



Proposed Water Bottling Plant at Cowdale Quarry
Buxton

Environmental Statement

Non-Technical Summary

Prepared on behalf of Express Park Buxton Ltd
January 2014

Background and Scope

Introduction

This Environmental Statement (ES) has been coordinated by Ian Jewson Planning Ltd (“IJP”) and forms part of a full planning application submitted by Express Park Buxton (“the Applicant”) to High Peak Borough (“the LPA”).

The description of the development for which planning permission is sought is set out in full below:

“Application for full planning permission for the construction of water bottling plant and associated offices, storage areas and parking together with landscaping, water storage lagoons and a new access from the A6.”

Background

The application site extends to a total of 13.6ha and comprises part of the disused Cowdale Quarry together with the adjoining area extending to the A6 across and beneath which the new access road is proposed to be constructed.

The quarry is located approximately 1.5 km east of Buxton Town Centre, bordered by the A6 to the north, the remainder of the quarry to the east and agricultural land beyond the quarry on the remaining boundaries. The groups of dwellings that form Cowdale Village are a short distance to the south east and

The development will include:

- a) The Bottling Plant which comprises a total gross floor area of 15,845 m², with office and welfare facilities in a two storey element containing a total of 600m² floor space and the main plant area for production and warehousing at 15,245m².

- b) The hard standing and loading areas around the building to accommodate the necessary vehicles for collecting and delivering water from the plant
- c) The new access road from the A6.
- d) The landscape proposals including an attenuation pond.

Proposals for a similar bottling plant in Cowdale Quarry were the subject of a Planning Appeal (APP/H1033/A/11/2166189) heard at Inquiry during 2012. The Inspector identified four main issues in respect of that the appeal. They were:

- 1) The method of construction of the access road from the A6 and the effect of that access road on:
 - (a) the scheduled monument;
 - (b) ancient and semi-natural woodland; and
 - (c) other protected woodland;
- 2) The landscape and visual impact of the proposed development seen from:
 - (a) the A6; and
 - (b) various viewpoints around the site;
- 3) The potential availability and appropriateness of alternative sites; and
- 4) An assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed development against its social and economic dimensions, and against policy, in order to conclude on its overall sustainability.

In his conclusion on the appeal the Inspector indicated that,

“There is conflict with a number of saved Local Plan policies but that conflict is mitigated by the modest scale and nature of the harm that would be caused and by the economic and social benefits that would flow from the proposed development. What is

not outweighed by those economic and social benefits is the significant harm that would be caused to the scheduled monument within the appeal site by the construction and the visual and physical impact of the proposed access road. All other matters raised at the inquiry and in representations have been taken into account but it is the conclusion on that issue that leads to the dismissal of the appeal.”

The Scheduled Monument was listed as such subsequent to the refusal of the appeal application by High Peak Council and prior to the Public Inquiry.

The current planning application is intended to directly addresses the concerns of the Planning Inspector in 2012,

- a) The revised site boundary excludes the designated area of the Scheduled Monument.
- b) The access road has been redesigned with a view to reducing the visual impact of the access from the A6 as well as the impact on ancient and semi-natural woodland; and other protected woodland.

Methodology and Approach

The purpose of the Environmental Statement (ES) is to set out the methodology, content and findings of the EIA. In accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations. This Environmental Statement includes the following:

- A description of the development
- An outline of the main alternatives
- A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development
- A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment,.
- A summary of the proposed mitigation and remediation measures.

- An indication of any difficulties encountered when compiling the required information.
- A non-technical summary of the information provided within the ES.

Site and Surrounding Area

The application site lies some 1.5km to the east of Buxton town centre, on the south side of the A6 as illustrated on the Location Plan attached at Figure 1.

The site extends to 13.6ha and comprises the western/north-western part of Cowdale Quarry, which ceased operations in the 1950s. The proposed development will be sited on the quarry floor, which is an average of 295m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). This part of the quarry floor is defined:

- i) to the west and south, by the excavated quarry rockface, which rises some 13-17m above the quarry floor to between 320-322m AOD;
- ii) to the north, by a continuation of the quarry rockface, which diminishes in relative height to the quarry floor from west to east, in front of which sit two spoil heaps that rise some 10m above the quarry floor; and
- iii) to the east, by the remainder of the quarry, including part of the tallest and easternmost spoil heap that rises to 317m AOD (13m above the quarry floor) to wrap around its north-east corner.

The A6, to the northern side of the quarry, runs along the bottom of Ashwood Dale. The land slopes some 30-40m from the top of the quarry wall down to the A6, which lies between 266m and 259m AOD adjacent to the western part of Cowdale Quarry, and falling in height from west to east. This land forms the southern side of Ashwood Dale.

A canalised section of the River Wye runs parallel to the northern side of the A6, set down below a stone wall and bank. Ashwood Dale Quarry lies beyond the river, and

has recently been extended further west towards the edge of Buxton. A single track mineral railway line runs between the River Wye and the Ashwood Dale Quarry.

Further to the north-east lies a scattering of farmsteads and individual properties, including Bailey Flat Farm, Tim Lodge and Pictor Hall.

To the south of the quarry is agricultural land. Cowdale village lies 0.2km to its south-east edge, with King Sterndale lying approximately 1km further east.

The hamlet of Staden and Slade Hill Farm lie on rising land some 0.3-0.4km to the south-west, with Staden Lane Business Park lying off the A515.

Vehicular access into the application site is currently via a narrow track from the A6, which joins the carriageway at an acute angle. There is a secondary access into the eastern part of the quarry, from the edge of Cowdale village.

The floor of the quarry is covered by calcareous grass and has some grazing use. Self-sown vegetation, comprising woodland trees and scrub, has colonised the spoil heaps and the top of the northern quarry wall along the A6. Ferns and other herbaceous ground flora may be also found on the rock ledges.

Description of the Development

The development (see Figure 2) will include:

- a) The Bottling Plant which comprises a total gross floor area of 15,845 sq.metres, with office and welfare facilities in a two storey element containing a total of 600 sq.metres floorspace and the main plant area for production and warehousing at 15,245 sq.metres.
- b) The hard standing and loading areas around the building to accommodate the necessary vehicles for collecting and delivering water from the plant

comprising eight loading bays, 12 parking bays for heavy vehicles and 12 parking bays for trailers.

- c) A new access road from the A6. The new junction with the A6 has been designed to minimise the visual impact on the existing landscape and will enter the site through a tunnel. It will not impact on the area of the designated Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- d) Extensive Landscape Proposals including new woodland planting and an attenuation pond.

Employment in the Plant

The proposals will generate around 100 new jobs which include,

- 72 process plant and machine operatives
- 20 administrative and secretarial staff
- 8 management and senior posts

The Water Resource

The Rockhead Spring is a natural Artesian spring located a short distance to the east of Cowdale Quarry on land owned by the applicant. The Spring is a high quality source of Spring Water which is a natural and sustainable resource when utilised in accordance with the Environment Agency licensing arrangements. It is one of only two such springs in Derbyshire, the other being the St. Ann's Spring in Buxton.

Consideration of Alternatives

This section of the Environmental Statement provides a description of alternative sites including the merits of each in comparison to the appeal site.

The identification of alternative sites is based on discussions with the local planning authority as well as an assessment of potential sites highlighted within the Nathaniel Litchfield Partnership Employment Land Review 2008 carried out for the Peak sub-region authorities including High Peak.

The Appeal Site is significant because it constitutes a coincidence of locations for all the key elements of the bottling process which are not available on other sites.

This applies to the following factors:

- a) Proximity to the Water Source at Rockhead Spring.
- b) Proximity to the Staden Lane borehole which provides a source of compensation water as required by the Environment Agency licence.
- c) Sufficient level land with good access to the strategic road system

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework is relevant to this application in both the general approach to policy matters and specific topics within the document. In terms of the general approach, the NPPF places the key emphasis on achieving sustainable development. At section 7 it identifies the three dimensions to this objective,

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built

environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

The Development Plan for the purposes of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the area including High Peak District Council comprises the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies.

As of 30 March 2008 therefore the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies document is the relevant Local Plan Policy document. In terms of the NPPF, the Saved Policies are relevant policies adopted since 2004 and as continued to be given full weight only for a period of 12 months from March 2012. The relevant “saved” policies are,

- GD2 Built-up area boundaries
- BC10 Archaeological and Other Heritage Features
- GD4 Character Form and Design
- GD13 Buxton Mineral Water
- OC1 Countryside Development
- OC3 Special Landscape Area Development
- OC4 Landscape Character and Design
- OC5 Development Conspicuous from the National Park
- OC8 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- OC10 Trees and Woodland
- EMP7 Industry and Business within the Countryside
- TR5 Access Parking and Design

There are a number of other relevant policy documents which do not form part of the development plan but are material considerations in the determination of this appeal.

- The Plan for Growth (March 2011)
- Draft Core Strategy 2010

- D2N2 Strategic Priorities & Areas of Economic Focus (2011)

Landscape and Visual Assessment

The Landscape and Visual Assessment has been prepared to reflect the new planning application submitted on behalf of Express Park Buxton Ltd in December 2013 and updates the previous LVIA prepared in May 2012.

The basic principle of development has not been revised, only the physical characteristics. These are as follows:

- The proposed building has been moved further behind the existing land spur to further minimise its impact.
- The building is now on two levels, decreasing the overall height above the existing quarry floor.
- The building is 45m shorter in length and 6m narrower than in the previous scheme.
- The access to the site is now via a tunnel instead of the cutting which was proposed alongside the Scheduled Ancient Monument. The access point on the A6 remains unchanged.
- The Heritage Centre building has been removed.
- The existing spoil heaps are to remain or are extended.

The key changes in the current scheme are that,

- a) The new application site area is now 13.6 ha.
- b) The application site does not now include a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The provision of the access road via a tunnel means that overall in the proposals the loss of trees is substantially reduced on the previous proposals. However, it remains the intention that existing vegetation will be reinforced alongside the northern side of the building between the existing land spur and the closest existing spoil heap.

Within the floor of the quarry, new planting will be designed to create an attractive environment for the users and visitors to the site although there is no longer a requirement for a Heritage Centre.

Moderately significant impacts were identified in relation to the 2012 Appeal proposals because of the removal of the existing spoil heaps. The new access arrangements mean that their removal is no longer necessary. The existing spoil heaps will also have their vegetation reinforced. The impact of the proposals has therefore been downgraded to 'Not Significant'.

Arboriculture

In terms of the previous proposals considered at Public Inquiry, the arboricultural assessment noted that the removal of individual trees and tree groups, to facilitate development would not result in residual effects beyond the twenty-year timeframe. At that point, it was expected that the site's tree cover would be broadly similar to that currently existing, but of a higher overall quality in terms of tree health and structural condition due to the managed introduction of new planting.

In terms of the appeal decision in 2012, the Inspector concluded that,

“99. The environmental harm that would be caused through loss of ancient woodland and other trees and through visual impact would be sufficiently modest in nature or duration that it would, on balance, be sufficiently modest in nature or duration that it would, on balance be outweighed by the economic and social benefits when coming to a balanced conclusion on the sustainability of the proposed development. That is not so when the harm to the scheduled monument is taken into account.”

In terms of the current proposal tree loss has been reduced significantly from the previous proposals. This is the result of the new access arrangements from the A6 by tunnel which avoid the need to remove trees and woodland on the scale associated with the previous proposals. Specifically,

- a) The impact on the Ancient Woodland is reduced from 2,400sq m to 1,610 sq m or 1.3%.
- b) The impact on TPO W1 is reduced from 6,230 sq m to 1,865 sq m or 5.1%.
- c) The impact on designated woodland areas is reduced from 4,920 sq m to 2,638 sq m or 12.4%.

Ecology

The ecological assessment of the effect of the previous proposals identified two specific areas of impact,

- a) The loss of Ancient Woodland and other woodland in the Ashwood Dale LWS as a result of the access road formed at that time along the line of the existing access track from the A6.
- b) The loss of secondary woodland outside the Ashwood Dale LWS resulting from the construction of a replacement layby on the A6.

The construction of the tunnel access to the Cowdale Quarry site results in a significantly reduced impact of development on trees as well as on the Scheduled Ancient Monument and its setting. In specific terms as with the arboricultural assessment,

- a)** The Loss of Ancient Woodland is 1,600sq m (reduced from 2,400sq m in the previous scheme) or 1.3% of the total area.
- b)** The layby proposed on the A6 requires the removal of 7 mature sycamore and ash. One mature elm within the visibility splays of the layby is recommended for retention

The impact on ecology was found acceptable by the Planning Inspector in the context of the 2012 Appeal Proposals. Notwithstanding the reduced impact of the current proposals, the mitigation strategy however remains as before. Specifically however,

- a) The translocation of Ancient Woodland ground flora and soil will reflect the reduced quantum of Ancient Woodland affected by the new proposals.
- b) The wildlife bridge is no longer required because the provision of access through a tunnel does not result in any fragmentation effects.

In terms of the current proposals, the impact of development is significantly reduced compared to that which was found acceptable in the context of the previous appeal.

Transportation

Buxton is a hub of the regional road network with roads radiating from the town including:

- A6 that runs through the eastern edges of the town east towards Derby and Chesterfield (A619) and north to Greater Manchester;
- A515 south to Ashbourne and on to the West Midlands conurbation;
- A53 south west to Leek and Stoke-On-Trent, which also becomes the A537 west to Macclesfield

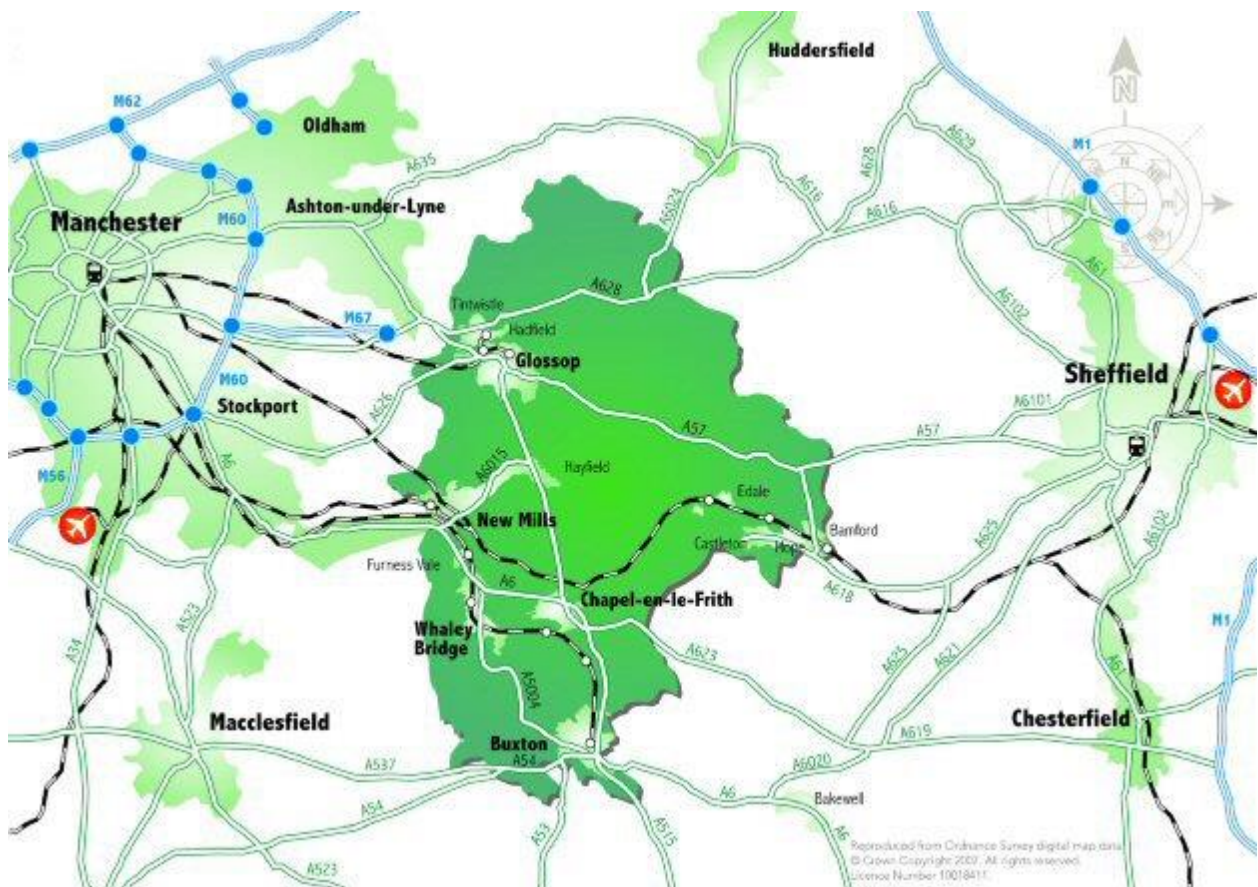


Figure 1: Strategic Location of Buxton

A6, Bakewell Road

The proposed development would be accessed directly from the A6, 1.5 kilometres east of Buxton. Within the vicinity of the development site, the road is 7.0 metres wide and subject to a speed limit of 50 mph.



A6 Looking West

A6 Looking East

Based upon the projected traffic volumes it is proposed that the junction will incorporate a right-turning lane with a ghost island on the A6. The design of this access junction will be engineered to accomplish the standards specified in the Design Manual for Road and Bridges (DMRB).



A 515 – Example Ghost Island as to be provided at development site

The two nearest bus stops to the site are to 1.5 kilometres west at Morrison's (Dale Rd/Bakewell Rd) or 800 metres east at Pig Tor. Along this section of the A6 there are 5 services operating as detailed below. In addition a wide variety of services operate within and around Buxton. Opportunities for linkages to these services could enhance the level of potential bus patronage to this site, but based on the water bottling plant alone would not be economically viable.

No. / Operator	Route	Direction	Frequency		
			Mon – Fri (First- Last)*	Saturday (First- Last)	Sunday (First- Last)
65 TM Travel	Buxton - Tideswell - Sheffield Centre Meadowhall	Out	07:00 – 16:00 6 per day	9:00- 16:00 6 per day	11:00- 18:15 3 per day
		Return	09:25 – 17:30 5 per day	10:50- 18:55 6 per day	09:30 – 16:50 3 per day
66 TM Travel	Buxton – Tideswell – Chesterfield	Out	14:00 – 19:00 3 per day	14:00- 19:00 3 per day	16:30 1 per day
		Return	10:30 – 14:30 2 per day	10:50- 14:50 2 per day	14:55 1 per day
68 Halleys	Buxton - Tideswell - Castleton	Out	14:50 1 per day	14:50 1 per day	10:15 1 per day
		Return	09:00 1 per day	09:00 1 per day	-
170 Hulleys of Baslow	Buxton - Bakewell - Baslow - Chesterfield	Out	-	-	19:00 1 per day
		Return	-	-	09:15 – 17:50 2 per day

No. / Operator	Route	Direction	Frequency		
			Mon – Fri (First- Last)*	Saturday (First- Last)	Sunday (First- Last)
218 First SY/TM	Buxton - Bakewell, Baslow, Sheffield	Out	09:00 – 18:05 4 per day	9:00- 18:05 4 per day	11:00 – 17:00 3 per day
		Return	07:30 – 16:40 4 per day	7:30- 16:40 4 per day	09:30 – 15:30 3 per day
605 TM Travel (School Term only)	Buxton - Bakewell - Matlock - Chesterfield	Out	07:30 1 per day	-	-
		Return	16:55 1 per day	-	-

*Timings shown are the departure from the origin of the service

Table 1: Bus Timetable Summary

Buxton Train Station is located 3 kilometres west of the development. The station is a branch line with direct services to Manchester, Preston and Blackpool, with available interchanges from principally Stockport or Manchester for onward connection to the rest of UK. Services operate roughly from 6am to midnight with a daytime frequency of four trains per hour (two arrivals/two departures), reducing to hourly (1 arrival/1 departure) in the evening.

There are no footpaths adjoining the A6 at this location. There are at present no formal cycle routes adjacent to the application site. The A6 could be used by cyclists, but is only recommended for experienced riders.

Noise

The noise assessment shows that the worst case noise levels from the development are not predicted to give rise to disturbance at nearby noise sensitive properties. However, it is important to ensure that noise levels generated by the proposed development are minimised as far as practicable. In order to achieve this a detailed

Noise Management Plan will be developed during the design phase in order to minimise noise impact.

The Plan will include measures to ;

- Update the noise model for the proposed development to reflect specific plant selections and to specify appropriate remedial treatments where required to minimise adverse noise impacts.
- Ensure that the general internal noise levels are not predicted to exceed the assumed levels. Where these levels are predicted to be exceeded specify appropriate engineering noise control measures to plant to reduce the levels below the required limit.
- Ensure that the loading bay is designed to minimise loading noise egress. Access for fork-lifts into the building needs to be arranged so that fork-lifts enter the warehousing area or a buffer space, and there is not a direct link from the outside to production areas.
- Specify generic measures to reduce noise impact such as using light-beacons instead of reversing alarms for the fork lifts. Where this is not possible the use of 'broadband' noise reversing alarms or smart alarms should be employed.
- Specify good practice operational procedures to minimise noise generation outside the plant and to ensure that loading operations are performed with minimal noise, doors to production areas remain closed, staff are informed about the need to avoid shouting etc in external areas.
- Periodic noise monitoring of the plant following completion to ensure that the plant achieves the predicted noise levels and to prevent noise 'creep' due to changes in operation of the plant over time.

The modelling and assessment of noise due to the proposed facility has shown that there will be no significant noise impact on residences in Staden or Cowdale either in terms of the noise due to operation of the plant, or noise due to vehicles. It has also been shown that due to the large distance between the site and the nearest residences construction noise is also likely to be below the level of significant impact.

Archaeology

Consultation with High Peak Borough Council and English Heritage has been on-going since refusal of the previous planning application in 2012.

At an early stage it was established that minor revisions to the previous application were unlikely to result in a scheme that would be acceptable in principle to English Heritage and/or the Local Planning Authority. The previous scheme has therefore been substantially revised to avoid any direct impacts upon the Scheduled Monument of Cowdale Quarry limestone extraction and processing site 540m north east of Staden Manor. This revised scheme formed the basis of the discussions with representatives of High Peak Borough Council on 25th June 2013. At that meeting it was agreed that any forthcoming planning application would be supported by a Statement of Significance and a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the site.

The archaeological interest of the study site has been reviewed and described within the desk-based assessment and the Statement of Significance.

The desk-based assessment has established that the only heritage asset that will be impacted directly or indirectly by the proposed development is Cowdale Quarry. This asset includes the Scheduled Monument of Cowdale Quarry limestone extraction and processing site 540 m north east of Staden Manor' together with associated non-designated elements.

The Scheduled Monument was placed on the Heritage at Risk Register immediately upon being Scheduled. Its condition is described as 'Very Bad', with some of the standing structures 'in very bad condition'. Currently vegetation and tree growth within and adjacent to the key structures is having a significant adverse impact upon those structures.

The site is also inaccessible to the public and contains no information to identify, describe or explain the key features or their significance. There are many, potentially significant components within the Scheduled Monument and its associated non-

designated assets that are, at present, concealed either by vegetation/scrub or imported topsoil.

Cowdale Quarry does not have any characteristics that would make it a site of geological significance.

The quarry floor is covered in imported soil for pasture which has precluded the calcareous vegetation community that would otherwise have developed since abandonment. Natural regeneration of various native tree species on the spoil heaps, including ash, hawthorn, alder, adds to the quarry edge's biodiversity, but the steep slopes and the entire rail siding area are overrun with dense growth with many rank species. Sycamore infestation is putting several structures at risk, parts of the steeper ground are being colonised by invasive bracken, and even the Lower Incline Plane (IM3) and Access Road (IM1) are being covered with invasive growth of butterbur.

The Statement of Significance gives specific consideration to the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the Scheduled monument and the associated non-designated assets. It concluded that 'within the boundary of the site, the setting of Cowdale quarry and limeworks presents a dichotomy between past industrial activity and post-abandonment natural regeneration. Its historic setting as a hive of large-scale industrial activity in an environment denuded of vegetation is to a large degree masked by the present ground cover and woodland growth, which provide the site with a strong sense of rural seclusion and wildness'.

Hydrology

The conclusions of the study identify that the proposed development is situated within an inner Source Protection Zone that has been drawn to protect groundwater discharging from Rockhead Spring.

The risk of derogation of water quality at Rockhead Spring as a consequence of the development is considered to be very low as no potentially contaminated water will be allowed to infiltrate.

Socio-Economic

The proposed water bottling plant at Cowdale Quarry – with associated offices– will create around 100 gross additional jobs. The number of net additional jobs associated with the bottling plant and offices, after allowing for leakage, displacement and multiplier effects, will be 60 full-time jobs in Buxton, 78 in High Peak and 92 in Derbyshire. Furthermore, the proposed scheme will support a total construction employment of 82 full-time jobs per annum over an assumed contract period of 24 months.

The value of the net additional employment in terms of GVA per annum is estimated at £3.90m in Buxton, £5.70m in High Peak and £5.98m in Derbyshire.

Whilst at local authority level, High Peak does not experience significant deprivation, there are clusters of relative deprivation in the urban area around the town of Buxton. The proposed development will primarily draw its workforce from the Buxton area, and it is noteworthy that this area experiences above average levels of worklessness and claimant count.

For the reasons set out in this report, we conclude that the proposed development is entirely consistent with the core planning principles and requirements of national and local planning policy (both adopted and emerging). The application scheme embodies sustainable development principles by reusing a vacant, previously developed site to enable the expansion of an existing business sector which is central to Buxton's economy. An alternative scheme for the site is unlikely to emerge.

As well as capturing some of the predicted growth in the UK water bottling industry in Buxton, the proposed development will also provide a boost to the local tourism economy. Moreover, the creation of a significant number of new jobs through inward

investment at the application site represents a major economic benefit for Buxton and High Peak, particularly as the national economy emerges from a long and deep recession. Against this background, the role of the private sector in creating new job opportunities will be especially important to the delivery of sustainable economic growth in the Borough.

Air Quality

This topic was not found to be an issue in terms of the previous proposals and the findings of the previous study remain relevant in the context of the current proposals.

Figure 1

Site Location Plan

Figure 2

The Proposals

Figure 3

Figure 4

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