

# Rivenhall Parish Council

*SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF RIVENHALL IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX*

## CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

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20<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

The Head of Environmental Planning  
Minerals Development Document  
Essex County Council  
Freepost CL 3636  
E3 County Hall  
Chelmsford  
CM1 1XZ

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Colemans Farm Site A46 – Your Ref: MDDI&O/0811/F/PYCs**

Rivenhall Parish Council strongly objects to the proposed site A46, which lies entirely within the parish.

The site covers 46 hectares in the Blackwater Valley, south of the A12. The entire site is within the Blackwater Special Landscape Area as defined in the Braintree District Local Plan Review, policy RLP 79. The proposed development would have a highly damaging visual impact on the countryside and SLA, made worse by the fact that the site can be viewed from elevated positions on both sides of the river valley.

It would involve the extraction of 2.5 million tonnes (MT) of sand and gravel over a period of at least 14 years with the currently proposed access being on to Little Braxted Lane. The site would extend from south east of the Colemans Bridge junction on the A12, to the Braxted Road, just south of the Matchyns and the Rivenhall Hotel.

Although the site is being presented as "new" it is in reality the same site, but with amended boundaries, that previously failed to meet the required criteria as a preferred site (Site A1, Coleman's Farm).

Many residents and the Parish Council have already objected to the site and are having to be consulted again because Essex County Council has deemed that previous representations do not count.

The currently proposed access would be via the single track Little Braxted Lane, the same as for the previously rejected site.

The proposed access is totally unsuitable for HGVs, with the lane having single track working for much of its length, high hedges and limited visibility. The junction at Coleman's Bridge is also highly dangerous for slow moving HGVs, being a location where vehicles, including HGVs, are often moving at speed, accelerating towards the A12 (south bound) or coming off the A12.

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Little Braxted Lane is part of the Braintree District Council defined Pedestrian Network and Cycleway Network because it currently offers a quiet, very low traffic environment. The proposed allocation would be clearly highly detrimental to this use and would, therefore, be contrary to RLP 49 and RLP 50 of the Adopted Braintree District Local Plan Review in which both policies refer to the need for the networks to be "safe". There would be obvious and dangerous conflict with walkers and cyclists from gravel laden HGVs in a narrow lane with no path providing a pedestrian refuge (except for a short section at the top of the lane near the Coleman's Bridge junction where it widens to 2 way working and there is a length of path).

Residents in Rivenhall and Rivenhall End have consistently raised concerns about increasing HGV traffic on local residential roads, which has led to one HGV weight restriction being imposed (Oak Road north of the railway bridge) and another being currently being considered (Oak Road south of the railway bridge). Heavy lorries to and from the proposed site could use the A12, or routes via Witham or could use the A12 northbound and then Oak Road, Rivenhall End (via the Fox junction).

Essex County Council already has many times more suggested sites than it needs to meet its required needs to the year 2028. A46 is not needed to meet requirements.

Contrary to the desire of Essex County Council to minimise impacts, A46 would create a new site, with new and additional impacts on local residents and the environment, including potentially noise, dust and heavy traffic. The developer refers to the access on to the A12, but gravel lorries travelling north to Braintree and the A120 would likely go through Witham and those travelling south to Tiptree or Maldon could come through Rivenhall End. By comparison, the existing Bradwell Quarry at Rivenhall Airfield, just to the north of Rivenhall Parish, has proposed sites A3 and A4 with a combined yield of 4 MT which are considered reasonable extensions to an existing quarry, affect very few people and avoid the need to create a new site or new access.

Although the proposed extraction period is 14 years, it is commonplace for the operators of large minerals workings to apply for time extensions and varying of conditions so the proposed period is more realistically regarded as a minimum. The Parish Council also has concerns about the potential use of access on to the Braxted Road to the north of the proposed site.

For the reasons outlined above Rivenhall Parish Council requests that Essex County Council rejects this current application.

Yours faithfully,

Keith P. Taylor  
Clerk to Rivenhall Parish Council.