

1.1 Overview of Proposed Facility

The Government Report 'National Overview of Waste Management Plans, 2004' predicts that municipal waste arisings in the Midlands in 2010 could be 237,000 tonnes. This is significantly higher than the 192,199 tonnes which the Midlands Waste Management Plan predicted for 2013. This large and unexpected growth in the quantity of waste requiring management within the Midlands region has placed considerable pressure on local authorities to continue with the implementation and upgrading of the existing waste management infrastructure.

Additionally, EU and Irish legislation requires the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill to be reduced by 35%, 50% and 75% by the years 2006, 2009 and 2016 respectively (based on 1995 waste levels). Given that 65% of municipal waste is biodegradable, the biological treatment (e.g. composting) of this waste can play an important part in managing this waste stream.

In line with national and European policy, Thorntons Recycling intends to establish a composting facility at Pass of Kilbride in County Westmeath.

The proposed facility would be capable of accepting 90,000 tonnes of organic waste per annum, comprised of the following types of waste.

- catering waste (from households and commercial kitchens);
- green (garden) waste;
- organic fines (i.e. organic material that has been mechanically separated from mixed municipal waste); and
- wood waste.

The waste materials would be processed in a state-of-the-art tunnel composting plant. After initial sorting, the compostable waste is mixed and placed in the tunnels for a period of two weeks. The process is computer controlled to ensure the optimum temperature, air-flow and moisture content. The air emitted from the process will pass through bio-filters that will actively remove odours. After the two-week period, the stabilised material will be placed on a concrete pad where air will be drawn through it for several weeks to complete the composting process. Following screening, the material will be sold as compost or used as landfill cover, depending on availability of markets.

The pure green waste will be placed directly on the concrete pads for composting, to produce a high-grade compost product. It will also be used to mix with the organic fines and catering waste to provide optimum conditions for composting.



Compost product

1.2 Overview of the Site

The site is located in a rural area 8 km to the west of Kinnegad village. It is situated in the townland of Pass of Kilbride, County Westmeath. Mullingar is the principal town in County Westmeath and is located 10 km to the North West of the site. The site entrance would be situated on a local road which connects with the N4 4 km to the north of the site and the N6 1.75 km to the south. The nearest settlement is the village of Milltownpass which is situated approximately 2 km south of the site. The village of Rochfortbridge lies over 6 km to the South West of the site. Local housing is made up of farms and residential properties in a linear formation along the N6, N4 and minor roads in the vicinity.

The proposed site is 17.5 hectares in size and is currently agricultural land, with a peat bank just outside the western site boundary. The proposed facility would occupy 4.8 hectares of the site. Thorntons also own the land to the west of the proposed site, which is currently planted with a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees.

Figure 1.1 shows the site location at a scale of 1:50,000 and Figure 1.2 shows the proposed site in the context of Thorntons Recycling's total landholding.

1.3 The Applicant

Thorntons Recycling is an Irish, family-run business that has been in operation for over twenty five years in the area of materials recovery and waste management.

The company operates one of Irelands most modern EPA licensed recycling/recovery facilities at Killeen Road in Dublin. This facility employs over 135 people and processes 250,000 tonnes of waste annually.

1.4 EIS Project Team

Enviros Consulting Ltd was engaged by Thorntons Recycling Ltd as principal consultants in the preparation of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The following subcontractors also provided expert advice in the following areas:

Author	Topic Areas
Robertson & Associates	Flora & Fauna
Cultural Resource Development Services Limited	Cultural Heritage
Colin Buchanan & partners	Traffic

1.5 Regulatory Context

The proposed development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 1999, First Schedule, Part ii (11 Other Projects) under the following category:

- b) Installations for the disposal of waste with an annual intake greater than 25,000 tonnes not included in Part 1 of the First Schedule.

The Second and Third Schedules of the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 1999 specify the scope of background information on the site specified for inclusion in an EIS. This EIS covers the information specified in those regulations.

1.6 Review of Legislation & Guidance

The EIS considers the following legislation and guidance notes throughout the evaluation:

- European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 1999;
- Waste Management Acts, 1996-2001 and associated Regulations;
- Protection of the Environment Act 2003;
- Landfill Directive (99/31/EC);
- Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 laying down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption;
- (EC) No 808/2003 amending Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 laying down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption;
- (EC) No 813/2003 on transitional measures Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 as regards the collection, transport and disposal of former foodstuffs;

- EC Working Document on Biological Treatment of Biowaste, 2nd draft;
- EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice (in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements) and Contents of an EIS;

From a local perspective, the following waste and development plans will be considered within the EIS:

- The Waste Management Plan for the Midlands Region, Adopted by Westmeath County Council, 12th September 2001;
- Westmeath County Development Plan 2002-2008

1.7 About the EIS

This document constitutes the Environmental Impact Statement prepared under the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 1999.

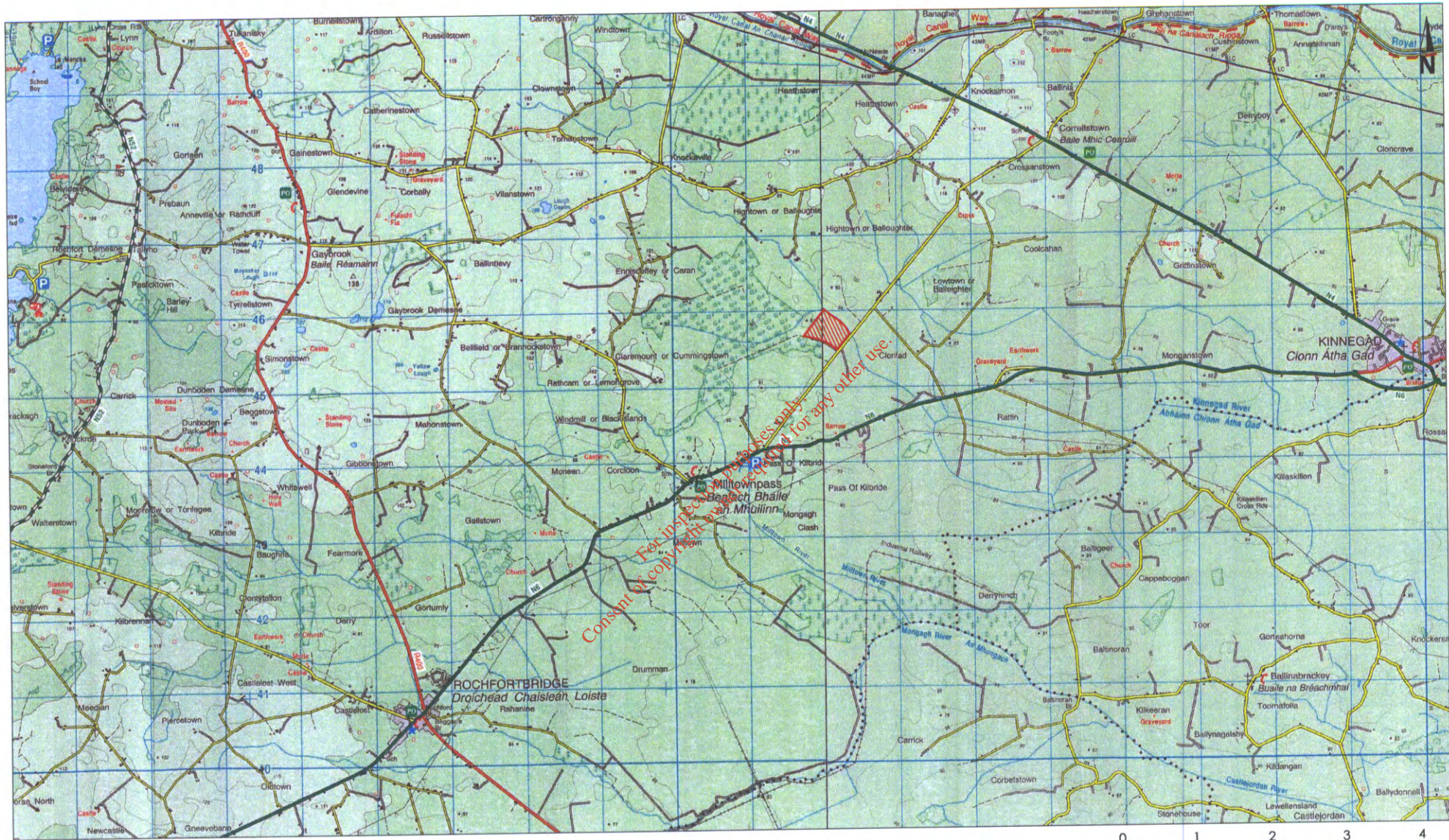
Chapter 2 provides details of planning policy relevant to the site; Chapter 3 provides a case for the need for the development and describes the alternatives that were considered; and Chapter 4 describes the proposed facility in detail. Chapters 5-16 consider the following environmental topic areas:

- Humans & Health impact assessment
- Air Quality
- Climate
- Noise
- Traffic
- Surface Water
- Geology & Groundwater
- Landscape and visual assessment
- Soils & Agriculture
- Flora & Fauna
- Cultural Heritage
- Material Assets

For each of the topic areas a description of the existing (baseline) environment is provided. The potential environmental effects of the development are then described and measures to mitigate the potential effects are provided. The interaction between all of the environmental topic areas is considered in Chapter 17.

Consultation

As part of the EIS process, consultation has taken place with several national bodies. Details are included within the various Chapters of this EIS.



Thorntons recycling **FIGURE 1.1**
SITE LOCATION PLAN

KEY:
 Site location

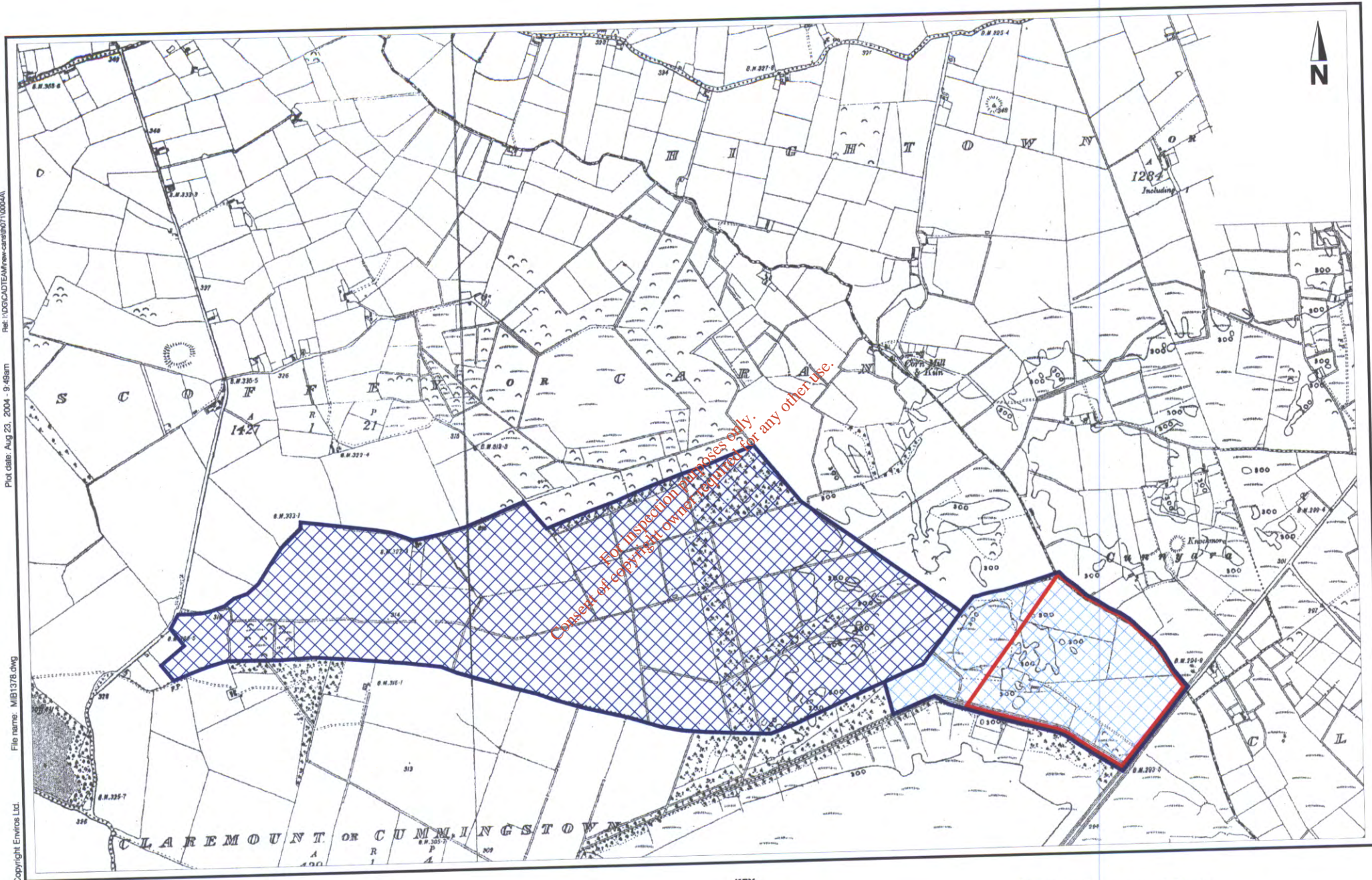





FIGURE 1.2
LAND OWNERSHIP PLAN

KEY:

-  Site Boundary
-  Land Ownership Boundary
-  Land Owned By Thorntons Recycling Centre Ltd

 Land Owned By Padraig Thornton