

Consultation Leaflet re Planning Applications at Colemans Farm Quarry

July 2021

Background

Brice Aggregates Limited (“BAL”) owns and operates Colemans Farm Quarry. Operations at the site originally have the benefit of a planning consent for the extraction of an estimated 2.5 million tonnes of sand and gravel together with the provision site access and ancillary facilities: with restoration to agriculture and water-based nature conservation habitats.

Since becoming operational in April 2017, the site has become an established supplier of quality sand and gravel to the local construction and concreting industries. A ready mixed concrete plant has recently been installed to enable the business to further meet its’ customers’ needs.

The operations on site have gone through separate phases of planning (as is often the case with mineral workings) with the last consent ref ESS/40/10/BTE granted in January 2020.

The currently approved working plan is shown on Figure I below.

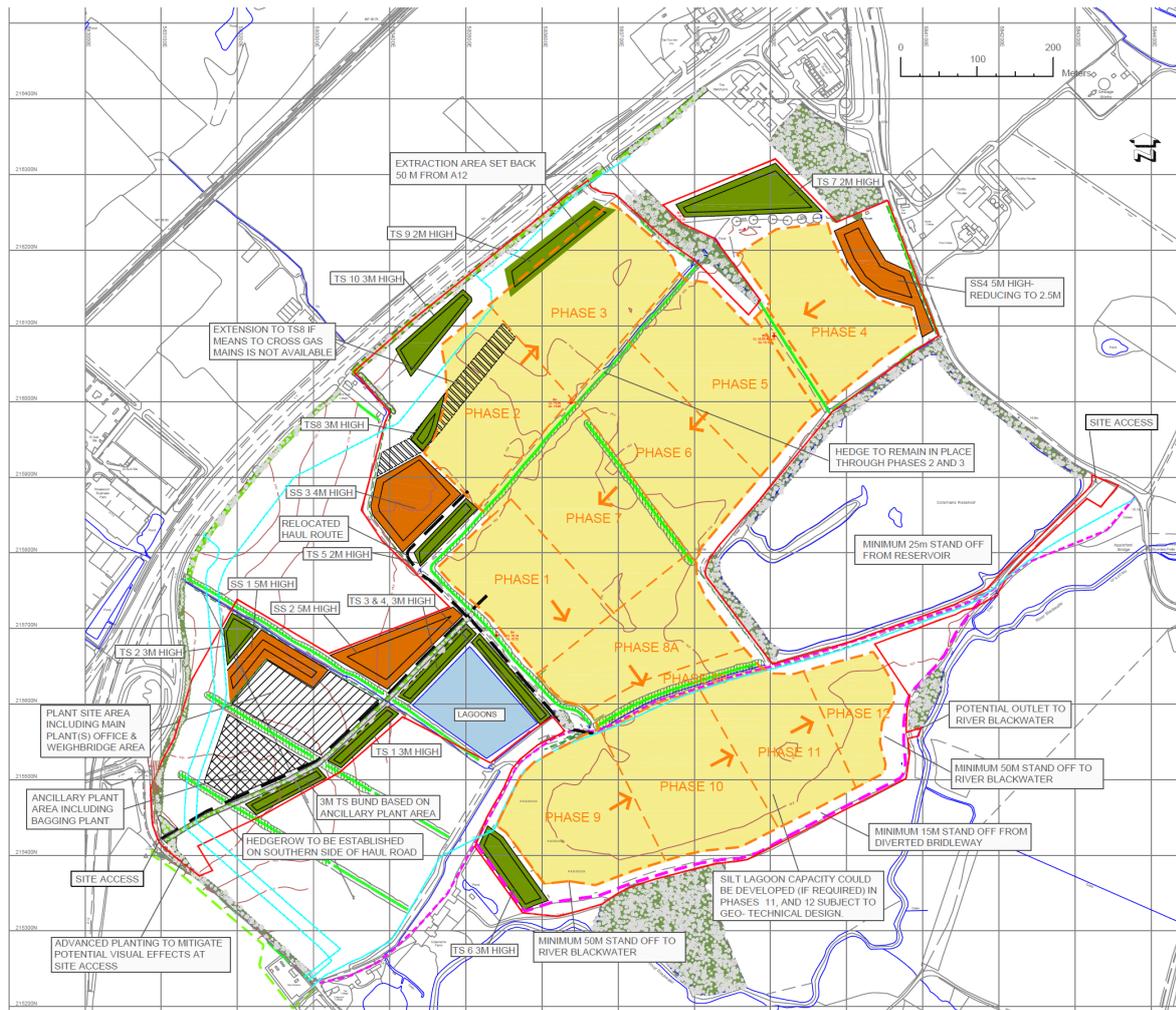


Figure I – Approved Working Plan

Relative to the operations at the quarry, the Preferred Route Announcement confirmed that between Junctions 22 (Witham North) and 23 (Kelvedon), the A12 would be realigned on a new route that passes through the northern section of the approved BAL site. Quarrying operations are ongoing in this area with Phase 3 currently being worked in proximity to Rivenhall End.

Much of HE's preferred route corridor within the quarry for the new A12 has already, or is shortly due to be dug with the worked out quarry void extending to approximately 6 metres deep. The expected boundary of A12 works is shown by the light blue dashed line on Figure 3 below with much of the route of the new A12 passing through land that is currently expected to be restored to lakes.

Should the A12 proposals come to fruition following examination by the Planning Inspectorate (Development Consent Order application due to be submitted in Spring 2022 with a decision expected late 2023).

A number of notable changes would be generated by the realignment of the A12 relative to the operations at the site, including: -

- a) a need to ensure that the current void space under the preferred route area is restored to enable the realignment and construction of the A12 to proceed in a timely manner; and
- b) there will be a need to remove remaining minerals in the preferred route area to ensure that these are not needlessly sterilised by the construction of the A12. Such an approach is consistent with national and local policy guidance.

There are other notable changes such as a potential need to relocate the plant site and site access on site. However, at this point in time there is not enough information available to develop suitable schemes. These matters would therefore be addressed either through the A12 DCO process or under a further phase of planning for the site.

The Proposal

In order to address these matters, and following extensive discussions and consultation with the A12 Project Team, BAL have developed an innovative proposal which also has the benefit of supporting the timely delivery of the A12 road scheme.

The proposed working plan is shown on Figure 3 below. This shows seventeen phases of working, with a proposed extension (shown as Phases 5, 6 and 7) to the west of the currently approved extraction area. Phases 1 -3 inclusive have already been worked. Of the consented 2.5 million tonnes, approximately 2.0 million tonnes remains to be worked in the currently approved site.

The proposed extension includes an additional 265,000 tonnes of high-quality sand and gravel. A planning application has already been submitted to Essex CC in their role as the MPA for this extension and this is currently on consultation.

The proposal being developed by BAL seeks to amend the working and restoration schemes to enable BAL to extract all accessible mineral reserves from within the corridor affected by the A12 improvements.

BAL would also facilitate a restoration back to original surface level of this area by importing with inert materials prior to the commencement of A12 construction works.



Figure 3 – Proposed Revised Working Plan

Subject to the grant of consent for the proposed western extension, it is proposed to enter into Phases 5, 6 and 7 later this year and complete extraction of these phases by mid 2023.

Following this, quarrying is proposed to resume in the areas of the approved quarry site unaffected by the A12 scheme throughout the remaining consented life of operations.

As part of the upcoming application, the remainder of the approved site will also be subject to a revised restoration scheme in order to ensure a sustainable after use delivering an equivalent overall area of ecologically valuable “Priority Habitats” as the currently approved scheme.

The proposed scheme would continue to have a balanced focus on lowland meadow, reedbeds and other wetland habitats, consistent with the sites status as a flagship restoration scheme under the Minerals Local Plan. Two different options under consideration, see Figures 4 & 5 below.

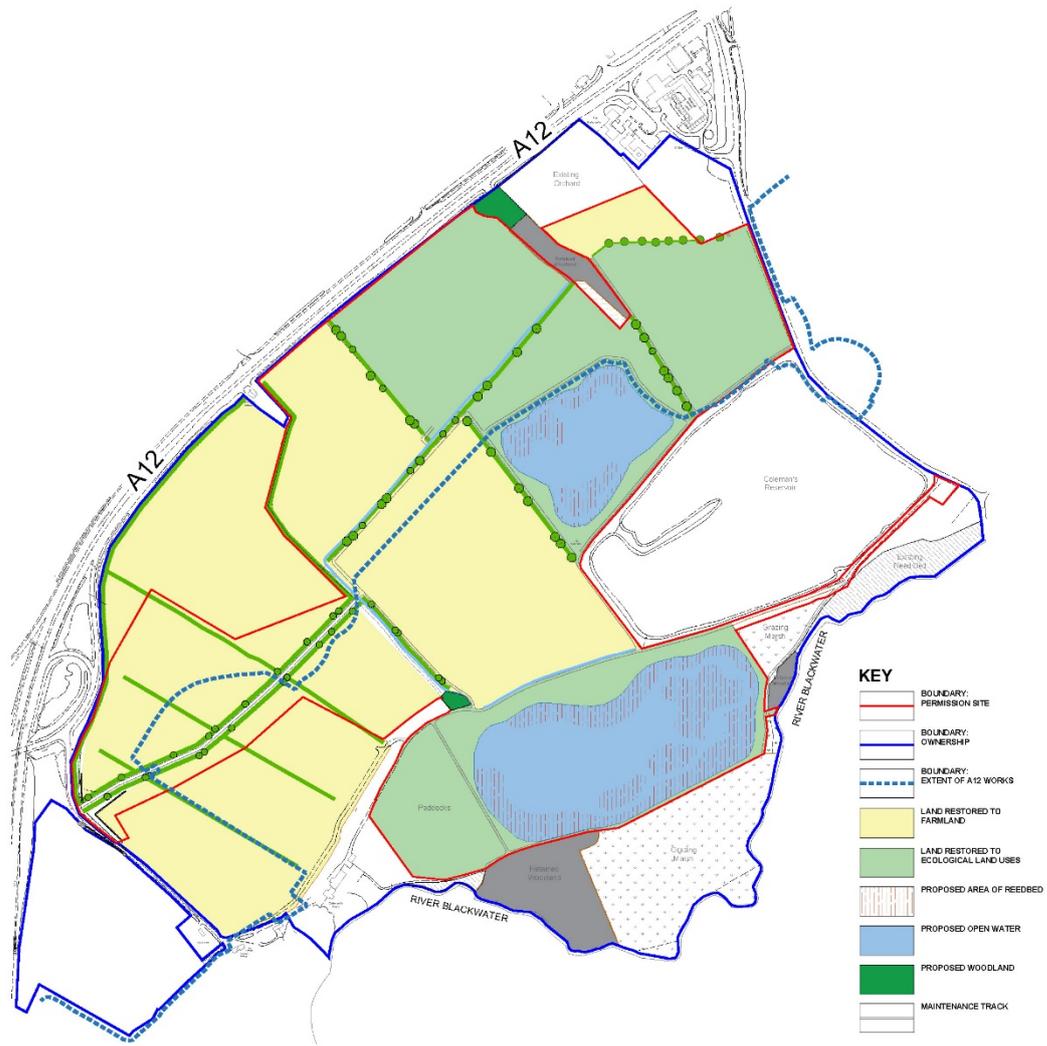


Figure 4 – Proposed Revised Restoration Plan, Option I

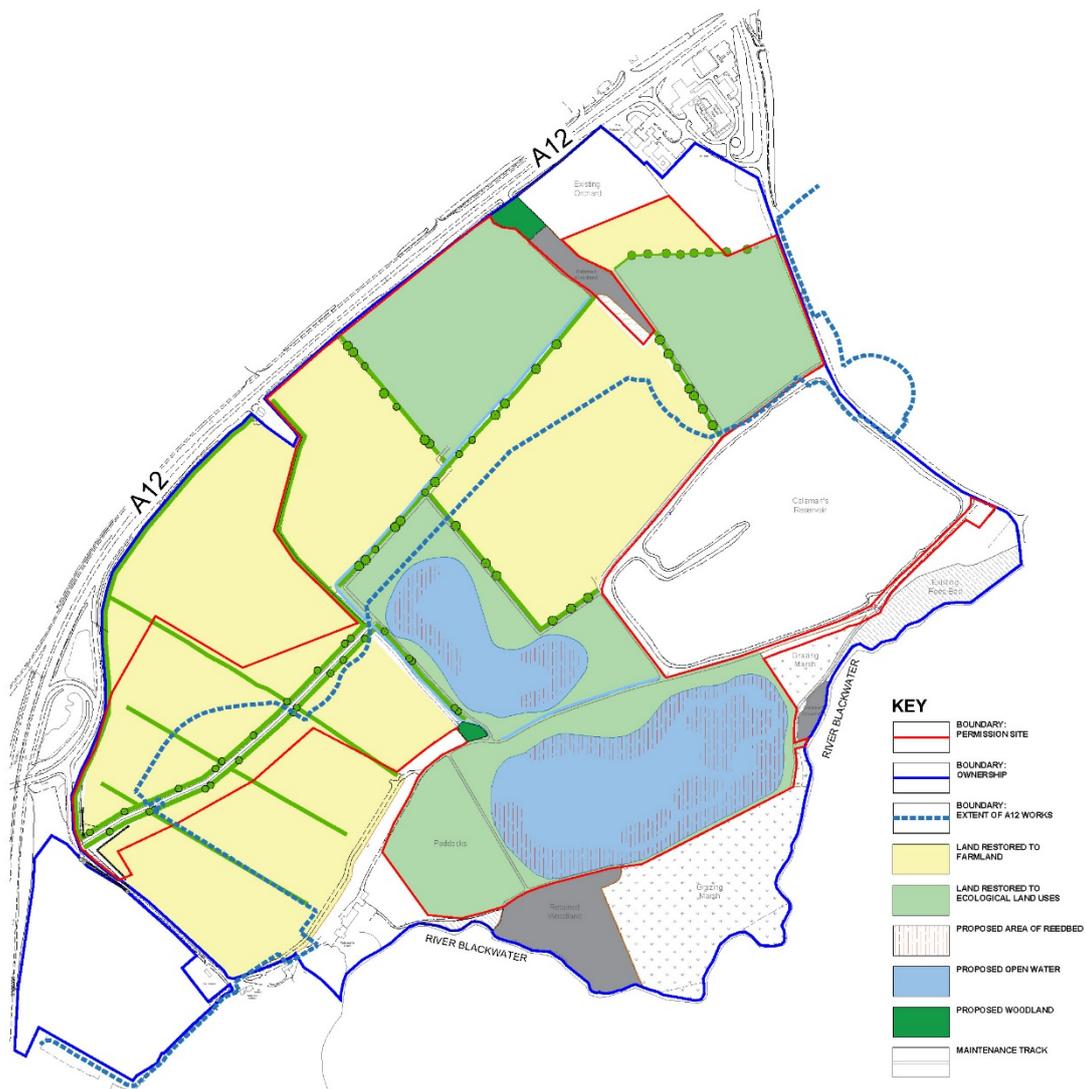


Figure 5 – Proposed Revised Restoration Plan, Option 2

Both of these options have the same overall objectives, and both would deliver the long term landscape and ecological benefits associated with the existing approved plans and schemes.

Consistent with the currently approved schemes for the existing site, it is proposed that the establishment and development of these habitats will continue to be supported by management plans agreed under suitably worded planning conditions.

In order to provide these habitats an additional volume of inert restoration material is proposed to be imported into site and deposited to make up the restoration landforms.

Inert restoration material typically consists of waste clays and soils excavated from construction sites in the local area. It is by definition chemically stable and odourless and is commonly used as fill material to restore quarry sites across the country to sustainable after uses.

Much of the inert materials generated by construction sites contains elements of stones and old rubbles; BAL are proposing to integrate a recycling operation into this proposal to ensure that this

aggregate fraction can be recovered for reuse and resale to the building industry. This maximises the sustainability of the operation by promoting the recovery and reuse of recycled aggregates as well as enabling the company to provide a consistent supply of cohesive fill material into the restoration of the A12 affected land to make it most suitable for roadbuilding.

This increased activity on site will generate an additional requirement for HGV movements into and out of the site. Currently the site is permitted to handle 150 HGV movements daily, it is proposed to increase this to 330 HGV movements daily. All of this increase in traffic will be routed via the main access onto Junction 22 of the A12. Traffic levels using the Braxted Road access will remain unchanged at minimal levels (typically 0-5 HGV movements daily). The increased level of 330 HGV movements has been demonstrated as within the capacity of the highway network surrounding the principal access to site.

Summary

This proposal is being brought forward by BAL at this time in response to the A12 scheme being promoted by HE. If granted planning permission, it will support the timely delivery of the A12 scheme by providing a suitable surface at pre-quarrying ground levels on which the road can be built. These proposals have been developed in consultation with the A12 Project Team. The proposals include a substantial delivery of biodiversity gain across the remainder of the site unaffected by the A12 scheme once restored.

The below table provides additional clarity and rationale behind the key aspects of BAL's proposal.

Interaction with A12	This proposal is being promoted by Brice Aggregates independently of the A12 scheme. The A12 Project Team have been extensively consulted and the proposals are intended to support the overall delivery of the A12 construction programme
Effect on this proposal of the A12 works being cancelled	Should the A12 works be aborted / cancelled then BAL will deliver the proposed restoration as shown on the above plans (Figures 4 & 5) within the currently consented timeframe (by 2034)
Importation of inert waste – A12 land	Restoring the land within the new A12 corridor to surface level requires a substantial volume of restoration materials in addition to those available on site. A restoration led by the importation of inert waste will enable the creation of a suitable landform on which to construct the road.
Importation of inert waste – remainder of site	With the expected loss of much of the site to the A12 scheme, the remainder of the site still has to provide a substantial amount of "Priority Habitat" in its restoration. In order to provide the necessary landform for creating new reedbeds and meadow land, additional inert waste will be required throughout the remainder of the scheme. Inert waste will not be imported into or deposited on the workings immediately adjacent to the River Blackwater.
Recycling of inert waste	The recycling operation will enhance the overall sustainability of the site by ensuring that usable aggregates contained within imported inert waste can be extracted for reuse by the building industry, in line with local and national policies in promoting the circular economy. Additionally, by removing aggregates from the inert waste, the residual material will be better suited to filling the void with enhanced cohesiveness suitable for building the road upon.
Suitability of site for inert waste handling	Inert waste arisings within Essex are of the order of 4 million tonnes per year. Much of the processing of this is conducted within operational

	<p>or former quarries given their availability of space and suitable equipment, as well as highway access and ability to operate with minimal impacts upon noise, dust, landscape and other environmental concerns within the locality. Colemans Quarry will remain subject to an equivalent, rigorous monitoring regime for such matters as at present. An Environmental Permit will also be required which will be sought from and ultimately regulated by the Environment Agency. A number of local quarries currently process and use inert waste as fill material e.g. at Sandon, Danbury, Stanway, Great Leighs, Great Dunmow and Ardleigh.</p>
Need for additional inert waste management capacity	<p>The Essex and Southend Local Waste Plan (2017) identified a substantial shortfall of inert waste deposit capacity within the county of approximately 7.05Mt, as well as a projected shortfall in recycling capacity. Lying at the heart of the County with excellent access on and off the A12 at Junction 22, Colemans Quarry is well placed to assist in making up the shortfall in local inert waste handling capacity.</p>
Revised restoration scheme	<p>The revised restoration scheme has been designed to provide an arable / meadow landscape for the A12 to be built upon within HE's indicated preferred route corridor. Should the A12 scheme not progress / be cancelled then this arable & meadow landscape will remain. The provision of "Priority Habitats" will be equivalent to the currently approved restoration scheme.</p>
Revised restoration on rest of site	<p>Consistent with the currently approved schemes the remainder of the site will be restored to an enhanced biodiversity landscape featuring a number of open water bodies with extensive reedbeds, and lowland meadow as well as smaller areas of flood plain grazing marsh and open mosaic habitats. The provision of "Priority Habitats" will be equivalent to the currently approved restoration scheme.</p>
Revised working scheme	<p>The revised working scheme will see quarrying paused on areas outside of the A12 preferred route corridor upon approval, with extraction and restoration focussed on the land under the A12 preferred route. Once these affected areas are worked and restored prior to the commencement of A12 construction, then quarrying and restoration of the remainder of the site (outside of the A12 scheme corridor) will resume. Such an approach will see the A12 able to be delivered on time whilst allowing for the timely extraction of existing mineral resource.</p>
Increase to 330 HGV movements daily	<p>The increase in HGV movements is necessary to support the increased activity on site and ensure that the land affected by the A12 can be restored successfully in a compressed timeframe. This HGV movements figure is within relevant junction design capacities and has been subject to quantitative assessment and the requisite Highways England risk assessments. This figure will only apply to HGV movements from the main entrance onto Little Braxted Lane / Junction 22 of the A12.</p>
Unchanged HGV movements from secondary Braxted Road access	<p>In response to local concerns about excessive lorry movements on the local road network, BAL are not proposing to increase traffic movements from their secondary access onto Braxted Road. These will remain unchanged at a low (typically 0-5 HGV movements per day) level.</p>
Unchanged lifespan of quarry	<p>The rate of extraction and output of sand and gravel from the site is not proposed to change, as such the current deadline for the conclusion of quarrying and restoration in 2034 will remain.</p>

Future provision of access to quarry	As part of the A12 scheme, the site access and some of the infrastructure (e.g. weighbridge and office facilities, processing yard area) may need to be relocated. With clarity on these matters being subject to further detail on junction / carriageway design from HE which is not yet available, it would be premature to consider these presently. They will be dealt with by subsequent planning applications or within the scheme DCO as appropriate. The intention however throughout will be to ensure that BAL can continue to operate Colemans Quarry throughout the construction of the A12 scheme and continue to supply building materials and services to the local construction industry.
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The proposal described above are to be submitted by BAL to Essex County Council as two separate planning applications which together will comprise the overall proposal. The application relating to the extension has already been submitted and is currently out for consultation. The application relating to the existing site will be submitted over Summer 2021 incorporating feedback from local communities, and other interested user groups.

BAL would be interested to hear the views of local residents on these proposals, in particular on the options presented for the restoration of the site.

Feedback should be marked as relating to the Colemans Farm Quarry proposals and submitted by email to head.office@dlwalker.net by close of business on 30th July 2021.