

'This is deplorable': Wildlife campaigners condemn plans for haulage road through Fairlop Waters nature reserve

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Wildlife campaigner protest plans for a haulage road for gravel transporting trucks set to through Fairlop Waters Local Nature Reserve. Photo: Ron Jeffries

Outraged wildlife campaigners are protesting plans to create a haul road within the boundary of Fairlop Waters Local Nature Reserve (LNR) fearing that a barrage of lorries will frighten away rare birds and harm trees.

The council's planning committee gave conditional approval to construction firm Brett Tarmac Limited's application to extend Fairlop Quarry, in Hainault Road, on June 5 this year.

The Recorder has seen a map which appears to show the route of a 13m wide road for mineral-transporting lorries snaking along the south west flank of Fairlop Waters - a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) protected by law.

The map, obtained by wildlife group Fairlop Birders, is dated October 2016 and is more detailed than that included on the council's website which is dated April 2016.



The LNR is home to rare long-eared owls, among other species, which campaigners say are under threat if the road is to go ahead along the proposed route. Photo: Steve Bacon

The group fears the daily passage of lorries will ruin the habitats of the park's rare long-eared owls and great crested newts (a protected species) and 50-year-old trees, among other species.

Fairlop birders spokesman Chris Gannaway said: "This is a terrible state of affairs when one group of council officers take the trouble to develop and go through the Local Nature Reserve registering process with Natural England, while the planners allow developers Brett Tarmac to run roughshod over what is now a mature wildlife site."

They, together with the Aldborough Hatch Defence Association, also argue that council's planning committee did not adequately scrutinise the plans at the time.

"This is deplorable. Redbridge Council has tried to hide this from the public," said Jenny Chalmers, chairwoman of ADHA.

"The council is the land owner and we are calling on the leader of the council to put an immediate stop to this development."

Simon Treacy, planning director for Brett Tarmac Limited, said that extensive environmental surveys and widespread consultation with everybody concerned was undertaken before their application was approved.

He added: "It's now a case of refining our plans so we can fulfil the conditions in our planning consent, and then doing what we say we're going to do (including safeguards to protect wildlife)." "We will continue to discuss our activities with the planning authority, local groups and ecological experts to achieve the best possible outcome for all (such as enhancing areas of the site that have potential to become habitat for numerous species on the Fairlop Plain)."

A council spokeswoman said the application went through the normal planning procedures included site notices, advertisements in press, letters to neighbours, public consultation and a planning committee meeting."

"Before development can proceed, we will be working closely with our partners and environmental agencies to ensure that the relevant planning conditions relating to biodiversity and vehicle movement are discharged."