

2.0 THE SITE

Introduction

- 2.1 Schedule 4 of the 1999 Regulations provides that an Environmental Statement (ES) should include a description of the site.
- 2.2 This section describes the existing physical and environmental characteristics of the application site and its surrounding environs. Allied to this, other sections within the ES provide descriptions of the application site in relation to particular environmental topics, providing *inter alia* “baseline” surveys. In this respect, Sections 6 and 7 describes the geological and water environments respectively, whilst the local highway network is described in Section 11. Landscape character and topography is set out in Section 12 and Section 13 considers the ecological interests within and surrounding the application site. Finally, interests of cultural heritage are set out in Section 14.
- 2.3 These existing conditions provide a base against which the effects of the proposals may be evaluated.

Location

- 2.4 The application site is located around 18km north of Nottingham, 9km south-west of the centre of Mansfield, and some 2km south-west of Kirkby in Ashfield, within the administrative areas of the District of Ashfield and the County of Nottinghamshire. More specifically, it is situated between the settlements of Selston to the west and Annesley Woodhouse/Kirkby Woodhouse to the east, with the B6018 Park Lane lying to the north and Salmon Lane to the south. Between the site and the settlement of Selston is the M1 Motorway, Junction 27 of which lies some 2km to the south.
- 2.5 For identification purposes, the application site is centred on National Grid Reference SK 481 539 (to centre of the Tip) and is shown on Drawing BC 2/1, being an extract from the OS 1:25,000 scale Explorer Sheet.

Site Description and Setting

- 2.6 The application site extends to some 152 ha, and comprises the former Bentinck Tip situated to the south of Park Lane, the Bentinck Void, located to the north of Salmon Lane and a strip of land lying adjacent to the M1 within which the proposed access road would be constructed. The Void itself comprises some 26 ha, whilst the Tip and access road comprise 88ha and 12.5 ha respectively. The remainder of the application site comprises marginal areas which would largely be undeveloped, save for peripheral planting works. Of the 88 ha associated with the Tip, around 50 ha comprise unrestored slurry lagoons and exposed colliery waste. The remaining areas of the application site comprise peripheral parcels of land which would not

be developed, save for the proposed landscaping works to provide the transition between the reclamation works and the surrounding landscape.

- 2.7 The Tip area comprises a series of settlement lagoons located within a plateau at an elevation of between 145m AOD (along the northern edge of the Tip) and 155m AOD (along the southern edge): the levels of the lagoon surfaces are generally in the order of 150mAOD. Three of the lagoons, situated on the western half of the site, are in varying stages of dryness. The eastern half of the site comprises a capped lagoon. From the northern edge of the Tip, the levels fall away towards Park Lane, which is at an elevation of around 120m AOD. The majority of the northern and western slopes of the Tip have been restored to large pasture fields without dividing hedgerows.
- 2.8 In contrast, the topography falls away more steeply from the southern edge of the Tip. The upper reaches of the southern flank are predominantly exposed colliery shale, whilst land adjacent to the central and eastern parts of the southern boundary comprise naturally re-vegetating slopes of the former opencast workings within the Bentinck Void.
- 2.9 To the south of the Tip is a small plateau at an elevation of around 130m AOD and measuring some 120m by 80m. This area is some 300m from the nearest properties, and generally 700m from the edge of Kirkby Woodhouse. Within this area are located three small settlement lagoons. Immediately to the west of this area is a restored section of the former open cast coal operation.
- 2.10 Finally, the southern part of the application site is the Bentinck Void, which was created through the opencast extraction of coal. The Void lies in a depression between the M1 motorway, Annesley Woodhouse, Kirkby Woodhouse, and the former colliery Tip. The slopes of the Bentinck Void have re-vegetated through natural recolonisation. The northern slopes of the Bentinck Void merge into the Tip, the upper reaches of which remain as exposed colliery shale. Water has collected within the base of the excavation to depths of between 2m and 9.6m. To the west of the Bentinck Void lies a further area of former opencast working, which has been backfilled with overburden and waste material from the excavation of coal. A soil storage mound has been placed on this area.
- 2.11 The slopes of the Void rise above the waterbody at gradients of between 1:3 and 1:6 to about 160 m AOD in the south-west corner, and between 130m AOD and 160m AOD along the south-east to north-east boundary of the site extending towards Kirkby Woodhouse. Within the Void are a series of soil storage mounds between 5m and 20m high, particularly to the south of the site. There is also a screen mound surrounding the properties known as Suvla Bay and Boggs Farm, off Salmon Lane.
- 2.12 Along the proposed access road the land rises from about 140mAOD at Salmon Lane to about 180mAOD at its southern extent. It rises relatively quickly to the south east of Two Dale Farm and levels off towards the A608.

Access and Public Rights of Way

- 2.13 Access to the colliery tip is currently gained via the B6018 Park Lane, which lies to the north of the application site, and runs in a general north-east to south-west fashion between Kirkby in Ashfield and Selston respectively.
- 2.14 In connection with the development proposals, a new private access road would be constructed across farmland linking the application site with the A608 adjacent to Junction 27 of the M1. The line of this access road is shown on Drawing BC 2/2. It is proposed that all vehicles visiting the site, would access the application site via this new road: no vehicles would use Salmon Lane and only in cases of emergency would the access off Park Lane be used.
- 2.15 A public footpath runs from the A608 east of Junction 27, northwards to cross the M1 via an overbridge, and would be crossed by the new access road into the proposed Bentinck Site. A further public footpath has been diverted around the southern and eastern periphery of the Void.
- 2.16 Section 11 provides a more detailed account of the existing highway and rights of way infrastructure in the vicinity of the application site.

The Surrounding Area

- 2.17 The application site is set in a semi rural area within the Nottinghamshire Coal Field, to the north of the city of Nottingham. The coalfield area is characterised by a densely populated area with numerous small to medium sized settlements. The settlements are frequently linked by ribbon development along the main local road network, with urban sprawl blurring clear definition of the boundary of settlements. This is especially so to the east of the application site, with the settlements of Annesley Woodhouse, Annesley and Kirkby Woodhouse tending to merge into one urban area.

Topography and Landscape Character

- 2.18 The broader environment of the application site is characterised by undulating valleys and spurs and relatively small areas of limestone upland forming flatter areas of contrast. Locally levels reach circa 175m AOD in the vicinity of Castle Hill, Kirkby in Ashfield with a similar level for Rise Hill at Annesley Woodhouse. These levels provide a remarkably consistent feature of the highest points in the local landscape. Levels in the vicinity of localised valley bottoms are typically around 100m AOD.
- 2.19 Annesley Woodhouse and Kirkby Woodhouse straddle a ridgeline to the east of the site. The large majority of houses in these two settlements are over the brow of the hill and therefore out of sight of the Void.
- 2.20 South of Salmon Lane, there is a short (2km long) valley through which the Cuttail Brook runs. At the head of the valley is Sherwood Park, Annesley

Hall and the A608 which runs from Junction 27 of the M1 to Kirkby in Ashfield.

- 2.21 The land rises naturally to the west of the site, with the M1 motorway in deep cutting. Alongside the proposed access road near Two Dale Farm, however, it rises many metres above the surrounding land on an embankment. As the land rises to the south near Junction 27, the motorway correspondingly falls back into a cutting, with the junction itself and its slip roads elevated above the main carriageway.
- 2.22 Section 12 provides a more detailed account of the topography and landscape character of the area surrounding the application site.

Land Use

- 2.23 Land uses within the application site fall broadly into three categories. Firstly former “operational land” associated with the Annesley Bentinck Mine. This part of the application site currently has planning permission for, and has been subject to, opencast coal mining and subsequent deposition of colliery spoil to varying degrees. It includes the whole of the Bentinck Tip and Void (which forms the majority of the application site); a temporary pool at the bottom of the Void and four former settlement ponds above it. It also includes large areas which were also predominantly subject to opencast mining and subsequently backfilled, but which now hold large topsoil and subsoil mounds set aside for site restoration. Although some of this area is grassed and grazed by cattle, it is only being temporarily used for farming purposes and will need to be re-excavated to complete site restoration whether this application goes ahead or not. Landfill operations would take place within this area of operational land.
- 2.24 A large belt of land between the Void and the built up area to the east of the site is also within the area which has the benefit of planning permission and which was formerly subject to opencast mining. It has now been successfully restored to agricultural use (grazing for cattle) and woodland, in conformity with the terms of the planning permission. This area would remain untouched by proposed site operations.
- 2.25 Farmland comprises the remainder of the application site south of Salmon Lane. Following temporary use as the access road to the site, this would be restored to agriculture.
- 2.26 The land uses of the area surrounding the application site generally comprise:
- Urban areas, principally Annesley Woodhouse, Kirkby Woodhouse, Selston Common and Selston
 - Industrial and commercial uses associated with Sherwood Park business park (Enterprise Zone)
 - Transportation links and corridors

- Woodlands and other protected ecological areas (Boggs Farm Quarry and Annesley Quarry SSSIs).
- 2.27 There is no Common Land within the application site. Current planning permissions are described in Section 4 of this ES.
- 2.28 Section 15 provides further details of the land uses in the vicinity of the application site, together with an assessment of the potential impacts the proposed development may impose upon them.

The Built Environment

- 2.29 The built environment is evident in the form of the nearby urban areas, such as Annesley Woodhouse and Kirkby Woodhouse to the east, and Selston and Pinxton to the west, together with a few isolated dwellings (in the form of farmsteads), and an established network of villages, public highways, railway lines and overhead electricity transmission lines.
- 2.30 The closest dwellings to the application site are situated on Salmon Lane to the south (Boggs Farm, Suvla Bay and Lee Dale), together with an individual farm (Kirkby Park Farm), located adjacent to the M1, and Croft Cottage, located on the western fringe of Kirkby Woodhouse, to the east of the Void. Whilst lying adjacent to the application site boundary, they are generally between 160m and 530m from the proposed landfill operations within the Void, and between 300m and 610m from the compost maturation operations. The closest property, Boggs Farm, is owned by Viridor Waste Management Limited and currently let on a tenancy. In connection with the reclamation of the Tip, Kirkby Park's Farm would be the closest receptor, approximately 120m from the closest operations on the western edge of the Tip.
- 2.31 Properties in Selston are within 400m of the proposed reclamation works, and a minimum distance of around 550m to the proposed compost maturation facility and 650m from proposed landfill operations. They are physically separated by virtue of the M1 motorway. Properties on the edge of Annesley/Kirkby Woodhouse, to the east of the application site, are a minimum of 380m from the edge of proposed landfill operations. Tables 8/7 and 8/9 in Section 8 (Air Quality) provides a more detailed account of the nearest properties to the application site.
- 2.32 Linking the settlements is an established network of roads. The major road in the vicinity of the site is the M1 motorway, which provides a convenient link to the north and south. Between these motorways is a network of 'A' class roads, which, in the vicinity of the application site include the A608, A38, A611 and A60. Finally, linking the principal road network with the various settlements and other developments are a matrix of 'B' and 'C' class roads.
- 2.33 In addition to the road infrastructure, canal and rail developments are evident in the area surrounding the application site. In particular, a branch

railway line lies to the north of the application site, crossing the B6018 Park Lane.

- 2.34 Finally, industrial developments are evident in the area, with the former colliery and a sewage treatment works to the north of the application site, and a business park to the south, adjacent to Junction 27 of the M1.

Utilities and Services

- 2.35 A search of all utilities and services present within the application site was carried out in connection with the 1997 planning application. All information that has been provided is shown on Figure 2.5 of the 1997 ES. Information was supplied by the following organisations:

- Ashfield District Council Technical Services Department – public sewers
- British Gas Transco – gas pipelines and installations
- British Pipelines Agency – non-gas carrying pipelines
- British Telecom – telecommunications
- Diamond Cable – telecommunications
- East Midlands Electricity – overhead power lines, underground cables and other installations
- National Grid Co Plc – major power lines and other installations
- Severn Trent Water Limited – water mains.

- 2.36 Information supplied revealed that there are no sewers, National Grid power lines or British Pipelines Agency installations in or around the application site. However, the following summarises the main services and utilities that are found within the site and have been taken into account in the design of the proposal, and will also need to be considered in the implementation of any approved works:

- Electricity: There are overhead wires strung between pylons and poles running between the Void and Kirkby Woodhouse. These cross the motorway and run towards Selston with the electricity wires on poles crossing and re-crossing Salmon Lane. Both have wayleave consent where they cross the application site.
- Gas: The Felley Gas Compound lies alongside the motorway north of junction 27. It is connected to the Selston-Glapwell high pressure gas main between the Compound and Two Dales Farm. The Summercotes to Popplewick Killingholme main also passes through the Compound from east to west across the proposed access road.
- Water: A trunk main and two distribution pipelines run along Salmon Lane, with further mains running along Park Lane and major roads in Kirkby Woodhouse.
- Telecommunications: A pole and wire aerial telephone cable runs along Salmon Lane.
- Cable: A fibre optic cable runs along Salmon Lane.
- Sewers: There are no sewers within the site.