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INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As set out in Chapter 1, Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations requires that an ES should include a description of the Site.
- 2.2 This Chapter summarises the existing characteristics of the Site and its surroundings. More detailed baseline descriptions are provided within the individual ES chapters, notably Chapter 06 describes the highway network and Chapter 09 describes the landscape character, with Chapters 10 describing the ecological interests respectively.
- 2.3 These existing conditions provide a baseline against which the effects of the proposals may be evaluated.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.4 The Site comprises an area of approximately 11.8 hectares.
- 2.5 For identification purposes, the Site is centred on National Grid Reference **SU784 595** and edged red on the plans accompanying this planning application (Volume 1 Appendix B).
- 2.6 The Site itself is located to the north west of Eversley Haulage Park (Ap No:10/02547/CMA) which provides a valuable facility in north Hampshire.



Figure 2-0 Showing Approximate Site Boundary and co-location of Eversley Haulage Park in purple

- 2.7 The applicant operates an existing permanent waste transfer station at Eversley Haulage Park as identified above in Fig 2-0, (App No 10/02547/CMA) which benefits from having the WHRF for onward recycling of the inert waste fraction that is sorted from the Construction & Demolition

SITE DESCRIPTION 2

waste taken. This equates to a large fraction of the waste handled at the transfer station, some 57% of the sorted waste from the transfer station are inert soils & aggregates which are destined for the WHRF.

- 2.8 Both the WHRF and the permanent transfer station operate sustainably and succinctly together and are best placed to do so, being co-located thus minimising road haulage within Hampshire.
- 2.9 The Site is a previously extracted gravel pit (permitted under Application No 0000349CMA and 00/00679/CMA), lower than the surrounding land which currently benefits from temporary planning permission (06/02863/CMA) for the development and operation of a secondary aggregate recycling facility.

Access

- 2.10 Vehicular access to the Site is achieved via an informal priority T-junction arrangement onto Welsh Drive; a private access road that provides connectivity between the Site, the CEMEX Primary Aggregates Quarry Plant and the public highway network at the A327.



Photograph 2-1 Showing A327/Welsh Drive Junction

- 2.11 Immediately opposite the Site access, Welsh Drive bulges to around 35 metres width but narrows almost immediately to a typical width of 9 metres, which is sufficient to enable two goods vehicles to pass side-by-side with ease.



Photograph 2-2 Showing Site Access/Welsh Drive

Topography

- 2.12 The Site is situated at a lower level than the surrounding land as a result of the historic gravel extraction.
- 2.13 Levels from the tree belt located to the east; situated at the original ground level, fall steeply towards the interior of the site. Levels also fall from the western boundary and there is an overall gradual fall across the site from the west to east. Levels from the northern and southern boundaries also fall towards the interior of the Site.
- 2.14 The ground levels at the boundary of the Site are approximately 94m AOD falling to a low point approximately 91m AOD within the Site.

Hydrological

- 2.15 The River Blackwater is located approximately 2.5km to the north of the Site.
- 2.16 The River Hart and a tributary of the Blackwater are both located approximately 1.5km to the south-west and east of the Site.
- 2.17 All three rivers in the locale are designated Main River and generally flow in a north-westerly direction.
- 2.18 There is no apparent network of local land drainage ditches located in close proximity to the Site.
- 2.19 There are a number of small water pools and channels located along the eastern and western boundaries of the Site.

	Approximate Site Location		Main Rivers
	Flood Zone 3		Flood Zone 2
	Flood Defences		Areas Benefitting from Flood Defences

Landscape and Visual

- 2.23 The Site is not located within a national landscape designation (National Park or AONB), nor is it located within a local landscape designation.
- 2.24 Vegetation occupies existing bunds to the north-east, north-western and south-eastern perimeters of the Site. Recently established and naturally colonised trees and scrub are present within the southern part of the Site.
- 2.25 Several water bodies and open ditches/drains are also present on Site. A mixed woodland plantation including Scot's Pine is located to the immediate east of the site. Commercial forestry plantations are located beyond the site to the south and beyond land associated with Bramshill Quarry to the west.
- 2.26 Forestry was also present to the east of the Site on land known as Busta Triangle, however, the majority of the stands on Busta Triangle have been clear-felled in advance of mineral extraction which is ongoing. A line of conifers flanks the western (application site) side of the A327 between Cooper's Hill and Welsh Drive.
- 2.27 Deciduous vegetation is present locally e.g. as roadside vegetation and deciduous woodland is present in the local landscape.
- 2.28 Coombes Wood Ancient (Replanted) Woodland is located some 500m to the north-west of the site whilst Great/Alder Copses Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland is some 840m to the north-east.

Residential Receptors

- 2.29 The residential property of Hawkers Lodge is located to the south east of the site. The northern boundary and a significant length of the western boundary of this property are enclosed by a 1.8m high brick wall which limits views of the site from the garden and ground floor rooms.
- 2.30 The first floor of the property includes windows on the northern and western elevations, from where views into the site may be possible. However, these windows are not perpendicular to the site, therefore the site would only be potentially visible from these windows from relatively acute angles. In addition, any such views would be filtered through existing intervening vegetation between the property and the site, further limiting potential visibility.
- 2.31 The pre-application advice from Hampshire County Council states that a residential property named Harewood House is located adjacent to the

northern boundary of the Site. However, field work has established that this property no longer exists.

Landscape Character

- 2.32 Warren Heath Recycling Facility is located within National Landscape Character Area 129 'Thames Basin Heaths' a distinct area of commonly unenclosed heathland and coniferous forestry developed on the acidic soils in the west of the Thames Basin.

Nature Conservation

- 2.33 The Site itself has no statutory or non-statutory designations², it is however within an island of land with no designations surrounded by component sites of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
- 2.34 Within 2km of the site are three SSSIs: Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Commons; Bramshill; and Hazely Heath, which make up part of the SPA. Part of the SPA is also designated as a NNR – Castle Bottom.

SINCS

- 2.35 The Site has no non statutory wildlife site designations.
- 2.36 There are however 17 SINCS within 2km of the site, the nearest, Coombes Wood, being 500m to the north west of the site. A complete list of these sites is provided in the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Report (Volume 2B, Section 10)

Ancient woodland

- 2.37 There are three areas of semi-natural and three area of replanted ancient woodland within 2km of the site (the nearest being Coombes Wood SINC).

Cultural Heritage/Archaeology

- 2.38 No World Heritage Sites are located within 5km of the Site.

Scheduled Monuments

- 2.39 There are no Scheduled Monuments within 500m of the Site.

Listed Buildings

- 2.40 Bramshill Park and Warbrook House, both of which are Grade II* listed and Elvetham Hall which is Grade II listed are located within 10km of the Site.

² A previous planning application for the site referred to the site as being designated at a local level as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, however, this is incorrect: the HBIC and the planning authority have no record of such a designation at the site.

Leisure

- 2.41 There are a number of recreational features in the Yateley area including Yately Common Country Park, Blackwater Valley Golf Centre/Driving Range, and numerous lakes offering fishing and pleasure flights are available at Blackbushe Airport.

SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.42 To the West of the Site is the CEMEX Bramshill (Warren Heath) mineral processing facility with mineral extraction areas and commercial forestry beyond. The Site is bounded to the East by the A327, then Eversley Common, then further mineral workings.
- 2.43 The general area has a long history of disturbance, mineral extraction activities having commenced on the site in the early 1960's. An aggregate recycling facility currently operates on the application site, which contains a significant area of disturbed and unrestored land.
- 2.44 Mineral extraction also forms a component of the wider landscape locally, which also contains significant tracts of forestry plantations on former heathland.
- 2.45 It is fair to say that in general the surrounding landscape is in a state of flux, with forestry being felled for mineral extraction and compensation areas occurring for replanting.