

Figure 1.1 : Area Location and Context

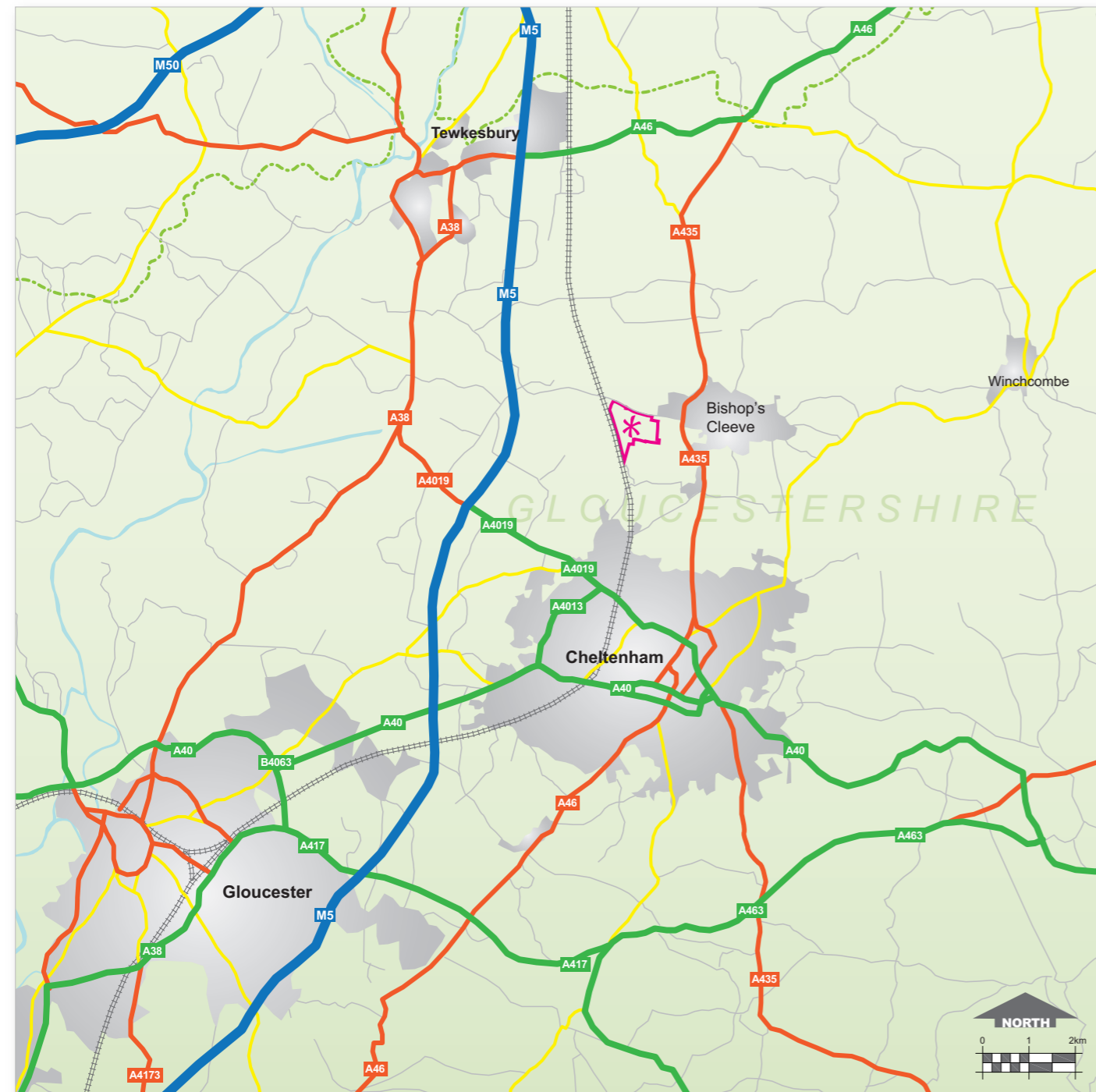
* Application Site



Source: Adams Hendry

Scale: Diagrammatic Not to Scale

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1.1 Grundon Waste Management Ltd (subsequently referred to as Grundon) is applying for planning permission to continue to extract minerals, import waste and undertake restoration activity at its current operational site at Wingmoor Farm, west of Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucestershire. The proposals will result in the site being restored to a similar profile to that which was previously granted planning permission and for it to be put to agricultural use with areas set aside for landscape and nature conservation purposes.

1.2 This document, together with the separately bound Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is the Environmental Statement (ES) that accompanies Grundon's planning application. It contains the information reasonably required to assess.

1.3 The proposals are located within the borough of Tewkesbury in the administrative county of Gloucestershire. The planning application has been submitted to Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) who, as the Waste Planning Authority, is the relevant determining authority.

THE APPLICANT

1.4 Grundon is one of the UK's leading suppliers of integrated waste management solutions. Operating from sites across the south of England, Grundon's non-hazardous waste management operations include recycling collections, waste removal services, waste disposal services, special events services and contract management. Hazardous waste management services include contaminated waste, clinical / medical waste disposal and the collection and treatment of waste electrical and electronic equipment. Grundon also provides waste minimisation consultancy advice and is involved in developing technological solutions to industrial waste problems. In addition, Grundon also has expertise in respect of the extraction, processing and supply of minerals and the restoration of mineral sites.

1.5 Grundon was founded in 1929 and is the largest privately owned waste management group in the UK.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND HISTORY OF THE SITE

1.6 The location and boundary of the site of the proposals, which is solely owned by Grundon and is subsequently referred to as either the application site or Wingmoor Farm East, is shown on Figures 1.1 and 1.2.



Figure 1.2 : Site Location Plan

 Planning application area

 Ownership area



Source. Adams Hendry

Scale. 1:25 000

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The site covers an area of approximately 78.65 hectares and is located approximately 200m to the west of residential properties in the village of Bishop's Cleeve and 2.5km to the north of Cheltenham.

1.7 The application site has a long established history as both a mineral extraction and waste facility, which is explained in detail in Chapter 2. The site historically operated as two separate sites, with the earliest planning permissions for mineral extraction on the eastern part of the site dating from the 1960s. Since that time, a period of over 40 years, the site as a whole has helped meet the minerals and waste needs of Gloucestershire, the South West Region and areas beyond.

1.8 In 1996 GCC granted planning permission for the proposed landform (Ref: 95/8446/1099 – the 1996 consent) that effectively combined the two operations on the site by consenting the creation of a single restored landform which required the continued extraction and export of minerals and the importation of waste. Since 1996, sand, gravel and clay extraction, waste importation and restoration works have proceeded in a coordinated manner in accordance with this permission. Grundon operates the site, and current operations permitted by the 1996 permission are carried out under the terms of a number of Environmental Permits granted by the Environment Agency under The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007.

1.9 The 1996 consent was the subject of a number of conditions. The second of these conditions requires the activities permitted in 1996 to cease by 12 May 2009.

1.10 Chapter 5 explains in further detail the background to how the May 2009 cessation date came to be a condition of the 1996 permission. This demonstrates that the cessation date was effectively carried forward from previous permissions without necessary consideration having been given to the timescale implications of allowing operations on site to be altered.

1.11 Whilst a significant part of the site has already been restored (over 40%), by 12 May 2009 the mineral resources on the site will not have been fully extracted and neither will the permitted restoration of the site be completed. The reasons for this are complex, however, fundamentally it is one relating to the timescale for the development set in 1996 and the amount of waste available to fill the resulting void not being as high as envisaged at that time.

1.12 It is therefore necessary for Grundon to obtain a further planning permission to continue the mineral

extraction and waste disposal and recovery operations at Wingmoor Farm beyond the May 2009 cessation date. The need for the proposals is set out in chapter 5. The planning application supported by this ES is the application which seeks this new consent

THE PROPOSALS

1.13 A detailed description of the proposals is found in chapter 3. In summary, they comprise of:

- *The continued extraction of sand, gravel and clay.* There is estimated to be approximately 40,000 tonnes (or 24,000m³) of sand and gravel remaining to be extracted from the site. Alongside the continuing extraction operation it is proposed to continue the operation of the existing sand and gravel processing plant until all of the site derived reserves have been exhausted. The continued extraction of approximately 1,350,000m³ clay from the site is also proposed, of which approximately 432,000m³ will be exported, with the remainder used for engineering and capping of the site's landfill cells.

- *The continued restoration of land to the previously approved profile.* It is proposed that the site is restored to the contours fundamentally the same as those approved in 1996. This will require the continued importation of non-hazardous and hazardous waste. The voidspace that remains at the site for non-hazardous landfill is approximately 2,945,000m³. The voidspace that remains at the site for hazardous landfill is approximately 1,287,000m³.

- *The continued operation of the waste treatment facility.* This facility was permitted in 1994 (Planning Permission Ref: 94/8446/0992/FUL) and is used to treat incoming waste prior to landfilling. The facility is proposed to continue in operation whilst the hazardous landfill is active and then removed upon completion of hazardous landfill operations. The site of the facility would then be restored in accordance with the restoration scheme.

The ongoing operation of the Materials Recovery Facility.

- Consent is also sought to extend the operation of a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) currently situated at the eastern access to the site. The MRF was constructed as a result of two previous consents but currently no longer has permission to be operated.

- *Continued use of and amendments to the landfill gas control system and associated landfill gas engines.* Consent is sought to replace the existing gas engine with a larger capacity generator to make the most efficient use of the landfill gas generated at the site.

- *Installation and use of new ancillary infrastructure and continued use of existing ancillary infrastructure.* Such infrastructure includes facilities such as weighbridges, leachate treatment plant and office and mess facilities required for the operation and restoration of the site.

OTHER CONSENTS REQUIRED

1.14 The current Environmental Permits issued by the Environment Agency to actively manage and regulate the waste operations on site will, if planning permission to continue operations on site is obtained, continue to have effect.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND THE PLANNING APPLICATION

1.15 The statutory requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) comes from Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directive 97/11/EC and Article 3 of Directive 2003/35/EC), which has been implemented into UK law for present purposes through the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended) – subsequently referred to as the EIA Regulations.

1.16 GCC has indicated that in its view the proposals fall within the description of projects found in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations, for which EIA is mandatory. EIA is a process defined in Government Circular 02/99 'Environmental Impact Assessment' as:

"a means of drawing together, in a systematic way, an assessment of a project's likely significant environmental effects. This helps to ensure that the importance of the predicted effects, and the scope for reducing them, are properly understood by the public and the relevant competent authority before it makes its decision." (paragraph 9)

1.17 This document forms the ES and draws together and reports the findings of the EIA process. This ES has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations and accords with best practice guidance on EIA produced by Government departments and other bodies such as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).

1.18 The ES is provided as a single volume and is accompanied by a separate non-technical summary (NTS) of the information contained within the ES.

Copies of the NTS are available free of charge from Grundon or are available on the website www.grundon.com. Copies of the ES are also available at a reasonable cost to reflect the printing and distribution costs from Grundon Waste Management, Grange Lane, Beenham, Berkshire, RG7 5PY.

Approach to the assessment

1.19 Generally in environmental assessments, defining the environment which will receive the effects generated by a development is relatively straightforward. However, in respect of these proposals it is not so straightforward.

1.20 The operations and activities which currently occur on the Wingmoor Farm 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 scenario that the receiving environment against which effects should be considered from future development, is with the site closed on 13 May 2009 and no further operations taking place – i.e. the 'do nothing' scenario.

1.21 However this 'do nothing' scenario is not considered to be a realistic proposition. Grundon is not able to simply close the site and stop work, as it would leave the site in a state where it did not comply with relevant Environmental Permit conditions with uncontrolled gas generation, unmanaged leachate production, unmanaged surface water and potentially unstable slopes. Grundon would be required by the Environment Agency, to take such actions as the Agency considered necessary to comply with the Permit conditions and to leave the site in a safe and suitably managed state.

1.22 The actions required by the Agency are likely to require continued operations at the site to construct a landform that will meet the relevant Environmental Permit conditions, and suitably manage the site for the future. A minimum engineered scheme (MES) has therefore been developed as a scenario to meet these requirements. This MES is discussed in detail in chapter 7 of this ES.

1.23 The approach which has been taken in respect of the assessment reported in this ES is therefore to consider the effects of the proposals for which permission is sought in the context of (i) the notional do-nothing scenario, and then (ii) the minimum engineered scheme scenario.

