

Date: November 2011
Your Ref.
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Dear Resident,

HIGHBARNES CHALK MINES PROJECT– CONFIRMATION OF OFFER OF FUNDING

We last wrote to you on 8th April 2011, with regards to our application for funding for the Highbarnes Chalk Mines Project. At that time we were waiting for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to carry out an audit of their budgets, to try to identify potential savings which could be used to finance the remedial works to the Highbarnes Chalk Mines.

Since we last wrote there have been a number of very important developments. The HCA completed their appraisal of the Council's application and recommended to the Government that it was eligible to receive funding. The Council's application to the Government for a Derelict Land Clearance Order in respect of the area (which was necessary to ensure that the Council was eligible to receive 100% of the costs) was granted and the Order came into force on 10 October.

Consequently, I am pleased to be able to tell you that the Council received a formal offer from the HCA in the sum of £2,045,349 which has now been accepted. This is extremely positive news, and something that we have been working towards since the discovery of the existence of the mines in 2008. We are now able to proceed to the next stage of the Project, which is to carry out a tendering process to appoint a suitably qualified contractor to complete the ground investigation works. We will be working with Hyder Consulting Ltd, who we appointed as our project managers in 2009. Hyder have considerable experience of this type of work, and have worked with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council following the discovery of chalk mines in their area.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Whilst this is clearly a positive development, you will no doubt have questions about the work that will be taking place, how long it might take and how you might be affected by it. Hyder have produced a Project Programme to show the anticipated length of each stage of the works. The Programme appears on the Council's website but we have extracted some of the key dates which are enclosed with this letter to give you an indicative timeline. In addition, we have prepared a "Question and Answer" sheet, which will hopefully address any initial questions you may have. If you do have any concerns that are not addressed here, please contact Jenny Young on 01442 228834 or jennifer.young@dacorum.gov.uk who will be able to assist you.

We also wrote to you on 9th May 2011 to advise you of the ground investigations that were to be conducted around the Highbarns/Pond Road junction. The purpose of these investigations was to determine if there had been any deterioration in the condition of the known mine chambers since their discovery in 2008. I am pleased to report that no significant changes were detected by the laser and CCTV surveys that took place. This means that the risks associated with these mines remain the same and have not increased during the past three years. The analytical report of the survey can be found on our website if you would like to read it.

Finally, we are planning to hold a local public meeting prior to the commencement of the ground investigation works. We anticipate this meeting will take place in January or February next year, but we will let you know the exact date.

I hope that you find this information both useful and reassuring. We will keep you fully up to date as the project progresses.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steven Baker
Assistant Director (Legal, Democratic & Regulatory)