

### 3. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing human environment in terms of land-use, population and employment and assesses the likely impacts on the human environment arising from the proposed development.

#### 3.2 Existing Environment

##### 3.2.1 Land Use, Zoning and Housing

The site is located in the townland of Carranstown approximately 3 km north-east of Duleek village. The R152 secondary road between Duleek and Drogheda runs along the southern boundary of the site. A commercial freight railway runs within 50-100 metres of the northern boundary of the site. The railway line which originates in Navan and joins the Dublin line at Drogheda is used to transport freight for Tara Mines, Navan and the Platin cement factory.

As can be seen from Figure 3.1, the land use in the area is predominantly agricultural with the exception of the Platin cement factory and its associated quarry located to the north-east of the proposed development site.

The area does not have any specific land zoning in either the existing (1994) or proposed (2000) Meath County Development Plan and is considered rural and agricultural. According to the development plan rural and agricultural areas 'can absorb quite effectively designed and located development in all categories including masts and wind energy installations, afforestation and agricultural structures'. One of the development objectives in the Development Plan for rural areas is to 'ensure that commercial and industrial proposals for rural areas are sustainable'. The closest industrial zoned lands are located to the east of Duleek on the R152 and in the Drogheda environs.

Housing development in the area is scattered in nature and is typical of a rural area. There is ribbon housing development along the R152 to Duleek to the south-west of the proposed site. The closest residential dwellings to the site are a dwelling adjacent to the boundary at the eastern corner of the site and two dwellings located across the R152 to the south of the site. There is also a group of four dwellings located across the R152 road from the eastern corner of the site and a further group of dwellings include two farm houses located about 400 metres to the north-west of the site across the railway line.

Other buildings in the area include a primary school, Mt. Hanover, which is located about 1 km to the east of the proposed development site. There are two commercial premises (tyre centre and garage) located across the R152 road from the eastern corner of the site and a public house, Carranstown Lodge is located approximately 500 m south west of the site on the R152. Adjacent Carranstown Lodge is a local football club. The adjacent land uses are shown in Figure 3.1 following.

### 3.2.2 Population

Meath is located in the fastest growing region in the country, the Mid-East region. Population has steadily increased in Meath throughout the 1990's and significant increases in population are expected over the next decade (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Population of County Meath

Year	Population	Predicted Population Range
1986	103,881	-
1991	105,370	-
1996	109,730	-
2001	-	113,000 – 120,000
2006	-	116,000 – 133,000
2011	-	119,000 – 154,000

The closest population centres to the development site are Duleek village to the south west and Drogheda town to the north east. Carranstown is located within Duleek District Electoral Division (DED). The most recent national census population figures (1996) for Duleek DED and the adjacent St Mary's DED and Drogheda are presented in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Population Levels in Development Area

Area	1991	1996	Increase in Population
Duleek DED	2496	2434	-62
St Mary's DED	3267	3529	262
Drogheda	24656	25282	626

The population of Duleek village itself has shown steady growth in recent years and the present population is estimated to be in excess of 1,800.

### 3.2.3 Employment

The Mid East region in which Meath is located is growing particularly strongly with increases in its output outperforming the Dublin area by a factor of almost 2:1. This growth has manifested itself in terms of employment growth in the county (up to 20% in the 1991-1996 period) and a fall in unemployment (over 10% drop 1991-1996).

The most recently available employment figures for the Mid-East region and the State from the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) are presented in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3 QNHS Employment figures (December 1999 - February 2000)

Region	In Labour Force	In Employment	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Mid-East	183,600	176,300	7,400	4.0 %
State	1,732,100	1,650,600	81,500	4.7 %

The live register statistics are maintained on a monthly basis and give the most up to date information on unemployment levels. There are a couple of problems in attempting to accurately quantify unemployment levels for the area in which the site is located based on these statistics. Firstly the live register measures casual, part-time and seasonal workers who claim benefit or assistance and therefore is not a true indication of unemployment. Secondly live register statistics are compiled based on information from the local employment office which does not correspond to specific geographic boundaries and therefore registrants at a given local office do not necessarily come from a particular area.

The employment office in Drogheda in Co. Louth is the closest employment office to the proposed development site and Navan, Co. Meath is the second closest office. Table 3.4 details live register numbers for these two offices for April and May 2000.

*Table 3.4 Live register statistics for Drogheda and Navan Employment Offices*

Employment Office	April 2000	May 2000
Drogheda	2,577	2,404
Navan	1,361	1,226

The 1996 National Census employment figures for Duleek District Electoral Division give a breakdown by category of employment as detailed in Table 3.5.

*Table 3.5 Duleek DED Employment Category figures 1996*

Category of Employment	Employed	Unemployed
Agriculture	98	18
Manufacturing	185	44
Construction	110	49
Clerical	68	5
Public Administration	38	1
Transport	58	6
Sales	73	14
Professional	90	5
Services	66	9
Other	58	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>190</b>

According to the draft Meath Co Council Development Plan 2000 a substantial portion of the population of Duleek is employed in manufacturing industry such as the nearby Platin Cement Works which is the largest employer in the immediate vicinity.

Much of the surrounding land is used for agricultural purposes and it is likely that a proportion of the population are employed in the agricultural and associated sectors. Likewise a proportion of the local economy would be dependant on agriculture.

### 3.2.4 Amenities and Tourism

The land in the immediate vicinity is predominantly privately owned agricultural land and therefore does not have significant amenity value for members of the general public. The closest natural recreational area to the development site is the area around Bellewstown Hill located about 4 km south of the site which has a listed viewing point over the area. Other natural recreational areas close to the development site are around Newgrange and Dowth Megalithic Cemetery and the Boyne River Valley located 4-5 km to the north west of the site.

The area does not possess any noteworthy scenic amenity value and the Platin cement works has a significant negative impact on the scenic quality of the area. In the draft County Development Plan the area is classified as 'Rural and Agricultural'. This is described in the development plan as 'normal rolling lowland pastoral landscapes that apart from occasional ridges or prominent areas are not particularly visually sensitive' and these areas 'can absorb quite effectively designed and located development in all categories including masts and wind energy installations, afforestation and agricultural structures'. The closest 'Areas of Visual Quality' to the proposed development site are the 'Lower Boyne Valley' located about 2 km to the north and the 'River Valleys' located about 2 km to the south.

The area immediately surrounding the site is not a significant tourist attraction. The Boyne Valley does have significant tourism potential for fishing and due to the archaeological value of the area.

## 3.3 Construction Impacts and Mitigation

### 3.3.1 Land Use, Zoning and Housing

Site clearance and construction on the development site will result in the loss of some land (ca. 25 acres) that was previously used for agricultural purposes. It is not predicted that the construction phase of the development will have any impact on land use in the surrounding area.

### 3.3.2 Health

As with any major construction site there will be potential risks to the health and safety of construction personnel on site. A comprehensive Health & Safety programme will be put in place on the site to minimise any risks to and ensure the health and safety of construction personnel and site visitors. The construction of the development is not predicted to have any potential impacts on the health of local residents.

### 3.3.3 Employment

The duration of the construction period will be between 18 and 24 months. During this period up to 300 workers, both skilled and unskilled will be employed on site. Where possible, local services and construction staff from the surrounding areas and counties will be used. Therefore the construction of the development will have a significant temporary positive impact on employment.

### 3.3.4 Amenities and Tourism

The construction phase of the development is not predicted to have any significant impact on the amenities or tourist potential of the site or surrounding area.

## 3.4 Operational Impacts and Mitigation

### 3.4.1 Land Use, Zoning and Housing

As with the construction phase the operation of the development will result in the change of use of some land (ca. 25 acres) that was previously used for agricultural purposes. The operation of the development is not predicted to have any significant impact on the land use of the surrounding areas, be it for agricultural, commercial or residential purposes, and is not predicted to have any significant impact on the housing in the surrounding areas.

### 3.4.2 Health

The proposed development will be designed and constructed in such a way as to minimise environmental impacts as far as practically possible. The plant has been designed in accordance with BATNEEC and will be operated in an environmentally sound manner.

Emissions from the plant will comprise of atmospheric emissions and discharges of treated domestic effluent to a percolation area on site. The potential impacts of these discharges are discussed in Section 4.4 on air quality and Section 8.4 on hydrogeology. All discharges from the plant will comply with the relevant regulatory limits designed for the protection of human health and the environment. Therefore the operation of the development will not have any adverse impact on human health.

### 3.4.3 Employment

The facility will employ a permanent staff of approximately 50 people, comprising managerial, technical, skilled and unskilled workers. Therefore the development will have a positive impact on employment in the area. The direct expenditure on employees salaries will have a multiplier effect on employment, household income, government income and Gross National Product (GNP). Goods and services required during the operation of the plant will be sourced locally where possible which will have a further positive impact on the local economy and employment in the area.

During the consultation process, concerns over the effects of air emissions on agricultural practices in the area were raised. There are over 500 incinerators of this type in operation throughout Europe, both in industrial and rural locations. The EU emission limits and the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines have been developed to prevent any impacts from emissions, either on health, the environment in general, or on agriculture. By operating well below these limits Indaver Ireland will ensure that there will be no adverse impact on agricultural practices, or on employment in agriculture, in the surrounding area.

#### 3.4.4 Amenities

As previously discussed the development site and surrounding area does not possess any significant amenity value or noteworthy scenic value, and therefore operation of the development is not predicted to have any significant impact on the amenity value of the area.

A minor loss of amenity will be experienced by immediate neighbours due to a loss of open space.

Due to its slight visual impact (see Section 6) and generally minor impact the proposed facility will not have any significant impact on the tourism potential of the surrounding areas.

The provision of the community recycling park will add to the amenity of the area.

#### 3.5 Conclusions

The proposed site was selected on the basis of objective technical and environmental selection criteria as detailed in Section 2.10. Although the site is not zoned in either the 1994 Development Plan or the Draft Development Plan, both plans accept the suitability of rural sites for industrial and other development.

The suitability of such sites is generally dependant on the sustainability of the industrial development in terms of its impact on infrastructure, visual amenity, tourism (particularly on the Boyne valley) and traffic. The sustainability of the development with regard to these and other environmental impacts has been ensured through design measures as detailed in the following Sections of the EIS.

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