



PRESS RELEASE



750 JOBS EXPECTED TO BE CREATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF SILVERLAKE - SUSTAINABLE HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION NEAR CROSSWAYS IN DORSET

Up to 750 direct jobs are expected to be created if planning permission is given to an application for high-quality holiday

OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION SOUGHT FOR UNIQUE NATURE CONSERVATION PROJECT AT WARMWELL QUARRY NEAR CROSSWAYS

Silverlake expected to generate nearly half a billion pounds of construction investment in the local area, up to 750 direct jobs are expected to be created if planning permission is given to an application for high-quality holiday accommodation and nature conservation on the site of Warmwell Quarry in Crossways.

The site is currently used for large-scale sand and gravel extraction, with hundreds of heavy lorries passing through the area each year, but quarrying is due to cease by 2017.

Habitat First Group, which also owns award-winning and high-quality sustainable holiday accommodation in the Cotswolds, is planning to develop the quarry, building up to 1,000 holiday chalets and lodges, a country club and spa and protecting hundreds of species of wildlife on the 560 acre site, as well as reinvigorating the local economy.

The development, called Silverlake, will be a key economic driver for the future of the West Dorset economy, encouraging inward investment, local spending and further employment. The construction stage alone is expected to generate £470million over a 20 to 30 year period, of which over half would be spent with local businesses.

573 construction jobs would be created, 286 of them with local firms and another 180 full-time jobs would be created on the site of the completed Silverlake scheme. Another 270 indirect

accommodation on the site of Warmwell Quarry in Crossways.



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jobs are also expected from visitor spend in the area.

Will Vicary, Managing Director of Habitat First Group, commented: "We are planning to create a truly unique concept for Dorset which boosts the economy, protects and manages the environment and benefits the local community with a long-term strategic plan for the quarry. Habitat First has a strong track record of delivering award-winning chalets and lodges which not only offer relaxing accommodation and leisure facilities, but which also protect the wildlife and wider habitat in the area."

Will Vicary added: "Silverlake provides a sustainable solution to the future of the quarry and will also supply an economic updraft which will be felt across the local region – from Crossways to Dorchester, from Weymouth to Poundbury and the Heritage Coast. Silverlake delivers nature conservation and landscape management at the highest level and firmly ties in with the key objectives in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework and West Dorset District Council's local planning strategy."

Habitat First Group has been consulting with the local community for over a year and engaged in detailed discussions with local parish councils, local residents, Natural England, Dorset Wildlife Trust, RSPB and Dorset County Ecologist.

Warmwell Quarry used to include a former World War Two airfield, RAF Warmwell, which dates back to 1937 and was a key component in the defence of the country. A number of important relics remain and will be preserved as an integral part of the development.

Silverlake would create an environment of wide open spaces, high-quality landscaping and recreation facilities for local people, as well as use creative design built on the key principles of sustainability, energy efficiency and biodiversity.

The aim throughout is to protect and encourage wildlife at the site, with species surveys having been carried out to identify the key areas of ecological importance for breeding birds, reptiles, dormouse, otter, water vole, invertebrates and bats for example. During 2012, a team of ecologists, hydrologists, engineers, landscape architects, archaeologists and transport advisers assessed the site in detail.

As well as the development of the site itself, which is very well concealed from its immediate surroundings, the plans include a focus on supporting the local tourist economy while protecting the environment – with the use of buses linking Silverlake with Moreton Station, Dorchester, Weymouth, Poundbury and the coast, as well as the creation of cycling and foot paths so as to discourage car use.

Habitat First Group believes that this major investment in the

area will offer a sustainable development boosting the local economy, enhancing and managing the local environment, as well as delivering hundreds of jobs and facilities to local people.

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