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17.0 MATERIAL ASSETS

Section 1 (Introduction), Section 6 (Site Setting) and Section 8 (Description of the Proposed Development) of the EIS should be referred to before reading this section.

17.1 Introduction

This section of the EIS addresses the potential impacts on material assets located in the vicinity of the Application Site. Material assets comprise the physical resources in the environment, which may be of human or natural origin. The objective of the assessment is to ensure that these assets are used in a sustainable manner with respect to development at the Application Site.

17.2 Methodology

The information for the assessment of the impacts of the Application Site was obtained from:

- Aerial and ordinance survey maps of the area;
- Geology of Kildare-Wicklow, Sheet 16 (Geological Survey of Ireland);
- Kildare County Development Plan (Kildare County Council 2005 – 2011);
- Census Returns (CSO 1996, 2002 and 2006); and
- On-site study and walkover which included exploration and landscape assessments.

17.3 Existing Environment

The Application Site is located in a rural setting and falls within the townland boundaries of Walshestown, Tipperkevin, Bawnogue and Blackhall (Figures 1.2 and 1.3). This area comprises of gently sloping undulating topography with scattered mature conifer woodlands and mature hedgerows separating landholdings. Land use in the area is predominantly agriculture with some extractive industry located in Tipperkevin (CPI Ltd.) and an inert waste facility located near the Application Site in Blackhall (Behan's Land Restoration Ltd.).

Punchestown Racecourse is located to the west of the Application Site, as depicted in Figure 1.3.

The area is populated by single house developments which are situated in a linear (ribbon) fashion along the surrounding road network. The Site consists of disturbed lands associated with historical aggregate extraction and is ca. 68.0 ha in size. The Application Site is located

within an area zoned for restoration under the Development Plan (2005-2011 – Pit No. 9) (Figure 3.1).

The material assets that have been identified within the Application Site and in the surrounding landscape are listed below:

- Land Resource;
- Road Network and Access;
- Public Utilities;
- Public Amenities;
- Architectural and Archaeological Heritage; and
- Scenic Routes.

Issues concerning the road network are addressed in detail within this EIS (Section 9.3.1), and are not considered further here.

17.3.1 Land Resources

The Application Site is ca. 68.0 ha in size and consists of previously worked out areas and lagoons associated with sand and gravel extraction (Figure 1.3). Natural vegetation growing in areas of the Site is now grazed by sheep and cattle over the course of the year. Mature and planted hedgerows surround the majority of the boundary of the Application Site. The lands are in the ownership of Cemex (ROI) Ltd. with no other lands being required for the restoration of the Site. The Application Site is zoned as in need of restoration under the Kildare County Development Plan (2005-2011, Pit No. 9). The outcome of the proposed restoration plan is to return the Application Site to the Eastern Kildare Uplands Transition character, as specified in the County Development Plan

17.3.2 Road Network and Access

The existing Site entrance leads on to the Local Road L6042 which runs along the north eastern side of the Application Site. This local road runs northwards and joins the R410, Regional Road at a junction known as Beggars End crossroads. The current entrance to the Application Site is to be used during the restoration activities with all traffic associated with the Site entering and leaving the Facility at this location.

17.3.3 Public Utilities

The Application Site is currently serviced by water, electricity and telecommunications. There are no overhead lines, underground cables or water mains running across the

Application Site accept for lines servicing the existing site offices. However, it is not expected that any of these utilities will be affected during either the construction or operational phases of the Facility.

17.3.4 Public Amenities

Punchestown Racecourse runs along the western and northern boundaries of the Application Site (Figure 1.3). This public amenity is used for horse racing, concerts, trade shows and for recreational walking by the general public. The surrounding road network is also used by the general public for recreational walking. There are also some historical features such as Tipperkevin Church, St Kevin's Pilgrimage Route, Punchestown Stones, and St. Kevin's Holy Well all located within a 2 km radius of the Application Site.

17.4 Impacts

The impacts of the Application Site are discussed below with regard to material assets.

17.4.1 Land Resources

The lands associated with the restoration are in the ownership of the Cemex (ROI) Ltd. As stated previously these lands are designated for restoration under the current Kildare County Development Plan. The proposed restoration plan will therefore be fulfilling an obligation on the Applicant. The proposed restoration plan will have both positive and negative impacts which are stated below.

Positive Impact / Mitigation

There are many positive impacts associated with the proposed restoration plan which include the restoration of the lands to its former Eastern Kildare Uplands Transition character, thus blending the Site into the natural surrounding landscape.

Negative Impacts

The restoration work will involve the cutting and filling of areas, construction of cells and clay liners to accept processed inert material. This will have an impact over the course of the construction and operational phase which is expected to last approximately 15 years (includes 2 years for landscaping post-closure).

17.4.2 Road Network and Access

Levels of traffic associated with the Application are expected to be in the region of 95 loads per day (Section 9.3.1 and Appendix 4). These vehicle movements are consistent with the

levels of traffic movements during extraction and processing at the Facility prior to ceasing of extraction (Permission Ref. No. 96/100).

Positive Impacts / Mitigation

The restoration activities will last for a period of 13 years; after 15 years the development will be complete (includes 2 years for landscaping post-closure). Following this, the permanent positive impact is the returning of the lands to their former Kildare Eastern Uplands (transition) landscape character.

Negative Impacts

The restoration plan will result in continued traffic movements on the surrounding road network particularly in HGV traffic entering and leaving the Application Site. This is expected to last for approximately 15 years which is the time estimated for the completion of the project. A detailed Traffic and Transport Assessment is included in Appendix 4, which sets out mitigation measures for any impacts on continued traffic volumes, including those generated from adjoining developments.

17.4.3 Public Utilities

It is not expected that the Application Site will have a negative effect on the public utilities in the area. As the Application Site already has existing utilities, it will not require further connections.

17.4.4 Public Amenities

The restoration of the Application Site will have both positive and negative impacts on the public amenities in the area which are discussed in the headings below.

Positive Impacts / Mitigation

The restored area will incorporate a public walk way along the perimeter of the Site which will be an extension of the Pilgrim's Walk, understood to have originally linked Tipperkevin to Glendalough (as required by Specific Objective for pit No. 9 of the County Development Plan). This feature will provide a link from the public walkway around the restored area to the Punchestown Racecourse, which is commonly used by local residents for daily walks. Another aim of the restoration plan is to increase habitat diversity in the area. The proposed restoration plan will also improve the view of the Application Site from Punchestown Racecourse which attracts thousands of people every year to various events.

The majority of vehicle movements associated with the restoration of the Application Site will travel along the Local Road L6042 with some movements being associated with other local roads in the area. It is noted however that traffic movements will be maintained at historical levels associated with the most recent planning permission for the Site (96/100).

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