

1.4 Potential Impact of the Proposal

In order to assess the possible landscape and visual impacts that the proposed development would have on the receiving environment, was generated. From this a series of points were identified and assessed to best illustrate impacts, be they negative, neutral or positive, that the proposed development will have over the short to long term.

Due to partially enclosed nature of the site, the orientation of existing development and the nature of the landscape within the study area, views of the proposed development are restricted to a number of key locations.

Views to the site were investigated from a variety of key locations and both long and short range distances were considered in the assessment. Views from the site were also investigated to further illustrate the suitability or inappropriateness of the proposal in relation to the visual and landscape amenity of the receiving environment and its ability to absorb further development. (Refer Figure 1.5).

Visual impacts have been assessed for the proposed development.

Table 1.6 indicates the residences that will be affected by the proposed development which are shown in Drawing No. DG0001-02 .

Table 1.6 Visual impact (without mitigation)

Residence Number	Description of visual impact	Residence Number	Description of visual impact
H1	Low	H11	Medium to high
H2	Medium	H12	Medium
H3	Medium	H13	Low visual impact
H4	Medium	H14	Negligible or no visual impact
H5	Medium to low	H15	Negligible or no visual impact
H6	Low	H16	Negligible or no visual impact
H7	Medium to high	H17	Negligible or no visual impact
H8	Medium to high	H18	High
H9	Medium to high	H19	Low
H10	Medium to high	H20	Negligible or no visual impact
-	-	H21	Medium to high visual impact

1.4.1 Construction Phase

The potential impact that such a proposal could have on the receiving environment during the envisaged construction phase would be negative in the short to medium term.

This would be due to the processes involved in the construction of any development of this scale which would include the following:

- higher traffic volumes because of materials delivery and removal;
- the potential removal of soil and vegetation to achieve a suitable FGL to make way for the proposed building and access areas; and
- the processes of construction itself will be highly evident.

Additionally if a tree protection plan is not implemented and the screening ability of existing trees along the southern and northern boundaries in particular is compromised then the visual impact upon the receiving environment would be negative and short to medium term due to the timeframe involved in the reinstatement of the lost vegetation.

1.4.2 Operational phase

Based on the review of current design proposals, the potential impact such a proposal could have on the receiving environment during the operational life of such a development would be neutral to negative – short to medium term. This potential is unlikely and would only occur in the unlikely event of inappropriate maintenance and management of proposed and existing vegetation, or where the proposed mitigation measures are not implemented fully and or where there was a total failure of specified planting. The inappropriate use of materials and colours used in construction of the extension would also impact negatively upon the visual amenity of the area.

1.4.3 “Do nothing scenario”

The “Do nothing scenario” would have a neutral impact in the medium to long term. Current practices will continue at the rate of approximately 16,500 tonnes per annum, being restricted by the size of the existing premises and resources under the current Waste Permit with the County Council.

1.5 Mitigation & Compensatory Measures

A series of mitigation and compensatory measures based upon the analysis of the site context, the site in its current state, and the proposed site layout are proposed:

- Avoidance of external material use for the Material Recovery Facility.
- Avoidance of open air storage of materials waiting to be processed.
- Avoidance of long term open air storage of recovered waste materials.
- Appropriate road design to accommodate the potential increase in road usage which would include suitable hedgerow protection and implementation of landscaping to ensure that the existing landscape character defined by the local road pattern is retained.
- If fencing is required to ensure restricted access and egress from the site, then fencing is to be set back a minimum of 1m from existing hedgerows and set out and construction by hand – this will ensure the continued integrity of existing screening vegetation.
- Fencing is to be dark green or blue grey in colour.
- The existing woodland pocket is to be protected through agreed site practices and if necessary physical barriers i.e. fencing.
- The northern boundary hedgerow to be reinforced with additional planting of a low berm that is to be set back from the existing ditch. This berm is to be planted with a combination of deciduous and evergreen trees, whips and shrubs.
- The existing hedgerows especially those on the northern and southern boundaries of the site are to be protected and augmented with species indigenous to the locality⁴.
- A planting strategy which uses tree species capable of adapting to varied site conditions in conjunction with appropriate understorey species should be developed in co-operation with a Landscape Architect. All whips are to be a minimum 60-90cm in height and planting areas are to have a minimum mix of 30% tall standards 8 - 10cm girth 4.25-6m ht where appropriate.

⁴ Refer to Table 1.7 in Appendix A for the hedgerow and screen planting detail recommendations.

- The design of the proposed extension should take into consideration receiving environment through the choice of construction materials, colours⁵, and the proposed ridgeline height of the structure.
- the use of directional lighting which is on a timer or is motion sensitive should be explored to further reduce negative impact.

During the construction phase of the development a tree protection program should be implemented in accordance with *British Standard 5837 – Guide for Trees* in relation to Construction as part of an ongoing site management strategy. This will assist in ensuring the retention of the existing hedgerows, hedges and trees identified for preservation; and protection of any newly landscaped areas. Structured tree and shrub planting program should be implemented which will further ameliorate the perceived visual impacts and enhance the overall development. The planting of trees and shrubs should be fully implemented in the growing season immediately proceeding construction of the proposed extension. It's the planting program's principal objective should be to assist in the visual integration of the development into the surrounds with a scale of planting which adequately screens the site.

All trees, shrubs, transplants, hedging materials and ground cover planting shall conform fully to the specification, prepared by the landscape architect, in respect to species, size and quantity. All plants should be well grown, sturdy and bushy according to type and free of all diseases and defects. The plants should be available for inspection prior to planting works. Any planting material that does not conform to the specification is to be automatically rejected and must be removed from site.

During the operational phase adherence to the objectives of the proposed mitigation measures, will ensure that the site will continue to be adequately screened from its surrounds.

A landscape maintenance regime will be a key component of on – going site management. This regime should include a defects liability period during which any defective plant materials are to be replaced. Weed control and litter picking must also be monitored carefully, especially during the early growing seasons of the landscape maintenance contract.

The aim of these proposed mitigation measures is to ensure that the degree of visual intrusion posed by the extension of waste recovery plant is minimised and that the site achieves a high degree of visual integration into the existing fabric of the receiving environment

1.6 Predicted Impact of the Proposal

The predicted impacts the proposal will have on the receiving environment, is based on information supplied by the client, the initial desk study and analysis of information collected in the field and the implementation of proposed mitigation/compensatory measures.

1.6.1 Construction Phase

During the construction phase the proposed extension will have a negative to neutral impact in the temporary to short term

As with any construction of this scale there will be a degree of high visibility due to the processes involved in construction. These include:

- higher traffic volumes due to materials delivery and removal,

⁵ Colours should mimic the large scale farm sheds within the area using either green, dark blue-grey or red.

- the site works involved in the removal of vegetation and topsoil adjacent to the existing facility to make way for the proposed extension and access areas.

These actions will be evident in the short term from a variety of locations, especially from the north-west, due to the elevation of surrounding lands

1.6.2 Operational phase

During the operational phase the proposed extension will have a neutral impact in the long term.

After construction of the proposed extension, the development will be partially visible. Due to the scale and mass of the proposed development, and the limited amount of additional screening possible the presence of the finished development poses a moderate visual impact over the short term. This visibility will diminish as the landscaping is established therefore the facility will have a neutral impact upon the visual fabric of the receiving environment in the medium to long term

1.7 Conclusion

The proposed development does not pose a threat to any identified unique, or special features, or elements found in the landscape; or compete directly with areas of unique sensitivity the landscape impact is considered neutral. The short term negative visual impact that the non hazardous waste facility will diminish as the augmented hedgerows and proposed landscape mitigation measures are implemented and established.

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1.8 REFERENCES:

Department of Environment and Local Government (2000), *Landscape and Landscape Assessment; Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Ireland.

DMRB, (2000) *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 Environment Assessment*, London.

EPA, (2002) *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements*. Environmental Protection Agency, Johnstown Castle, Ireland.

EPA, (2002) Draft Advice Notes to Guidelines on Information to be contained in an EIS. Environmental Protection Agency, Wexford (Download from EPA website, September 2003 (page last updated 16th July 2002).

Kerry County Council (2003) Kerry County Council Development Plan 2003 – 2009, County Kerry.

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EXISTING SCREENING SITUATION AND DETAIL RECOMMENDATIONS⁶

Table 1.7 Screening Recommendations

AREA	FIGURE	DESCRIPTION	EXISTING SCREENING ABILITY	PREDOMINANT EXISTING SPECIES	MAINTENANCE	PROPOSED HEDGEROW PLANTING AS PART OF MITIGATION
North-eastern boundary hedgerow	Plate 1.10 and Plate 1.11	Mature hedgerow, with earth mound 2m in height along section of boundary.	Low due to deciduous vegetation and low understorey vegetation. Screening width and existing berm inadequate.	Alder	No visible maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infill existing gaps in hedgerow with Holly and Alder species Extend existing berm
South-eastern boundary hedgerow along roadside	Plate 1.12	Semi-mature hedgerow in corporation with earth mound 1m in height.	Generally good; Limited screening near material recovery facility	Alder Ash Ivy Hawthorn	Gaps have been amended with young trees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infill existing gaps in hedgerow with Holly and Alder species Heighten and improve existing berm
Woodland pocket	Plate 1.13	Mature native trees	Limited screening use (Landscape and tree preservation relevance)		None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infill existing gaps in hedgerow with Holly and Alder species
South-western edge (Trees next to woodland pocket)	Plate 1.14	Coniferous trees planted in row. In highly distressed state	Relatively low, compared to forest density.	Alder Ash Sedges	No visible maintenance	Re-transplant forest species
Internal screen on western side		Trees in a highly distressed state	Extremely low	Plantation species-Conifers	None	Substitute existing conifer trees

⁶ Refer to Section 1.5 for comprehensive list of proposed mitigation measures. Refer to Figure 1.6 for Landscape Mitigation Plan.