

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Kerry Central Recycling Facility Ltd. is applying for planning permission for the development of a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), an office building, a Public Recycling Centre, an internal access road and associated works in the townlands of Scart/Caherdean near Farranfore in County Kerry. The development will be known as the Kerry Central Recycling Facility.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required to accompany the planning application. This document represents the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that results from the EIA process. The purpose of the EIS is to identify the environmental effects of the development and examine how these impacts can be avoided or reduced during the design process of the proposed development.

The site is located between two nationally designated linked hub centres, Tralee and Killarney, and is connected by a strategic linking corridor, the N22 National Primary Road. Environmental quality enhancement and the provision of effective waste management facilities are specified by national policy as necessary for the sustainable development of the nation; the National Development Plan (NDP) prioritises environmental services, including waste management services. The NDP makes particular reference to the need to reduce the reliance on landfill, partially through the increase of the recycling rate and an increased number of recycling centres. The economic benefits of high quality waste management infrastructure are acknowledged. The South West Regional Planning Guidelines reinforce this position.

The regional Waste Management Plan (WMP) acknowledges the role of the private sector in waste management, notes the need to provide additional facilities in the region for the recovery and recycling of waste and sets objectives and targets for the recovery and recycling rates of household waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste and organic waste, all of which the proposed development can contribute to in a proactive manner.

SITE DESCRIPTION & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The site is located to the north of the L-3023 adjacent to the N22 National Primary Route between Killarney and Farranfore, 4km south of Farranfore and 9km north of Killarney.

The site is situated within a rural context and landuse in the surrounding area is mainly agricultural.

The development involves the construction of a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) building. An annual intake of 95,000 tonnes per annum is proposed (50,000 tonnes of mixed municipal waste, 3,000 tonnes of organic waste, 30,000 tonnes of dry recyclables and 12,000 tonnes of non-hazardous Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste).

A public recycling centre will also be constructed for the deposition of recyclables including C&D waste, timber, metals, cardboard, paper, glass, plastic bottles/film, green waste, WEEE, fluorescent tubes, batteries, bulky waste, waste oils, textiles and household hazardous waste.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT & MATERIAL ASSETS

The nearest commercial activity to the site is Independent Irish Health Foods Ltd, who operate from their warehouse and offices immediately to the north east of the site. There are 39 residential dwellings within a 1km radius of the site. However the nearest residence at the commencement of the access road to the proposed development has been acquired by Kerry Central Recycling Facility Ltd.

Potential negative impacts could arise from a decrease in visual amenity, a risk to water quality and an increase in traffic volumes in the area. However with all the mitigation measures proposed it is not anticipated that there will be any negative impacts on the current residents, landuse or utilities in the region.

The proposed development will have a positive impact on the working community through the creation of employment in the locality. Also, a public recycling centre is proposed as part of the development which will provide a recycling facility for the residents of Killarney, Farranfore and environs.

ECOLOGY

The site is not located within any site designated for its conservation importance. The nearest designated site is the Castlemaine Harbour cSAC, which is situated approximately 300 m to the south of the site.

Flora listed as requiring protection in either Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, the Wildlife Act 1976 or the Flora Protection Order of 1999 were not recorded on the site.

A large percentage of the development site is made up of coniferous plantation and this provides the overall character of the site. Coniferous plantation is species poor and is of low ecological value. There are patches of wet grassland interspersed throughout the site but these have been agriculturally improved and is of low ecological value.

There will be minor negative impacts from the loss of grassland habitat and the loss of young coniferous plantation but these habitats have limited ecological value. The potential loss of mature treelines would have a detrimental effect, however, the proposed landscaping treelines are of similar species.

SURFACE WATER

The proposed development site is drained by two tributaries of the Gweestin River. The Gweestin River is designated under the Quality of Salmonid Waters Regulations 1998.

Most of the Gweestin River is within the Castlemaine Harbour cSAC. The site is designated for a range of Annex I habitats and Annex II species including Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey and Atlantic Salmon.

Biological water quality assessment indicated unpolluted conditions and fair to good water quality in the Gweestin River immediately downstream of the confluences of the two tributaries which flow from the proposed development site. The section of the Gweestin River assessed has very good habitat for all salmonid life stages. The river is known to have a population of brown trout and salmon. The Gweestin River is designated a cSAC specifically for the conservation of salmon.

The eastern tributary of the river was found to be moderately polluted immediately downstream of the proposed development. The habitat assessment recorded significant salmonid nursery (juvenile) and spawning habitat in this stream and good densities of juvenile brown trout were recorded at all four sites assessed. The lowest c.150m of the western tributary stream is part of the Castlemaine Harbour cSAC.

A number of mitigation measures are recommended for the construction and operational phases of the facility. Without suitable mitigation, the impacts to surface water quality could be significant. All drainage from process areas will be directed to an effluent tank for tankering to a wastewater treatment plant. All non-process paved and roofed areas will be drained according to sustainable drainage system (SUDS) principles. The surface water drainage system for the proposed development will include sufficient flow attenuation to ensure no significant changes in maximum and minimum flow rates of the streams to which the site drains.

Effluent from on-site facilities (toilets, canteens etc) will be treated using best available techniques before discharge to ground. Specific mitigation to reduce elevation in ortho-phosphorus in adjacent streams is required.

If the recommended mitigation measures are implemented in full and the facility operates using BAT, the impact of the proposed development on aquatic ecology will be minor.

SOILS, GEOLOGY & HYDROGEOLOGY

Soils on the sites are described as Acid Brown Earths / Podzolics with an area of Surface Water Gleys / Ground Water Gleys Acidic in the northwestern corner of the site and an area of Lithosols / Regosols in the lower part of the proposed access road.

The subsoils across the site comprises of till derived chiefly from Namurian rocks and the bedrock is described as Namurian Undifferentiated (NAM) group of rocks.

The underlying aquifer is classified as being locally important and of High to Low vulnerability. The facility activity would pose a risk in terms of potential contamination

(accidental spills from the effluent or fuel tanks etc.). However this risk will be minimised due to good site practice and management.

It is proposed that a new internal road network will be constructed to allow access to and from the proposed development. To this end, there will be minimal soils stripping and levelling to facilitate the construction of the road. Any future construction activities will be scheduled such as to minimise the area and period of time for which soil will be exposed.

Specific mitigation measures have been formulated to ensure that the groundwater is adequately protected. Best practice procedures have been formulated to ensure control of surface water runoff and treatment of sewage, including the inclusion of such technologies as soil polishing filters and a hydrocarbon interceptor.

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL ASSESSMENT

A landscape and visual assessment was carried out on 27 identified receptors in the vicinity of the proposed facility. The site is located within the Ridges and Agricultural Patchwork Landscape.

Construction phase impacts will be similar to impacts that will be experienced during the operational phase of the development. Construction phase impacts will include visual intrusions, and a change in landscape character. However, these impacts will be temporary, as opposed to the long-term duration of the operational phase.

During operation, a number of mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise the residual visual and landscape impacts. The building should be coloured to reduce visual impact, and a number of landscaping measures have been proposed to screen the facility from nearby receptors. Initially, there will be a slight/moderate negative landscape impact from the facility for some of the nearby receptors. By mitigating for visual impact, this can be reduced, and once the landscaping is established the impact will be reduced to slight or negligible impact for the majority of the receptors.

ARCHAEOLOGY, ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The site of the proposed development at Scart/Caherdean was thoroughly researched and physically examined by two archaeologists. No known recorded monuments are recorded within the site. Desk-based research provided an archaeological and historical picture of the site and its hinterland. No previously unknown monuments or features of archaeological interest were noted during the field survey of the site. Given the present condition of the site (large-scale conifer plantations etc), it is not suitable for pre-planning or planning conditional archaeological testing. Archaeological monitoring of all ground disturbance works is deemed most appropriate.

AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The air quality assessment carried out concluded that the proposed development will not result in a significant alteration of traffic flows in the area and that increases in operational phase traffic-derived pollutants will be negligible. There are no proposed significant scheduled emissions to atmosphere and odour abatement will be carried out by means of biofilters. The potential for dust generation and deposition off-site during construction phase will be mitigated through specified measures.

NOISE & VIBRATION ASSESSMENT

Noise impacts as a result of the operational stage of the development are anticipated to be minimal. There will be an imperceptible increase in traffic noise on the approach roads accessing the site, associated with the operational phase of the proposed facility.

TRAFFIC

The Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) was carried out in respect of the proposed development and predicted that no significant queuing should occur either at the access junction between the proposed development and the local road L-3023 or the existing junction between the N22 National Primary Route and the local road L-3023.

It was estimated that the proposed development will generate 112 two-way trips during AM peak and 110 two-way trips during the PM peak hour. It is proposed

that all vehicles entering and exiting the proposed development will use the existing junction between the N22 National Primary Route and the local road L-3023. Recommended road improvements are outlined in the report entitled “New Access Road Junction to proposed MRF in Appendix P of this EIS.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development supports national and EU policies for the treatment of waste. On a local and regional level the proposed development meets the objectives of the current Kerry County Development Plan and the Waste Management Plan for the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region. It will also create a significant employment opportunity in the area. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared to identify the potential environmental effects of the proposed development and to assess how these impacts can be avoided or reduced. If the mitigation measures outlined in the EIS are fully implemented the development will have minimal impact on the receiving environment.

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