

INTRODUCTION

7.1 This chapter describes the general methodology, process and procedures that have been followed in preparing the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It also outlines the main elements of the consultation process undertaken as part of the EIA process.

CONSULTATION

7.2 Throughout the EIA process and the production of the ES the applicant has undertaken consultation with various bodies, key stakeholders and members of the public.

7.3 A scoping opinion on the issues to be addressed in an assessment of the proposals was initially issued by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in February 2006. However, due to the lapse in time since that opinion was issued, changes made to the proposal and the changes in site assessment data, policy, guidance and environmental permitting procedures, a revised scoping report was produced on behalf of the applicant and submitted with a request for a revised scoping opinion from GCC. A revised opinion was issued by GCC in December 2008.

7.4 Since this time the MRF has been included in the proposals. The applicant and assessment team have given consideration to the implications this change has in respect of the 2008 scoping opinion. Previously the MRF was to be applied for separately and taken into account in the assessment in terms of cumulative impacts. As a result, making the MRF part of the proposal is considered to have no implications for the overall conclusions of the assessment, it simply affects the way they are arrived at. Neither does it change the scope of the matters that have to be taken into account. On this basis the assessment team have taken the view that in preparing the ES it is reasonable to continue to take account of the 2008 scoping opinion.

7.5 In addition to the scoping process, technical consultations and discussions have been held with various bodies during the pre application process. Such consultation has been undertaken with Environmental Health Officers, the Environment Agency, the County Ecologist and Gloucestershire Highways. GCC have been consulted throughout the pre application process.

7.6 A public exhibition was also held at the end of January 2009, where members of the public and interested parties were invited to discuss and comment on the draft

proposals together with a tour of the site and its operations. The outcomes from these exhibitions have been taken into account in the development of the final proposals.

7.7 In addition to the public exhibition, Grundon have maintained dialogue with the public and key stakeholders through attendance at the Wingmoor Liaison Forum and through publication of a newsletter to keep residents informed of operations and future proposals for the site. Full details of the exhibition and community liaison meetings undertaken are provided in the Statement of Community Involvement accompanying the planning application. The assessment chapters of the ES explain in further detail the consultation that has been undertaken in respect of specific topic areas.

OUTLINE OF THE CONTENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

7.8 The scoping exercise and consultation identified the following areas requiring assessment due to the potential for likely significant effects on the environment, as a result of the proposal:

- Landscape
- Traffic and Transport
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Hydrogeology and Hydrology
- Health
- Ecology
- Archaeology
- Recreation, Sustainability, Climate Change, Agriculture and Waste

7.9 The information contained within the ES includes that which is required to be provided by Annex IV of the 1997 Directive, which is also set out in Schedule 4 of the Town & Country Planning 1999 EIA Regulations as amended. In summary this information is:

- a description of the proposals being assessed, including information on site, design and size;
- an outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant;
- a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
- a description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment;
- a description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant effects on the environment; and

- an indication of any difficulties in compiling the required information.

7.10 A non technical summary of the above information has also been produced as required by Schedule 4. In setting out this information the ES has been structured in the following manner.

7.11 Chapters 1-7

These chapters contain information of the EIA process; a description of the site and its surroundings; a description of the proposals including details on the operational phases and process for restoration; the policy context for the proposals; the need for the proposals and an outline of the main alternatives studied.

7.12 Chapters 8 - 16

These chapters provide a topic based description of baseline conditions, the identification of potentially significant environmental effects, a description of mitigation measures that will seek to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant impacts and an assessment of effects.

PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

7.13 The ES has been prepared on the applicant's (Grundon) behalf by Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd, chartered town planners and registered assessor members of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, with the assistance of the EIA team as detailed below. The topic assessment chapters are based upon the assessments carried out by the relevant indicated specialist consultants.

- Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd: Need, alternatives, policy context, site description, recreation, ES management and ES production.
- David Jarvis Associates: Landscape and visual
- Peter Brett Associates: Traffic and transport
- Walker Beak Mason: Noise
- Enviro: Air Quality and health
- SLR Consulting Ltd: Ecology, hydrogeology and hydrology
- WA Heritage: Archaeology and heritage

7.14 In addition to the above team Grundon themselves have provided input into the assessment process in respect of defining the proposals and providing technical information on landfill and extraction operations.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

7.15 To ensure consistency between and within specialist topic chapters, where possible a common assessment methodology has been used. This is outlined in further detail below. However, where specific assessment topics have relevant standards, guidelines or practices these have been used.

7.16 The degree of residual impact significance has generally been defined throughout the ES according to a four-point scale of insignificant, minor significance, moderate significance or major significance. Determining the significance of impacts in accordance with this scale has generally involved consideration of the following factors.

i. Sensitivity of the Receiving Environment – This is a measure of the adaptability and resilience of an environment when affected by an impact, and is categorised as either of high, medium or low sensitivity.

ii. Magnitude of the Impact - This is the scale of change which the impact causes compared to the baseline and how this change relates to accepted limits and standards. Magnitude is categorized as either high, medium or low.

iii. Frequency of the Impact - This is the duration of the impact compared to the activity causing it and is categorised as either infrequent, frequent or continuous.

iv. Spatial Extent of the Impact - This relates to the geographical area that the impact may affect and is categorised as either local / immediate, regional, or national / international.

v. Timescale of the Impact - This is the duration of the impact irrespective of the activity causing it and is categorised as either temporary short term, temporary medium term, temporary long term or permanent.

7.17 In addition to using the same assessment methodology wherever possible, each of the assessment chapters has sought to report the findings of the assessment using common headings.

Defining the receiving environment

7.18 An important aspect of the assessment of environmental effects is the identification of the environment which will receive the effects generated by the development, often referred to as the baseline position or the existing environment. Generally in environmental

assessments this is relatively straightforward as consideration is being given to the construction of a development proposal not yet in existence. However, in respect of these proposals the definition of the receiving environment is not as straightforward.

7.19 The operations and activities which currently occur on the site and which help define the character of the existing environment do not have planning consent to continue beyond 12 May 2009. There is therefore the notional scenario that the receiving environment against which effects should be considered from future development is with the site closed on 13 May 2009 with no further operations taking place.

7.20 However, this notional scenario, subsequently referred to as the ‘do nothing’ scenario, is not a tenable position. Grundon are not able to simply close the site and stop work on 12 May as it would leave the site in a state where it did not comply with relevant Environmental Permit conditions with uncontrolled gas generation issues, unmanaged leachate issues, unmanaged surface water issues and potentially unstable slopes. Grundon would be required by the Environment Agency, likely under the threat of an enforcement notice, to take such actions as the Agency considered necessary to comply with the Environmental Permit conditions and to leave the site in a safe and suitably managed state.

7.21 Consideration has therefore been given to the likely reasonable actions which would be required to enable the site to be shut down in a safe and suitably managed state to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency. Such necessary actions would result in works being required on site which would in their own right require planning permission and environmental assessment.

7.22 The works required to leave the site safe and suitably managed, therefore represents a situation that would likely occur in the future in the absence of the proposals. This scenario is subsequently referred to as the ‘Minimum Engineered Scheme’ scenario which is described in further detail below.

7.23 The approach that has been taken in respect of the assessment reported in this ES is therefore to consider the effects of the proposals in the context of both:

- (i) the do-nothing scenario, and
- (ii) the Minimum Engineered Scheme scenario.

The Minimum Engineered Scheme

7.24 In order to undertake the assessment along the lines outlined in the preceding paragraphs it was necessary to define in sufficient detail the works that would realistically occur on site in the absence of the proposals. These works, subsequently referred to as the Minimum Engineered Scheme, are explained in further detail below and have been drawn up by SLR Consulting Ltd and Grundon using their collective knowledge and expertise of the approach that would likely be taken by the Environment Agency in this situation having regard to the requirements of relevant legislation.

7.25 In order to leave the site in a safe and suitably managed state it would be necessary to:

- engineer the cap and liner of the site to the minimum requirements of the Landfill Regulations 2002;
- provide conditions for the prevention of pollution of soil, groundwater and surface water;
- ensure the effective control of leachate;
- control surface water and prevent flooding;
- provide appropriate measures to collect landfill gases, to use this where possible and keep flare to a minimum, and
- ensure stability and avoid slippages.

7.26 How a scheme meeting the above requirements would physically translate on the site is shown on Figure 7.1. This is an indicative demonstration of what would likely be required and has not been subject to the amount of detail design and consideration that has been given to the proposals. For example, if such a scheme were to be taken forward the suggested retaining slopes may need to be slackened for surface water management purposes and the prevention of erosion. Consideration would also be needed in respect of its visual appearance. Such further amendments would require additional material to be brought onto the site with corresponding geographical and temporal scope implications.

7.27 What is shown on Figure 7.1 is therefore a minimum engineering solution that meets the requirements set out above, hence the subsequent reference to this being the Minimum Engineered Scheme.

7.28 The Minimum Engineered Scheme would involve the completion of landfill activity in the current operational non-hazardous and hazardous waste cells, the levelling of the site to enable surface water to be managed, and the creation of suitably engineered slopes to the completed landfill cells. The creation of this Minimum Engineered Scheme would itself require the importation of approximately 1,587,000m³ of material, of which approximately 980,000m³ would be non hazardous waste and approximately 607,000m³ would be hazardous waste.

7.29 It is estimated that the Minimum Engineered Scheme would itself take in the order of 9 to 10 years to complete. This is due to a combination of factors including the time it would take to bring the amount of waste into the site, in particular the hazardous waste, and the way in which the scheme would have to be carried out. For example, to provide continued access to the hazardous waste landfill cells over the time frame envisaged would mean that parts of the scheme in the non-hazardous waste landfill area could not be completed until the hazardous waste landfill elements had been completed.

7.30 As part of the Minimum Engineered Scheme it is assumed that the MRF would be operational as this is considered to be the most sustainable and socially acceptable course of action.

7.31 Chapter 6 has explained the consideration given to alternative solutions. This has included an analysis of the Minimum Engineered Scheme and an explanation as to why it is not an alternative to the proposals. Even if the Minimum Engineered Scheme were to be put forward as a serious suggestion a further matter is the acceptance of liability for such a scheme once completed. Grundon have indicated that they would be unlikely to accept the liability for such a scheme as it is on the limit of landfill engineering.

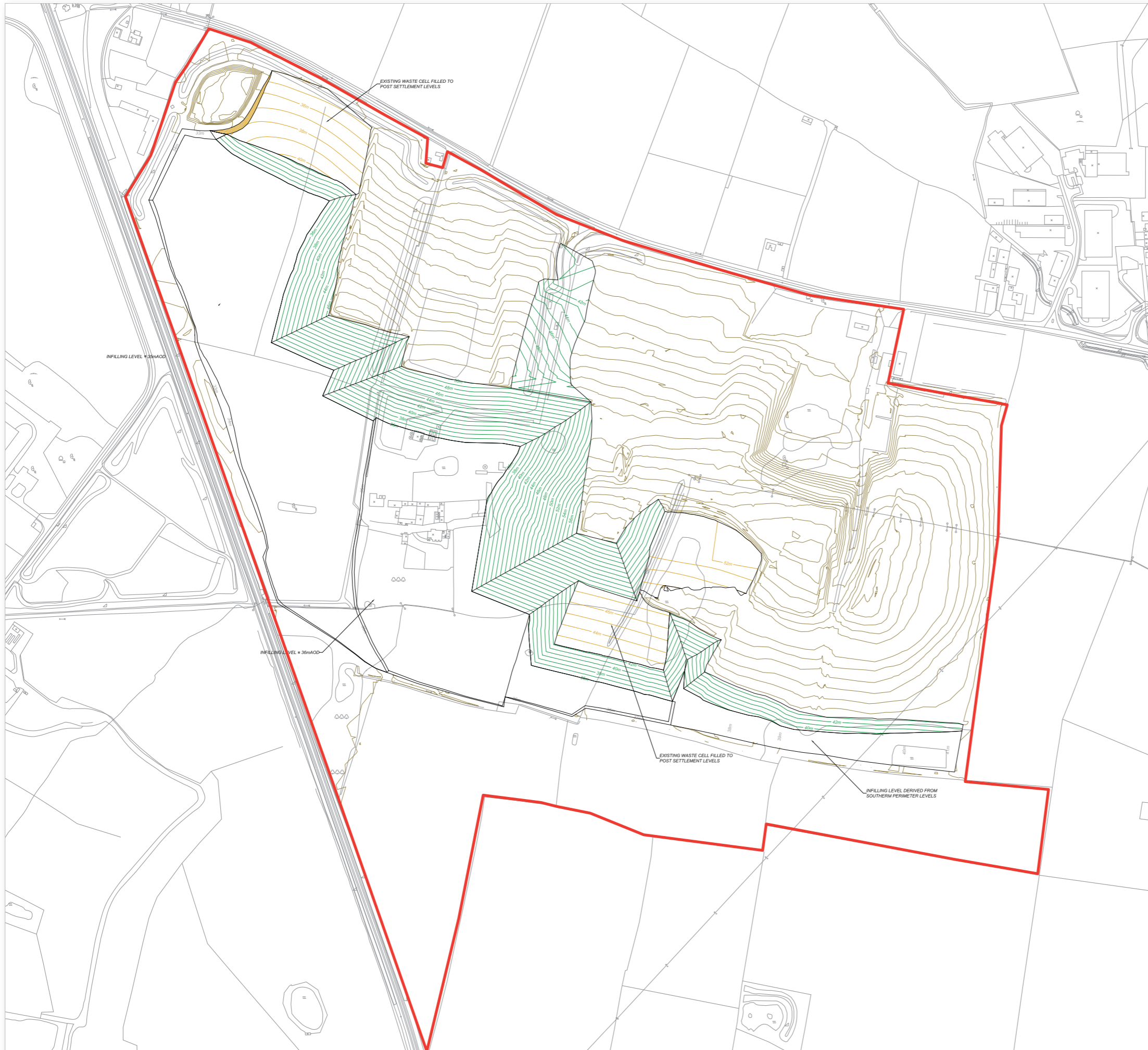


Figure 7.1 : Minimum Engineered Scheme (indicative)

- Planning application area
- Topographic survey level contours
- 30m Proposed waste cell infilling level contours
- 30m Proposed inert infilling level contours
- 30m Proposed waste cell sealing batter level contours



Source: SLR

Scale: 1:5000

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