Restoration

It is proposed to largely restore the quarry back to the levels of adjacent land with the exception of the SSSI. In this way the restored landform would most successfully integrate and blend into the wider environment over time. The overall aim of the restoration is to create lowland calcareous grassland or chalk downland as this is a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) target for Cambridgeshire.

Small scale trials are currently taking place on the existing site to determine the most effective way of achieving this. On steeper restored slopes it is proposed to establish deciduous woodland. The current train unloading platform in particular would be transformed into a wooded valley with a linear glade running along the valley bottom.

A permissive footpath would be created running approximately south to north linking the proposed cycleway connecting the new housing with Foston Station to the public right of way that forms the quarry’s northern boundary.

Field boundaries will be re-established through the planting of hedgerows, the positioning of which have been influenced by the location of the original field boundaries prior to the development of the quarry. These hedgerows will act as conduits for nature conservation, allowing species present in the wider environment to colonise the site once restoration is complete. Within the hedgerows many solitary trees will be planted.

As the creation of the new landform in each phase is realised, the surface will be spread with a chalk layer dug from the quarry base to a depth of 0.4m. 100mm of soil will be spread on top of the chalk, this having been sourced from the previously restored area within the site. Soil and chalk will then be ploughed to produce the chalky soil necessary to create chalk downland.

Once restoration is complete, the whole site will be subject to five years of ‘aftercare’. ‘Aftercare’ is where the company monitor the completed restoration scheme to ensure its success, takes remedial measures where this monitoring shows that the restoration is not maturing as it should, and reports progress, measures taken and measures proposed to the County Council for consideration.

Summary

CEMEX is proposing to seek planning permission from Cambridgeshire County Council to implement a restoration scheme for Barrington Quarry that requires the continued importation of restoration material over a 15 year period;

The quarry void would be largely restored to the levels of adjoining land as chalk downland, with small deciduous woodlands being established on steeper slopes. A 200 metre length of the existing quarry face will be retained for continued scientific study, reflecting the site’s Site of Special Scientific Interest status;

A permissive footpath will be provided linking the new cycleway with the public footpath that runs along the quarry’s northern boundary, thus linking the new homes to the villages to the north;

Almost all the material required for restoration purposes would be imported onto the site via the existing Barrington Light Railway. No more than three trains per day as a monthly average are proposed, although the company would like to be able to accept up to four trains on any particular day;

Restoration works would take place in four main phases, in addition to the Initial Development and Final Restoration Phases;

The planning application will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement - the written findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment. The assessment work undertaken thus far indicates that the key issues relate to water (surface water drainage), transport (continued use of the Barrington Light Railway), geology (the quarry’s Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status, noise and vibration, and landscape;

Once restored the former quarry will blend and integrate into its wider environment, contribute to biodiversity gains in the County and provide a link for walkers from Foston to Harlton whilst retaining access to a nationally important geological resource for future study.