

NEWS RELEASE

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Ronez begins exploratory drilling at Chouet Headland

Ronez has begun the next phase of its project to establish a new quarry site on Chouet headland in light of the fact the existing quarry at Les Vardes will be exhausted in around 10 years' time.

Exploratory drilling, which will take place during daylight hours, will continue the evaluation of the site's potential and is essential to the future planning application. It is scheduled to begin on November 6 2017.

Recognising the strategic importance of quarrying to Guernsey the area is designated by the States of Guernsey's Island Development Plan as a mineral safeguarding area. Ronez has initiated discussions with the States' Development and Planning Authority over drawing up a development framework for the site.

Of the total site that has the potential to be quarried, one third, at the eastern end, is owned by Ronez and the remainder belongs to the States. It is proposed that quarrying at Chouet would initially start on the Ronez-owned land in 2021.

Ronez general manager, Steve Roussel, said: "The site investigations will be centred on Ronez' land and it makes economic sense for the testing to include the part of the headland owned by the States while the specialised drilling rig is on the island."

The exploratory work will involve the specialist drilling of up to 12 holes to a depth of 50 metres.

Mr Roussel said: "Should our extensive studies at the headland prove that it contains commercially-viable mineral reserves, and the development framework is adopted, it would be Ronez' intention to start preparing a planning application but only in respect of the land owned by Ronez.

"Quarrying is considered to be of strategic importance to Guernsey and a new quarry at Chouet would provide decades of sustainability for the Guernsey industry."

It is estimated that a quarry at Chouet would have a lifespan of at least 40 years during which time around five million tonnes of aggregate could be extracted.

At Chouet, Ronez will do everything possible to minimise the impact of quarrying on neighbours, other users of the headland, wildlife and the general environment. The coastal pathway would be maintained and the quarry would become a new point of interest.

The 18th century Napoleonic pre-Martello towers would be retained and protected. Access would be via the existing road leading to the Mont Cuet landfill site.

Mr Roussel said: “Guernsey has a long heritage of quarrying, and being self-sufficient for building materials, and we hope that this will continue for decades to come as we seek to responsibly quarry the Chouet headland with minimum impact on the surrounding area.”

Ronez is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sigmaroc which acquired the business in January 2017.

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