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INTRODUCTION

11.1 This chapter of the ES assesses the potential landscape and visual implications arising through the development of the proposed facility at the application site.

11.2 Chapter 3 above provides a description of the proposed waste treatment facility, which forms the basis against which landscape and visual effects have been determined.

11.3 This chapter is divided into seven main sub-sections:

- General introduction;
- Summary of the methodology;
- Policy considerations;
- Baseline conditions;
- Assessment of impacts;
- Residual impacts; and
- Conclusions.

11.4 Policy considerations include all relevant landscape planning history, policy, guidance and designations. A general overview of the planning policies relevant to the EIA has also been set out in Chapter 4 above.

11.5 The baseline study considers both landscape and visual conditions as follows:

- the landscape baseline study includes a review of all existing landscape character assessments as well as a more detailed assessment of the landscape character of the application site and its context; and
- the visual baseline study includes an assessment of the visibility of the existing site and the selection of representative viewpoints.

11.6 The assessment of impacts includes a study of the development proposal; potential landscape and visual characteristics and impact generators; effects and mitigation; and will be considered in terms of spatial element (local, district, regional, national), timescales (short/medium/long term) and permanency (reversible or permanent) in accordance with the EIA Regulations (refer to Chapter 1).

11.7 The assessment of residual impacts considers the sensitivity of the receptors to the proposed development, the magnitude of change and the overall significance of effects.

METHODOLOGY

11.8 The format of this assessment is based on the principles within the Countryside Agency's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance (2002), and the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and

Assessment's "*Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*" (2002), hereafter referred to as the GLVIA.

11.9 A study area of up to 6km surrounding the application site (measured from its centre) has been adopted for this assessment. This is based on experience from similar types of development and similar landscape settings and also the limits of theoretical visibility as defined by computer modelling.

11.10 Initially a desktop study was undertaken to review the relevant publications, maps and plans. This was followed by fieldwork to the application site and surrounding study area in April 2012, to provide photographs of representative views. During the fieldwork the weather conditions were clear and suitable for assessing views.

11.11 Use has been made of 3D computer models to identify potential viewpoints and create perspective views.

11.12 Photographs illustrating views from a selected series of viewpoints were taken using a Nikon D80 digital camera. The camera was set to a focal length which is the equivalent of a 50mm lens for a 35mm format camera. The nature of the views was of relatively wide panoramas and it was therefore considered beneficial to present the photographs in this way.

11.13 The panoramic views consist of a series of photographic frames merged together using industry standard software in accordance with recognised standards.

11.14 The potential significance of landscape and visual impacts is determined by combining the magnitude of the potential impact and the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors to change, as shown in Table 11-1 below. Moderate/Substantial Impacts, and Substantial Impacts, (in bold typeface on Table 11-1) are regarded as significant.

11.15 This process is not a quantitative process; there is not an absolute scoring system. Instead, the correlation of the two factors, although reflecting recognised features and methods of working outlined in this section, is in the end a matter of professional judgement of the qualified landscape architect.

11.16 Table 11-2, below, provides a brief definition of the full range of significance criteria. Both landscape and visual impacts can be adverse, beneficial or neutral in nature.

Table 11-1
Principles of Assessing Significance of Landscape and Visual Impact

Sensitivity / Magnitude	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	Negligible Impact	Negligible/ Slight Impact	Slight Impact	Slight/Moderate Impact
Low	Negligible/ Slight Impact	Slight Impact	Slight/ Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact
Medium	Slight Impact	Slight/ Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	**Moderate/ Substantial Impact**
High	Slight/ Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	**Moderate/ Substantial Impact**	**Substantial Impact**

Table 11-2
Description of Significance Criteria for Landscape and Visual Impact

Level of Significance	Definition
No Impact	The proposed scheme has no effect on landscape or visual receptors.
Negligible	The proposed scheme is largely appropriate in its context. It would be very difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and would affect very few or no receptors.
Negligible/Slight	The proposed scheme would result in minimal change to the landscape which would be difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and would affect few receptors.
Slight	The proposed scheme would cause a barely perceptible impact, and would affect few receptors.
Slight/Moderate	The proposed scheme would cause few changes to the landscape, which would not be clearly noticeable, and would affect few receptors
Moderate	The proposed scheme would cause a noticeable difference to the landscape, and would affect several receptors. However, this change would not alter the essential character of the local landscape or that of the view.
Moderate/Substantial	The proposed scheme would cause a very noticeable difference to the landscape, and would affect several or many receptors. This change would therefore alter the character of the landscape in this locality, or the character of a view.
Substantial	The proposed scheme would change the character and/or appearance of the landscape for a long period of time or permanently. It would affect many receptors. This change would therefore alter the character of the landscape in this locality, or the character of a view.

Consultations

11.17 A draft set of viewpoints was issued, by letter dated 8th May 2012, to Hampshire County Council (HCC). HCC replied, by email dated 24th May

2012, which confirmed that *"the selected viewpoints for inclusion within the detailed landscape assessment do provide a representative coverage of the surrounding area".*

11.18 This initial consultation with HCC was carried out based on an initial stack height of 25m and purchased DTM data for the site levels. Subsequent detailed topographical survey has identified that the development platform would be set down lower than originally assumed and, following the air quality assessment, the stack has been reduced to 20m in height. Consequently, some of the original viewpoint locations agreed with HCC no longer have any visibility of the proposed development. The agreed viewpoints are still included in the assessment to illustrate the general landscape character in the area.

Technical Difficulties

11.19 No technical difficulties were encountered in assessing the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development.

LANDSCAPE PLANNING AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

11.20 As noted above, full details of the planning context of the application site are described in Chapter 4 of this ES.

11.21 A summary of relevant landscape policies from the National Planning Policy Framework, National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South East of England, Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1998, Hampshire Minerals & Waste Core Strategy (2008) and the Local Plan for Winchester District are set out in Appendix 11/1.

11.22 Current planning applications or existing permissions, allocations and designations which are of particular relevance to this landscape and visual impact assessment are examined below.

Planning Permissions and Allocations

11.23 The application site has no current planning applications or permissions. However the site is located immediately to the east of a 9 hectare area of land alongside the Winchester to Basingstoke railway line, which has been safeguarded as a site for rail-head aggregates depot in the Hampshire Local Plan 1987 and this was carried into the Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1998. This states *inter alia* that any application should ensure that *"plant and buildings should be designed and located to minimise visual impact in the landscape and appropriate screening and planting should be provided".*

Designations

11.24 Drawing MS 11/1 presents the relevant landscape designations within the study area. As illustrated, the application site does not form part of any

national landscape designation such as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) nor is it located within a local landscape designation.

11.25 The South Downs National Park (which was adopted on 1st April 2011 and extends north of the East Hampshire AONB) is located approximately 12.7km to the southwest of the application site at its nearest point. The North Wessex Downs AONB is located approximately 7km to the north of the application site at its nearest point.

11.26 The application site is situated approximately 3km northwest of Stratton Park which is identified on English Heritage's "*Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*" as Grade II (Reference GD1864). However the citation for this designation also identifies that the "*Intermittent tree belts, including screen planting alongside the M3 and woodland within the site, restrict views into the park to glimpses from the lanes to the south and south-east*".

11.27 Approximately 5.7km north west of the application site, lies Laverstoke Park, also identified by English Heritage on the "*Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*" (Grade II* Reference 1444). The citation for this designation refers to *'The parkland is divided from surrounding farmland by heavily wooded boundaries. To the north, Home Plantation extends along most of the parkland boundary apart from a section in the north-west corner where a narrow shelter belt demarcates the walled garden and Home Farm. Icehouse Row forms the boundary at the easternmost point of the park and, further to the south, the copses and woodland on Rotten Hill and Wool Down mark the southernmost limits of the park and the horizon. The hamlet of Freefolk Priors lies directly adjacent and to the west of the park while Freefolk, a linear settlement, divides the south-westernmost park from Wool Down and the southernmost area of parkland'.*

11.28 Registered Parks and Gardens at The Grange Park and at Hurstborne Park, lie outside the study areas at approximately 7.6km south east of the site and 7.5km north west of the application site, respectively.

Ecological Designations

11.29 There are a number of ancient semi natural woodland blocks located within the study area, including: Black Wood (1.1km east of the application site); Misholt Copse (2.6km northwest of the application site); Cobley Wood (0.7km north of the application site); Burneath Copse(0.6km north of the application site); Oaken Copse (1.6km northeast of the application site); Round Wood (1.4 north west of the application site); and Freefolk Wood (1.7km northwest of the application site). In addition to the above there are a number of dense belts of woodland, that follow the railway line and A303, which enclose and obscure views into the application site.

11.30 There are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) identified within the study area, as follows:

- Micheldever Spoil Heaps SSSI, which lies to the north of the application site and abutting the northern verge of the A303. This site comprises Nineteenth century chalk spoil heaps derived from railway cuttings;
- River Test SSSI, approximately 5km west of the application site at its closest point. It is an extremely species-rich lowland chalk stream; and
- Bere Mills Meadows, SSSI, approximately 5km northwest of the application site. It comprises a group of damp, unimproved herb-rich neutral grasslands on the flood plain of the upper Test valley.

11.31 Micheldever Oil Terminal SINC lies within the application site. It has been designated for its species-rich unimproved chalk grassland and was last surveyed in 1992 (it was designated in 1995).

11.32 An assessment of impact upon these ecological designations is described in greater detail under Chapter 12, Ecology, of this Volume.

Other Designations

11.33 There are no Listed Buildings within 500m of the application site. Within 2km there are 10 Grade II Listed Buildings, with the majority concentrated at Warren Farm and Micheldever Station, as follows: Micheldever Railway Station building (748m, south-southwest from the application site); The Dove Inn (749m, south-southwest from the application site); K6 telephone Kiosk (763m, south-southwest from the application site); Old Stores (795m, south-southwest from the application site); Stableblock and Graden Wall 20m off Warren Farm House (1.1km, south-southwest from the application site); Barn 50m off Warren Farm (1.1km, south-southwest from the application site); Milestone on A30/A303 at NGR 532 439 (1.2km east-northeast); Warren farm Cottages (1.2km, south-southwest from the application site); and Milestone 300 metres west of old junction with A303 (1.9km, west-southwest from the application site).

11.34 The nearest Scheduled Monument is recorded at Popham Beacons Round Barrow Cemetery, at 0.6km to the northeast of the application site, comprising a line of 5 upstanding Bronze Age barrows to the west of Popham Airfield. This asset is separated from the application site by the line of the A303, with intervening housing and woodland.

11.35 An assessment of impact upon these cultural heritage designations is described in greater detail under Chapter 13, Cultural Heritage within this Volume.

BASELINE CONDITIONS

11.36 Baseline conditions for the application site and surrounding study area have been assessed in terms of landscape and visual conditions, as discussed in greater detail below.

Landscape Baseline

11.37 Landscape assessment, as opposed to visual assessment, deals with the fabric, character and quality of the countryside. The landscape fabric consists of the elements that make up the landscape, such as landform, land use and cultural factors. The way these elements fit together in terms of proportion, pattern, scale, etc., gives rise to a particular landscape character. Changes to the fabric and character of a particular landscape may affect the perceived value of that landscape, giving rise to changes in its quality.

11.38 Potential landscape receptors can therefore include elements of the physical landscape that may be directly affected by the development such as: topographic, geological and drainage features; woodland, tree and hedgerow cover; land use; field boundaries and artefacts[1].

11.39 This part of the assessment aims to assess the character and quality of the landscape in and around the application site by carrying out a subjective assessment, and by also examining particular factors objectively, in accordance with the guidelines defined by The Countryside Agency (2002), *op.cit*.

11.40 The Countryside Agency's guidelines make a clear distinction between the characterisation process (in which the attributes of the landscape are described) and the judgement making process. This sub-section of the assessment deals with the characterisation process, and later sub-sections make judgements about the potential effects of the proposed development based upon the characterisation.

Existing Landscape Appraisals

11.41 The Countryside Agency guidelines describe how Landscape Character Assessment can be applied at different scales, from the national or European level to the parish level. Assessments are ideally prepared at different scales that should fit together as a nested series or a hierarchy of landscape character types and/or areas, such that each level of assessment adds more detail to the one above. The three main levels identified by The Countryside Agency are: national and regional scale; local authority scale; and local scale. This assessment uses and presents a summary of the relevant published assessments at national and regional scale (The Countryside Agency) and local authority scales. These wider character assessments are then used to provide the context for the local scale landscape assessment for the application site.

11.42 Drawing MS 11/2 illustrates the national and local level published Landscape Character Areas for the application site and surrounding parts of the study area.

National Character Areas

11.43 At a national level, landscape character has been assessed by the Countryside Agency (Countryside Agency, 1999). As shown on Drawing MS

[1] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition), paragraph 6.13

11/2, the Countryside Agency identifies the area of the application site and all of the surrounding study area as falling within 'Area 130 – 'Hampshire Downs'.

11.44 Area 130 – Hampshire Downs has the following key characteristics:

- *Strongly rolling downland with scarps, hilltops and valleys which have an overall open and exposed character;*
- *Scarps and hilltops are characterised by extensive open tracts of large arable fields and some ley pasture, sporadically interrupted by woodlands. In contrast, within the sheltered downland valleys, the network of mixed-species hedgerows interspersed by numerous oak/ash or hazel woodland coppice gives a strong sense of enclosure;*
- *Clay-with-flints overlying Chalk mainly on higher ground supports a mix of arable farms, former commons, wood-pastures and ancient semi-natural woodland. A network of distinctive and ancient droving roads and track ways are a particular feature, as are numerous large estates with formal parkland;*
- *Distinctive appearance of chalk cob and flint in traditional rural buildings and walls surrounding farm courtyards, with thatch surviving in many places;*
- *Widespread prehistoric settlement and burial mounds with visually prominent Iron Age hillforts, Roman estates and nucleated medieval village settlement patterns;*
- *The Test and Itchen are significant and distinctive Chalk river valleys cut into the broad downland landscape.*

Draft Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment

11.45 At a county level, landscape character has been assessed by Hampshire County Council. The draft Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (2010) complements local assessments (such as Winchester City Council Landscape Character Assessment) by providing a strategic overview.

11.46 The application site is located within the northeast corner of character area 8E "*Mid Hampshire Open Downs*". The boundary between character area 8E and character area 7B, "Hannington and Dummer Downs", is approximately 500m to the north of the application site.

11.47 The key characteristics of character area 8E are identified as:

- *A sense of elevation, space and expansive views;*
- *A landscape of straight edges and sense of planned countryside on a large scale;*
- *Straight and direct fast roads, some of Roman origin;*
- *Large farm holdings dominated by cereal crops with little grazing;*
- *Woodland is rare and largely consists of 19th century shelterbelts – apart from assart woodland in the Downland Mosaic Small Scale landscape;*
- *Important arable plants supporting farmland bird populations;*
- *Historic drove routes survive as prominent hedgerow lines in the landscape. These provided the framework for the ladder field systems*

which serviced the open field system and downland prior to formal enclosures;

- *A landscape of considerable perceptual time-depth and an early focus for farming. Extensive crop marks visible, especially on higher ground associated with the east-west ridge between the Itchen and Test valleys;*
- *Very few settlements. Most are farmsteads, often with large modern storage sheds;*

11.48 The key characteristics of character area 7B are identified as:

- *High elevated open chalk plateau covered by a thick and continuous clay with flints cap giving rise to a gently undulating topography;*
- *Large open arable farmland enclosed with low hedgerows, trees and extensive woodland blocks;*
- *Contains part of the BOA Longparish Important Arable Plans Area, providing habitats for rare plants and farmland birds;*
- *Varied field pattern with medieval assarted fields in association with woodland, and formal enclosures set between older origin ladder system of droveways and tracks;*
- *Varying intervisibilty due to areas of extensive semi-natural woodland blocks and small linear plantations on more open slopes;*
- *Historically, a frontier landscape between the more intensively farmed downs to the west and the less intensively exploited landscape to the east;*
- *Notable areas of parkland landscape;*
- *Settlement consists of nucleated, small hamlets and scattered farms located on hilltops or within valleys;*
- *Intricate network of narrow winding lanes contrasts with major transportation corridors;*
- *Quiet and unspoilt rural character with a sense of openness and space, the northern part of which is designated AONB.*

Winchester Local Landscape Character Assessment

11.49 Winchester City Council's Landscape Character Assessment divides the District into a series of 'Landscape Character Areas', each with their own key characteristics, landscape management and built form strategies.

11.50 As shown on Drawing MS 11/3 the site falls within area 6, "*North Dever Downs Landscape Character Area*", at approximately 500m from its north eastern boundary.

11.51 Key characteristics for area 6, "*North Dever Downs Landscape Character Area*", include the following specific reference to the application site "*Rare arable weeds and calcareous grassland plants on Micheldever Spoil Heaps and railway embankment*" and also the following:

- *Rolling, relatively low lying, chalk downland, rising from levels of 80 m in the south to 140 m OD to the north.*
- *Well-drained open farmland with dry valleys, forming part of the catchment basin of the River Dever to the south.*

- *Predominantly arable farmland together with some cattle and pig pasture farms. Historically an area of sheep rearing.*
- *Small number of small assorted semi-natural ancient woodlands to the north.*
- *Good populations of declining farmland birds.*
- *Relatively large fields with straight, surveyed boundaries predominantly associated with enclosure by formal agreements in the 18th and 19th centuries followed by further boundary loss through 20th century field rationalisation. Includes examples of 'ladder fields' extending from the Dever up onto the chalk. Evidence of pre-historic field systems to north.*
- *Strong field boundaries, with tall, thick hedges and a relatively high proportion of hedgerow trees, giving a degree of visual enclosure.*
- *Long panoramic views of open farmland, contained by distant woodland to the east and north.*
- *A well spaced network of straight minor rural roads and lanes, together with the A303 trunk road.*
- *Historic drove roads running in a north-south direction often lined with yew trees.*
- *Well-treed railway embankment running in a north-south direction, carrying regular trains between London and Southampton, which provides an important ecological habitat and a visually prominent feature within the area.*
- *Remote, rural character, although the A303 and railway detract from this to the north of the area.*
- *Sparsely settled, with one small village, Micheldever Station and scattered farms.*
- *Evidence of a long history of settlement, including the site of an Iron Age camp at Norsebury Ring, Bronze Age tumuli and Celtic field systems.*

11.52 The landscape character has been subdivided into landscape types (and uses those described by Hampshire County Council (1993), but has subdivided some of them according to their degree of enclosure and woodland.

11.53 The application site is defined as 'Open Arable Landscape Type'. *"These are the extensive, large-scale and open arable landscapes that are characteristic of the most intensively farmed chalkland areas, where the influence of the chalk geology is not masked by deposits of clay with flints. There are two sub-types, mainly reflecting differences in the frequency of hedgerows and trees; 'Exposed Open Arable' and 'Open Arable'"*.

11.54 The application site falls within the middle of subtype 'Open Arable'. The key characteristics of open arable land are:

- *Large-scale, arable fields;*
- *Visually exposed, with a sense of elevation and extensive panoramic views;*
- *Greater frequency of hedgerows defining field boundaries than 'open arable (exposed)' landscape type;*
- *Hedgerows are still often low and fragmented with few trees, and there is still a low incidence of woodland cover;*

- *Settlements are also scattered and infrequent on this landscape type;*
- *Typical areas can be found to the north of the Dever Valley and east of Crawley;*
- *The settlement pattern is scattered, and dominated by large farms.*

11.55 The following key issues for the Open Arable Character Area are considered relevant to this development:

- *Landscape: The potential visual intrusion of built elements in the open landscape, such as large ancillary buildings and structures associated with farm complexes, pylons and telecommunication/ transmission towers, particularly if sited on the more prominent crests.*

Landscape Attributes of the Existing Site

11.56 The Countryside Agency guidance on landscape appraisal recommends that landscapes are initially characterised, and that judgements about the nature and sensitivity of these landscapes are then based on this characterisation process. The Agency's guidance recommends that the characterisation process should be based on an assessment of natural factors, cultural social factors and aesthetic and perceptual factors.

11.57 These factors have been examined primarily for the application site, but also more generally for the surrounding landscape. Each of these factors is assessed below.

Natural Characteristics

11.58 The application site lies at elevations of approximately 125-140m AOD and has two distinct plateaus: the first, upper plateau is located to the east, adjacent to Overton Road at elevations of 139-140m AOD and is approximately 30m wide orientated north to south; and the second, lower plateau is set approximately 10m down (129m - 130.5m AOD at the bottom of the embankment to 123m – 125m AOD at the western edge of the application site) and measuring approximately 26m wide, orientated north to south. . Overton Road lies at elevations of approximately 138-142m AOD (the proposed junction sits at 140.5m AOD).

11.59 Thus, locally there is significant variation in the topography resulting from the construction of the railway through a cutting and tunnel beneath the A303. The railway line lies approximately 10m below the lower plateau.

11.60 At a wider scale, as shown by Drawing MS 11/4, the topography of the local area is typically rolling with the application site being located towards the western end of a slight ridge which rises to high points at 183m AOD, approximately 2.5km away to the east.

11.61 Some 5km to the north of the application site the topography falls away to around 100m AOD associated with the upper valley side of the River Test.

Similarly, around 5km to the south of the application site the topography falls to around 70m AOD associated with the River Dever.

11.62 The footprint of the proposed building and intended roads are located on existing, sparsely vegetated and patchy bare ground, with scrub and grassland, measuring approximately 150m by 200m.

11.63 A mature belt of deciduous tree planting (including Beech, Oak and Hawthorn with an understory of Holly, Blackthorn, Wild Rose and Hazel) is located around the eastern and northern edges of the application site. This plantation is approximately 15m wide at the north and 50m wide at the east and stands approximately 15-20m in height. The tree belt runs along much of the eastern boundary, narrowing towards to the south, forming a deciduous hedge with mature trees.

11.64 Vegetation cover in the surrounding area is typically linear in form; comprising predominantly hedgerows, shelter belts and copses which bound open agricultural land.

11.65 As shown on the 'Designations Plan' (MS 11/1), large areas of woodland are also common in this area, such as Black Wood, which is approximately 900m east of the application site (ancient and ancient replanted woodland) and Freefolk Wood, which is 2km northwest of the application site (ancient woodland).

Cultural and Social Factors

11.66 The application site is a previously developed brownfield site now surplus to requirements for Network Rail. The land adjacent to the site is covered by several rail tracks and used as a rail freight yard and as "rail head".

11.67 The application site is situated within a broader rural location to the north of Micheldever Station. The application site has existing road and rail access; the main South Western Mail Line railway line runs parallel to the site (running north - south), the M3, which connects Basingstoke and Winchester, is located 2km to the east of the application site (aligned southwest to northeast) and the A303 lies directly to the north of the application site (aligned east to west).

11.68 The predominately rural setting is sparsely populated but with some residential properties in the near vicinity. The nearest residential property is Western Farm, lying approximately 80m to the southeast, with the small settlement of Micheldever Station, located 530m south of the application site.

11.69 There are other properties on the north side of A303 (including Coxford Farm, The Boundary, Holinshea, The Beeches, Woodlands, The Pines and Cobley Wood House). Vegetation exists along the roadside and the A303 is elevated in this vicinity.

11.70 The surrounding areas have a number of large industrial/'agri-industrial' buildings and compounds; for example, to the north of the A303, 200m north of the northern end of the application site, is Hampshire Grain Ltd

(approximately 5 hectares with a mixture of building types and storage units), and 1km north east of the application site is Popham Airfield. Around 180m to the east of the application site and railway line is Hampshire County Council's Micheldever Depot, which consists of a storage building and compound.

11.71 The closest settlement to the application site is the village of Micheldever Station, which is located approximately 530m south of the application site (with approximately 150 residents). The village of Micheldever lies 4km south of the application site (with approximately 800 residents). The market town of Whitchurch is located approximately 7.2km northwest of the application site (with approximately 8,900 residents).

11.72 The settlement pattern in this area is scattered (prehistoric settlement patterns; Roman estates and nucleated medieval settlements) and with large ancillary buildings and structures associated with farm complexes. For example, Roundwood Farm at 1.5km to the north; Beacons Farm at 0.5km to the east; Northbrook Farm at 1km to the south; West Stratton Farm at 3km to the south; and Hunton Down Farm at 2km to the southwest.

11.73 The style of the listed buildings within the village of Micheldever Station contrasts with the style of buildings described within the National Character Assessment (Area 130 – Hampshire Downs) of "*Distinctive appearance of chalk cob and flint in traditional rural buildings and walls surrounding farm courtyards, with thatch surviving in many places".* This style of housing is more commonly seen within Micheldever village further to the south, and more widely in the villages within the surrounding area.

11.74 The building materials within Micheldever Station village are better described within the Winchester District Local Plan, North Dever Downs Landscape Character Area, under the title of built form strategies*, "Conserve and promote the use of local building materials such as red brick, flint and slate in any new development".*

11.75 Farming is the common land use in the surrounding area, consisting of large-scale and open arable field, predominantly cereal crops with little grazing.

11.76 Public rights of way within the surrounding area include a footpath which runs parallel to the western side of the South Western Mail Line and is approximately 100m west of the application site. A belt of vegetation is located between the path and the railway line (and application site), with the exception of a short gap at the northern end (refer to Viewpoint 9). There is also a bridleway along the western boundary of Black Wood approximately, 600m east of the application site and which may have clear views. There are a number of other footpaths within the surrounding area.

11.77 Other recreational features in the local vicinity include Test Valley Golf Club (1.2km to the north) and Airbourne Aviation – Microlight Flying school (800m to the north), both off Overton Road, together with Roundwood Shooting Ground (1.9km to the northwest).

Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects

11.78 The aesthetic qualities of the application site and local area are summarised in Table 11-3, being divided into the main categories identified within the guidance[2].

[2] Landscape Character Assessment – Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) – Paragraph 5.12

Table 11-3
Aesthetic Attributes of Site and Study Area

Generic Aesthetic Attributes	Description of Attributes for Site and Study Area
Scale	The main part of the site, where the proposed building would be located is small to medium scale, becoming medium scale associated with the remainder of the railway sidings. Surrounding areas are typically larger in scale; field patterns and blocks of woodland vary in scale but are predominantly medium to large in scale.
Enclosure	The site is enclosed by being set down and surrounded by mature woodland/scrub vegetation to the north and east. To the east mature hedgerows line Overton Road and follow the road south. The profile of the site to the east has been engineered to form an embankment. Mature vegetation on this embankment forms visual enclosure. A mature belt of vegetation runs parallel to the railway line cutting and sidings. On a broader scale, the undulating topography of the surrounding area accompanied by blocks of mature woodlands and the elevated A303 form visual enclosure. The M3 motorway to the east of the site is enclosed in a cutting.
Diversity	The site is uniform at a local scale due to relatively level landscape platforms, bareground and scrub vegetation (although the designated areas of species-rich grassland are diverse). At a broader scale the surrounding landscape contains a number of sub-characters including open arable farmland with boundary hedgerows, chalk and clay farmland and woodland, open parkland, settlements, residential properties and farmsteads.
Texture	The site texture is generally intermediate; the texture of the southern area of the site is fine, where due to the predominance of scrub vegetation the northern area of the site is intermediate. This is typically also the case for the surrounding areas, large areas of farmland and woodland are smooth to textured.
Form and Line	The site is relatively flat with a steep embankment leading down to the railway and a steep embankment leading up to a flat area of land adjacent to Overton Road. At a broader scale the undulating topography of the landscape forms a typically curved and rolling to horizontal and flat skyline. However, this trend is interrupted in places by the vertical form and straight lines of woodland plantations, roads (elevated A303), masts and other incidental developments such as farmsteads, residential properties and industrial buildings.
Colour	The exposed chalk is white and other bare ground often grey. Colours of the built environment locally include predominantly greys, blues and russets of the natural stone with red brick, flint and slate, mixed with muted rural colours, such as greens and browns of the mature vegetation.
Balance	The disturbed/despoiled nature of the site, in addition to the railway and road networks, is generally discordant and contrasts with the more balanced woodland and farmland.
Movement	There is a contrast between the generally still woodland and farmland areas and the busy M3 and A303 road north and east of the application site.
Pattern	The site and adjoining railway sidings are similar in shape to the surrounding rectilinear pattern of farmland, woodland plantations, roads and field boundaries. Areas of parkland are more irregular at a local scale.

Landscape Dynamics

11.79 In the absence of the proposed development it is assumed that the application site would continue to be a derelict area of sparsely vegetated and bare ground.

11.80 However, it recognised that the site is adjacent to an area safeguarded for a rail-head aggregates depot, within the local plans and therefore likely to be developed.

11.81 Within the wider area, it is noted that planning permission was granted in July 2010 for the erection of 23 dwellings in Micheldever Station village (comprising 1 no. four bed house, 10 no. three bed houses, 8 no. two bed houses and 4 no. one bed flats with associated landscaping, access and parking arrangements). The plots are located at the rear of the existing houses on Andover Road (access to the site is via a space between Victoria Cottages, New cottage and Thistle cottage), and sit to the west of Brunel Close.

11.82 Other recorded planning decisions include full planning permission for a 5m antennae and radio equipment on land at New Road and a HCC Minerals application (a periodic review of Stockbridge Oil Field which used part of the adjacent rail sidings as a terminal but the decision notice confirmed that Micheldever was no longer in use for this purpose).

Classification and Evaluation

11.83 The landscape surrounding the application site is consistent with the key characteristics for the “North Dever Downs Character Area” and “Open Arable Character Type” as set out in the published assessments. For example, the rolling and relatively large fields with straight boundaries, strong field boundaries, with tall, thick hedges, a relatively high proportion of hedgerow trees and small assorted semi-natural ancient woodlands give a degree of visual enclosure. There are long panoramic views of open farmland, contained by distant woodland to the east and north and a well-treed railway embankment running in a north-south direction, which is a visually prominent feature within the area. The area has a remote, rural character, although the A303 and railway detracts from this to the north of the area.

11.84 However, more locally the application site and adjacent railway sidings contrast with the character of the wider study area. The application site consists of bare ground (with large areas of species-rich unimproved chalk grassland), has an engineered, linear form (with the railway sidings cutting into the sites topography) and although there is some natural regeneration and mature trees/woodland plantation around the periphery of the application site, the character is of a largely abandoned/derelict state. Overall the character of the site is of “Previously Developed Land”.

Potential for Landscape Enhancement

11.85 The following key objectives and landscape strategies set out in the Winchester City Council's Landscape Character Assessment that have been incorporated into the proposed development as far as possible:

- *Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow network to maximise biodiversity, restore ecological networks and provide visual enclosure;*
- *Conserve and enhance areas of mature trees through appropriate management and replanting as appropriate;*
- *Conserve and respect the visually remote character of the area through sensitive location and design of new development;*
- *Conserve and promote the use of local building materials such as red brick, flint and slate in any new development; and*
- *Integrate new development into its rural setting with appropriate located indigenous planting.*

Conclusions on the Landscape Appraisal of the Existing Site

11.86 Although the landscape surrounding the application site is consistent with the key characteristics for the "North Dever Downs Character Area" and "Open Arable Character Type", as set out in the published assessments, the character of the application site itself is of "Previously Developed Land", due to its abandoned appearance, engineered topography and bareground/sparse vegetation cover.

Visual Baseline

11.87 Visual Impact Assessment relates to "*changes that arise in the composition of the available views as a result of changes to the landscape, peoples' responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity*"[3].

11.88 Potential visual receptors can include the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of viewers as well as the visual amenity of people affected[4].

11.89 Initially, it is necessary to define the extent of visibility both within and outside the application site. Viewpoints are then selected to represent views from the most commonly used locations in and around the site, and the existing views from each of these points are briefly described with the aid of photographs.

[3] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment", Second Edition, *op.cit*

[4] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition), paragraph 6.3

General Visibility of the Application Site

11.90 The visibility of the application site was initially assessed by a desktop study of Ordnance Survey maps in order to identify potential viewpoints. This was followed by 3D computer modelling and calculation of two comparative zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV): firstly of the four flue stacks (based on a stack height of 20m and with a ground elevation of 125m AOD); and secondly the main building mass only (based on a building height of 9m with a ground elevation of 128m AOD).

11.91 These were prepared using 3D modelling software (McCarthy Taylor LSS) in accordance with the method statements provided in Appendix 11/2 and were based on purchased DTM data and initial building mass. The ZTV assessment is limited to subtended vertical angles above 0.25˚. Anything below this angle is considered to be insignificant.

11.92 The resulting ZTVs, which are shown on Drawings MS 11/5 and MS 11/6 are based on a bare terrain; that is, the computer model does not include structural vegetation or the built environment. As a result, the extent of visibility, which is illustrated, is very much a worst case scenario, and would be greatly reduced if structural vegetation/buildings were included in the model.

11.93 The general theoretical visibility of the proposed building mass is limited, as follows:

- The area of visible vertical angle greater than 3 degrees covers a small area, up to approximately 150m from the site boundary in all directions, including a small part of the A303 to the north, the edge of Western Farm to the east, the railway sidings to the south and the public right of way and a small section of the Council Depot to the west;
- The area of theoretically visible vertical angle for the building mass between 1 and 3 degrees extends 0.2km to the west from the site boundary and covers the remainder of the Council Depot. This range, from the site boundary, extends south 0.2km towards the railway station platform and north 0.2km to include part of the Hampshire Grain site; and
- The area of theoretically visible vertical angle for the building mass between 0.25 and 1 degree extends for 0.5km to the north, 1km to the west and south west to Andover Road and 0.4km to the east around Western Farm. Micheldever Station village and Northbrook Farm to the south is not covered.

11.94 The general theoretical visibility of the proposed stacks is inevitably larger, as they are a taller structure and extends for 0.5km to the north and 3km to the south, as follows:

- The area of theoretically visible vertical angle for the stack greater than 3 degrees covers an area approximately 400m to the south and west, and 200m to the north and east;

- The area of theoretically visible vertical angle for the stack between 1 and 3 degrees extends from the site boundary 500m to the north and east, 1km to the south to Northbrook Farm and 800m to the west encompassing the A303; and
- The area of theoretically visible vertical angle for the stack between 0.25 and 1 degree extends south by 3km, including Micheldever Station village. It includes part of the A303 to the west. Norsebury Ring and sections of the public right of way on higher ground, south of Kitesland, are included in the area of visibility. Around 2.7km to the north the area of visibility covers small areas such as Pilgrim's Farm and a stretch of road between Litchfield Grange and Cobley Wood.

11.95 Following the initial desk based modelling of theoretical visibility, fieldwork was carried out to review the degree of additional screening provided by vegetation and/or built up areas and buildings. Generally this indicated that the undulating, rolling topography in combination with mature hedgerows, trees and woodland blocks and the elevated A303 (and its associated mature screening) provide varying amounts of enclosure. Screening is typically greatest along roadsides, the railway line, public rights of way and within settlements, becoming more open where land is elevated and/or begins to slope away, or where hedgerows have been removed, or from gateways and road junctions.

Choice of Viewpoints

11.96 In consultation with HCC, representative viewpoints have been selected for detail viewpoint analysis to be carried out as part of this assessment.

11.97 Initially, potential viewpoints and areas were reviewed with reference to the following criteria:

- potential visual receptors in the baseline;
- potential for visual impact as indicated by the ZTVs;
- high concentrations of viewers, such as main settlements, users of main roads and motorways, recreational facilities and routes, etc; and
- designated areas, views from different character areas and/or views illustrating the visual character of the surrounding area and views from a range of distances and directions.

11.98 Potential visual receptors in the local area, which have been reviewed for potential inclusion as viewpoints include the following:

- inhabitants of settlements such as Micheldever Station village and Micheldever village and smaller groups of residential properties and farmsteads, such as Western Farm;
- users of public highways such as A303 and other minor roads such as Overton and Andover Road and Micheldever Station railway platform;
- users of Public Rights of Way from Micheldever Station village to the A303, Western Down Cottages to Andover Road and the bridleway along the western boundary of Black Wood.

11.99 Certain potential visual receptors in the local area have been excluded from the viewpoint selection due to an absence of coverage as indicated by the original ZTV (such as Stratton Park Registered Park and Garden or M3) or identification of intervening vegetation during the fieldwork (such as Test Valley Golf Club and Popham Airfield).

11.100 Photograph and fieldwork analysis of views of the site were then carried out from the surrounding landscape. The object was to determine which locations offer the clearest views of the application site and/or are most accessible to the public.

Viewpoints

11.101 Table 11-4 summarises the selected representative viewpoints, their locations and drawing numbers to illustrate existing views. Viewpoint locations are shown on the ZTV, Drawings MS 11/5 and MS 11/6.

Table 11-4
List of Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Description	Drawing
1	View south west from unnamed B road	MS 11/7
2	View west from The Beeches north of A303	MS 11/7
3	View west from footpath intersection with A303	MS 11/8
4	View north west from just off footpath within Black Wood	MS 11/8
5	View west from Western Farm	MS 11/9 (day) (and MS 11/13 (night)
6	View north from train platform at Micheldever Station	MS 11/10 (day) (and MS 11/13 (night) in Appendix 11/2)
7	View north from Church Street, northern edge of Michedever village	MS 11/10
8	View south east from footpath	MS 11/11
9	View east from footpath south of A303	MS 11/11(day) (and MS 11/14(night) in Appendix 11/2)
10	View east from Unnamed B road	MS 11/12

General Appraisal of Darkness and Existing Artificial Lighting

11.102 In addition to the photographs of existing views listed above, three additional night time photographs have been provided from Viewpoint 5, 6 and 9 to illustrate general levels of darkness within and surrounding the application site, together with any existing artificial sources of lighting (Drawings MS 11/13 and MS 11/14).

11.103 The majority of the study area is agricultural and thus the existing sources of artificial light within the landscape are concentrated around the Micheldever Station settlement to the south with platform lighting, street lighting and residential lighting, Hampshire Grain Ltd and A303 to the north and the Council Depot to the west.

11.104 There is lower scale, more localised lighting at the more isolated rural dwellings and farmsteads.

11.105 In addition there is the movement of headlights from traffic along the A303 and the main vehicular corridors during the hours of darkness.

11.106 The application site currently does not have any artificial lighting. The site was previously lit, however the light units that are on site are no longer operational as their cables have been removed.

11.107 Viewpoint 5, (night view west from Western Farm) shows artificial lighting from the Council Depot on the western side of the rail line through the tree canopy and understory planting. Other light sources are predominantly from passing vehicular traffic on Overton Road.

11.108 Viewpoint 6, (night view north from train platform at Micheldever Station) shows artificial light from the Network Rails freight yard and rail head in the distance. At the time of this photograph, a train was stationary within the rail head. Other light sources in this view include the platform lights in the foreground, and the car park lighting and internal residential lighting to the west.

11.109 Viewpoint 9, (night view east from public right of way south of A303) shows no artificial lighting to the application site. Light spill from the Council Depot to the west of the application site (behind a 2.4m palisade fence there is a mixture of security boundary lights and lighting to the facade) is visible to the left of viewpoint 9A and the right of viewpoint 9B. Train lights can be seen in the distance with lighting to the platform at Micheldever Railway Station just beyond.

Potential for Visual Enhancement

11.110 Opportunities for visual enhancement are closely related to the opportunities for landscape enhancement, although the application site is currently well screened by mature perimeter vegetation.

Conclusions of the Visual Assessment of the Existing Site

11.111 This sub-section has assessed the visibility of the site, which is restricted by landform, vegetation and buildings. Representative viewpoints have been selected from locations in the surrounding area and include public rights of way, recreational areas, roads and residential properties.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

11.112 As noted earlier, the assessment of impacts includes a study of the development proposals, potential landscape and visual characteristics and impact generators, effects and mitigation and is considered in terms of spatial element (local, district, regional, national), timescales (short/medium/long term) and permanency (reversible or permanent).

Nature and Extent of the Proposed Development

11.113 The extent and nature of the proposals are described in Chapter 3 above, and the following items have been examined in detail due to their specific landscape and visual implications:

- Main building (9m high);
- A gasmeter for gas storage (approx 6m diameter and 9m high);
- A stack for the autclave plant (20m high and max 120cm
- diameter);
- 3 flue stacks for each of the 3 engines (20 high and max 100cm diameter);
- An electricity substation (5m by 3 m and 3 m high);

- 2 AD digester tanks (approx 25m diameter) and 2 x AD digestate tanks (approx 32m diameter) and 9.5m high; and
- New access road and entrance point, car parking for visitors, approximately 10 staff parking spaces and a cycle shelter/spaces to encourage a reduction in car use; and
- Weighbridge and offices.

Potential Landscape and Visual Elements of the Proposed Development

11.114 The application site covers approximately 3ha. The landscape strategy shows the following approximate proportions of land cover:

- Hedgerows, grassland, woodland and scrub planting (around 1ha or 36%;
- Hardstanding, access road, pathways, car parking, etc (around 1.2ha or 41%); and
- Building, digestate and digestive tanks (around 0.6ha or 23%).

11.115 The overall size of the building is 130m long by 40m wide and would be 9m high to the apex of the roof. The building, digester and digestate tanks are set at 128m AOD. The stacks are 20m high at the base level of 125m AOD.

11.116 The precise details of the external surfacing and fencing works would be subject to further submission, should planning permission be granted.

11.117 There would be no visible plume from the development as only dry emissions would be produced.

11.118 A visibility splay has been identified for the site access point, where it joins the public highway to the east. Based on the tree survey work carried out three trees would be removed to create the access; however the extent of additional disturbance associated with the visibility splays and infrastructure, would be subject to detailed design should the development be approved. At this stage it is assumed that the visibility splays would necessitate pruning and cutting of the roadside vegetation.

Timescales and Permanency of Potential Impacts

11.119 The site preparation and construction stage would take place over an 18 month period (during 2013-14) with the plant being fully operational (flowing a period of commissioning) from c. 2014/2015.

11.120 This would be followed by the operational phase. The proposed development is not time limited and is therefore considered to be permanent for the purposes of this assessment.

11.121 The waste management processes would take place 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Deliveries would be restricted to a 10 hour working day on Mondays to Fridays (e.g. 8am to 6pm), with shorter hours on Saturdays (mornings only).

11.122 This assessment considers the construction and operational phases together.

Potential Indirect Impacts

11.123 The main indirect impact would be from traffic generated from the development, as this would have a potential visual impact.

11.124 However, the impact of additional traffic would be limited to a short stretch of Overton Road between the site entrance and the A303, heading northwards along the minor road. Traffic would not be permitted to travel southwards from the site entrance and all movements would be daytime only. The traffic assessment is described in greater detail in Chapter 6 this Volume.

Lighting

11.125 External lighting within the application site would be required to ensure the safety of manoeuvring vehicles and pedestrians around the facility. Lighting would also enhance the security of the facility. The main areas where lighting would be necessary are:

- adjacent to roadways, footpaths and vehicle manoeuvring areas. This would include all site roads and hardstandings within the site;
- above doorways; and
- on the façade of the building.

11.126 There are no proposals for floodlighting the building, or for high level lighting gantries.

11.127 Lighting of roadways and footpaths would be designed to ensure that there was minimal ‘glare’ or light trespass.

11.128 Drawings MS 11-13 and MS 11-14 in Appendix 11/2 illustrates views from Viewpoint 5, 6 and 9 taken at 9pm at night in April 2012:

- for Viewpoint 5 the lighting to the proposed development would contribute to the existing light source from Council Depot, west of the railway line and would be visible through the tree canopy and understory planting.

- in Viewpoint 6 the lighting to the proposed development would be visible to the right (east) of the viewpoint, but due to the intensity of the lighting on the platform and railway lighting, the intensity of the light from the proposed facility would be reduced.

- the lighting to the proposed development would be most prominent from viewpoint 9, which looks directly into the site. The development would be visible and would add to the existing light source from Council Depot.

Proposed Mitigation Measures

11.129 The GLVIA at paragraph 5.8 advises that "*The ideal strategy for each identifiable negative effect is one of avoidance. If this is not possible, alternative strategies of reduction, remediation and compensation may be explored*".

11.130 Of relevance to this proposed development, Under Box 5.1 it also goes on to state that "*Appropriate form, materials and design of built structures: many buildings and structures cannot be screened; nor is it always desirable or practicable to do so in these circumstances the design of the structures themselves, their colour treatment and textural finishes can be designed to fit comfortably with their surroundings".*

Building Design

11.131 The assessment has indicated that the building would be set down and hidden from the majority of views.

11.132 If permission is granted, a detailed scheme for materials to be used for the building would be submitted and agreed with the local authority.

11.133 Generally, at this stage, it is proposed that the colour of the building and tanks would be similar to the colours found locally such as "*red brick, flint and slate"* as mentioned in the North Dever Downs Landscape Character Area, or from natural materials such as exposed chalk and green vegetation.

Landscape Treatments

11.134 Drawing MS 11/15 shows the proposed landscape strategy for the site.

11.135 Based on the findings of the ecological assessment, areas of chalk grassland would be retained, as much as practicable, within the margins of application site. Areas vulnerable to construction traffic would be protected during the construction period through the use of temporary fencing.

11.136 The internal vehicle access route would cut through native shrub/scrub planting. With the exception of the new site entrance, the existing tree belts to the north of the site would be retained and protected during the construction period. Areas that are subject to removal due to construction would be replanted with similar plant specimens.

11.137 Additional woodland and scrub planting would be introduced around the periphery of the site. The main aim of the landscape treatments to this area is to compliment and extend the adjoining existing habitats outside the application boundary, providing connectivity.

11.138 As discussed above, a number of trees and scrub on the Overton Road would be felled and/or pruned to accommodate the new junction to the site and allow for sufficient visibility splays. The precise nature of this would be determined as part of detailed scheme to be prepared. Compensatory

planting would be carried out as near as possible to these individuals to be removed.

RESIDUAL IMPACTS

11.139 The assessment of residual impacts below, considers the sensitivity of the receptors to the proposed development, the magnitude of change and the overall significance of effects.

Residual Landscape Impacts

Landscape Sensitivity

11.140 The sensitivity of the existing landscape resource is based on the following factors:

- the value placed on the landscape;
- compatibility of the proposed development with the existing land-uses and landscape character;
- condition of the landscape;
- contribution of the landscape within the site to the overall landscape character;
- the scope for mitigation of the proposed development; and
- degree to which landscape elements and characteristics can be replaced or substituted.

11.141 The sensitivity of a landscape is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible.

11.142 Table 11-5 illustrates how these criteria have been appraised to gain an understanding of the overall landscape sensitivity of the application site. Overall, the application site is considered to have a low sensitivity to the proposed development as it is not located within a landscape designation and due to the local landscape character, the existing use of the site, the compatibility of the development with the existing use for the site, scope for mitigation, replication and/or substitution.

Table 11-5
Sensitivity of Existing Landscape Resource to Proposed Development

Landscape Element	Description	Sensitivity
The value placed on the landscape	The application site is not covered by any national landscape designations, however Micheldever Oil Terminal SINC lies within the site. It has been designated for its species-rich unimproved chalk grassland. There is a group tree preservation order along the eastern boundary (where the access road is proposed).	Medium
Compatibility of the proposed development with the existing land-uses and landscape character	The application site is a previously developed brown field site now surplus to requirements for Network Rail. The land adjacent to the site is covered by several tracks and used as a rail freight yard and as a "rail head" at the end of the line. The built form and physical landscape of the site has an industrialised character. Industrial and ancillary complexes occur to the north, south and west of the proposals and therefore the land use would be unchanged through the development.	Low
Condition of the landscape	The condition of the application site is that of previously developed land; it has an abandoned appearance, engineered topography, bareground/sparse vegetation cover and natural regeneration to some areas.	Low
Contribution of the landscape within the site to the overall landscape character	The majority of the application site and adjacent railway sidings contrast with the character of the wider study area; there are no elements that are remnant of the "North Dever Downs Character Area" and "Open Arable Character Type" within the site boundary. To the periphery of the site there are mature trees, woodland plantation and hedgerows which reflect the local character area, however, the majority of the plants in this area have naturally regenerated and are generally unmanaged. The landscape within the site does not contribute to the overall character of the study area.	Low
The scope for mitigation of the proposed development	There is scope to provide mitigation of the proposed development by establishing suitable landscape treatments around the edges of the main buildings and internal circulation/roads, with additional planting.	Low
Degree to which landscape elements and characteristics can be replaced or substituted	As discussed above there is scope to introduce new landscape elements in keeping with the character of the surrounding area (Open Arable Character Type). There are few existing landscape features on site due to previous development of the site. Mitigation for the loss of areas of the species-rich unimproved chalk grassland should be considered.	Low
Overall Sensitivity		**Low**

Magnitude of Landscape Impacts

11.143 The magnitude of landscape impacts which is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible, depends upon the following factors[5]:

- the scale or degree of change to the existing landscape resource;
- the nature of the change caused by the proposed development (for example, beneficial or adverse); and
- the timescale, or phasing of the proposed development

Changes in Natural Characteristics

11.144 There would be localised changes to the topography of the application site to accommodate the new buildings and roads. Generally the application site would remain in a hollow, set down from adjacent areas.

11.145 Three existing trees, covered by a group Tree Preservation Order, and located to the east of the development along the Overton Road, would be removed to accommodate the new junction and access road to the site. Mitigation for the loss of these trees would be provided within the landscape strategy, and further details of monitoring and maintenance to be prepared, should the development be permitted.

11.146 The 'Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire' (BAP) sets out the objectives of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership. Micheldever Oil Terminal SINC lies within the site. It has been designated for its species-rich lowland calcareous grassland. The objectives of the BAP for lowland calcareous grassland are to:

- ensure no further loss or degradation of lowland calcareous grassland
- increase the extent of lowland calcareous grassland;
- improve the quality of lowland calcareous grassland;
- ensure that the needs of the Hampshire priority species are met

11.147 Although there would be loss of calcareous grassland, the landscape strategy aims to retain as much of the existing grassland as possible. Effects on the SINC are discussed in more detail in Chapter 12, Ecology.

Changes in Cultural and Social Factors

11.148 No cultural or social features would be lost as a result of the proposed development, nor would any designated historic sites or designed landscapes be directly affected.

11.149 Usage of the application site would increase from employees and visitors.

5 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraphs 7.18 and 7.23

11.150 Vehicle access to the application site would be from Overton Road to the east via a new junction and access road. Access would be controlled via double gates within the existing fence line.

11.151 Access to the main entrance and offices is via a footpath from the car park via the access road. The footpath is designed to wheelchair standards of gradient with non-slip surfaces. It has contrasting coloured bands and textures to aid perception for people who have visual impairments.

Changes in Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects

11.152 The overall changes to the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the application site would be limited, due to the nature of the existing brownfield site, (previously developed land), but would include the introduction of the proposed built forms and infrastructure. For example diversity and movement within the application site would be increased, the differences between texture and balance would be altered and the development pattern, colour, form and line would increase the degree of enclosure.

Changes in Classification and Evaluation

11.153 The proposed development would change the local landscape character of the application site from “previously developed” land to “active industrial land”, due to the proposed building, infrastructure and tanks.

Overall Magnitude of Landscape Impacts

11.154 The overall magnitude of landscape impacts on the site itself would be medium due to the introduction of large industrial buildings / structures within previously developed land and the loss of calcareous grassland and small number of roadside trees. Some mitigation for the loss of habitats and new employment usage is proposed. The overall nature of effect on landscape fabric would be neutral.

Residual Visual Impacts

Sensitivity of Viewpoints

11.155 The list of identified viewpoints set out in Table 11-6 below also includes a brief assessment of their sensitivity, categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. Sensitivity depends on the following factors[6]:

- the location and context of the viewpoint. For example, viewpoints within an industrial setting are generally less sensitive;
- the expectations and occupation of the receptor. For example, ramblers are more likely to be observing the landscape more closely. By contrast, views from outdoor sport facilities, transport routes or places of work are less sensitive in this regard; and
- the importance of the view, which may be defined by the number of viewers who commonly use the viewpoint, the cultural significance of the viewpoint, or the facilities provided for its enjoyment.

Table 11-6
Sensitivity of Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Description	Sensitivity
1	View south west from unnamed B road. Represents users of vehicular traffic between Micheldever, Overton and Deane villages.	Medium
2	View west from The Beeches north of A303. Represents residential properties to the north of the A303.	High
3	View west from footpath intersection with A303. Represents busy vehicular corridor between the M3 (east of the site) and the M5 (west of the site). The viewpoint is located at the end of the public footpath/bridleway where it meets the A303.	Medium
4	View north west 2m off the bridleway within Black Wood. Represents recreational users of the public right of way on the edge of Black Wood and A303.	High
5	View north west from Western Farm. Represents the residential property at Western Farm and users of vehicular traffic along Overton Road.	High
6	View north from train platform at Micheldever Railway Station. Represents the rail users/commuters using the South Western Mail Line railway line.	Medium
7	View north from Church Street, northern edge of Micheldever Village. Represents the residential properties in Micheldever Village and users of vehicular traffic between Micheldever and Overton.	High
8	View north east from footpath. Represents recreational users of the public right of way between Western Down Cottages and Andover Road.	High
9	View east from footpath south of A303. Represents recreational users of the public right of way between the A303 and village of Micheldever Station and users of the Council Depot.	Medium
10	View east from Unnamed B Road. Represents users of vehicular traffic between Micheldever, A303 and Whitchurch.	Medium

[6] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraphs 7.31 and 7.35

11.156 Whilst public rights of way would generally be regarded as being sensitive receptors, as the users' attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape, it is not necessarily the case that they would always be high. Different public rights of way may have different sensitivities and different sections of the same public right of way may also vary in its sensitivity, depending on location, context and relative importance.

11.157 For example, a high sensitivity grading would be a popular right of way within a rural context, perhaps with facilities for the enjoyment of views. Also public rights of way recognised as having national importance, such as a National Trail or National Cycle Route, or pass through a national designation such as an AONB or Registered Park and Garden, would most likely be of a high sensitivity. Other influencing factors may include a route which passes through a County Park, leads to a viewpoint marked on an OS Explorer map or other major promoted recreational facility or possibly a location close to a Listed Building or Scheduled Ancient Monument.

11.158 Medium sensitivity gradings may include those parts of the public right of way that have a less rural context and/or less well used. This could include routes adjacent to roads and/or urban edges. In this assessment Viewpoints 3 and 9 have been attributed a medium level of sensitivity to the proposed development.

Magnitude of Visual Impacts

11.159 The potential visual effects of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape, and in particular the views from identified viewpoints, have been assessed with the aid of plans, photographs, 3D computer models and site assessment, and are described in detail on the following paragraphs.

11.160 For each of the viewpoints the potential magnitude of the residual visual impacts, taking into account the proposed mitigation, has been assessed. The magnitude of visual impacts is mainly dependent upon the following factors[7]:

- the scale of change, what proportion of the existing view would change as a result of the development proposals?
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features, how many features or elements within the view would be changed?
- how appropriate are the proposals in the context of the existing views?
- how many viewers would be affected by the changes in the view?
- what is the timescale of the proposals? Also, is it continuous or intermittent?
- what is the angle of the view in relation to the main activity of the receptor? and
- what is the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development.

[7] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assess*men*t (Second Edition) Paragraph 7.36

ZTV Analysis

11.161 As discussed above, initial ZTVs were calculated for the proposed development. Each ZTV shown on Drawing MS 11/5 and MS 11/6 used LSS according to the method statement described in Appendix 11/1.

11.162 The ZTV output file from LSS calculates, for every receptor point, not just whether the development can be seen, but also what vertical angle of the development can be seen. This provides a useful initial guide as to the size and scale of the proposed development and therefore the likely potential magnitude of visual change at any point around the application site. In general terms, for the type of development proposed, less than 0.25˚ of visible vertical angle would have the potential to be not visible or insignificant, between 0.25˚ and 1˚ would have the potential to be low, between 1˚ and 3˚ would have the potential to be medium and over 3˚ would have the potential to be high. For comparison, a two storey house, at an average height of 8m, would subtend a vertical angle of 4.58˚ at 100m, 2.29˚ at 200m, 0.92˚ at 500m and 0.46˚ at 1km.

11.163 As an initial exercise, the computer generated ZTV allows for analysis of the potential visibility of the proposed development from specific visual receptors/viewpoints. However, the ZTV analysis must always be used in conjunction with an analysis of the other factors described above, such as appropriateness of the change and the overall proportion of the existing view that would change.

11.164 The ZTV is calculated on landform only, without any consideration of vegetation or buildings and therefore it presents a worse case scenario; vegetation can significantly reduce the actual visibility of a feature and the ZTV should always be used in conjunction with more detailed site assessment and analysis of photographs/actual views.

Viewpoint 1 - View south west from unnamed B road

11.165 This viewpoint is located approximately 1.7 km to the north of application site on an access/gate to farmland off an unnamed road between Copse Farm and Beacons Farm. Views in the foreground are across rolling arable farmland with a large block of woodland (Cobley Wood) to the southwest in the middle ground. In the distance, central to the view, another large block of woodland (Cobley Wood and The Scrubs) can be seen. The topography falls away (to the south west of the viewpoint) to a low point near Cobley Wood in the middle ground and then rises beyond Cobley Wood into the distance. To the left, the viewpoint is framed by a mature, native, managed hedgerow, which restricts views from the road. Bellevue Plantation can be seen in the distance behind the hedgerow, with a communications mast to the south on the horizon between individual specimen trees.

11.166 The initial ZTVs for the proposed development, used in consultation with HCC indicated that only the stacks would be visible in this distant view. However the subsequent ZTV included in this assessment for the final design

shows that the viewpoint is no longer covered by the ZTVs for the development.

11.167 Taking all the above into account, it is assessed that there would be no magnitude of visual change during operation of the proposed development.

Viewpoint 2 - View west from The Beeches north of A303

11.168 This viewpoint is located on the edge of 'The Beeches', a residential property to the north of the A303 and approximately 300m from the application site. In the foreground the view looks across the road towards the A303. The slip road connects to the A303 at approximately 1km to the east of the viewpoint. The A303 and associated traffic can be seen over a small bund (approximately 1-1.5m high) and through the fence and mature vegetation. Mature deciduous vegetation/screen planting lines either side of the A303 provides enclosure, reduces visibility and distance of views.

11.169 The initial ZTVs for the proposed development, used in consultation with HCC indicate that the building mass and stacks would be visible. However the subsequent ZTV included in this assessment for the final design shows that the viewpoint is no longer covered by the ZTV for the main building.

11.170 Analysis of the 3D models indicate that the proposed building and stacks would sit on lower lying land, so that the development would be largely screened by topography.

11.171 The top of the flue stacks would not break the skyline and would be screened by the woodland belts to either side of the A303 and the mature vegetation to the periphery of the application site.

11.172 Taking all the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operation of the proposed development would be negligible and neutral in nature.

Viewpoint 3 - View west from footpath intersection with A303

11.173 This viewpoint is situated on the A303, approximately 650m from the application site, where the bridleway, which runs along the western edge of Black Wood, crosses the A303. In the foreground the view looks across the busy dual carriageway with its associated infrastructure, including signage and crash barrier. Large dual carriageway signs are featured in the mid ground (approximately 120m away) on the west bound side of the carriage way. The land falls away to the south of the A303 and rises to the north, but generally mature deciduous vegetation/screen planting line either side of the carriageway reduce visibility and distance of views.

11.174 The initial ZTVs for the proposed development, used in consultation with HCC, indicated that only the stacks would be visible in this distant view. However the subsequent ZTV included in this assessment for the final design shows that the viewpoint is no longer covered by the ZTVs for the development, albeit on the very edge of the stack. The mature dense

vegetation/woodland belt to the south of the A303 would also provide visual screening to the development.

11.175 Taking all the above into account, it is assessed that there would be a negligible magnitude of visual change.

Viewpoint 4 - View northwest, 2m off the bridleway within Black Wood

11.176 This viewpoint is situated 2m to the west of the bridleway which runs along the western edge of Black Wood, approximately 1km from the application site. The existing view looks west, with hedgerows and mature trees lining field boundaries in the mid ground and running west to the horizon. The view is of rolling arable farmland, which falls to the northwest (middle ground) and rises towards the horizon. To the right, the viewpoint is framed by mature vegetation, trees and a small amount of understory, which restricts views from the bridleway. To the north (right of the viewpoint) the mature, deciduous vegetation, which lines the A303, can be seen in the distance.

11.177 The initial ZTVs for the proposed development, used in consultation with HCC, indicated that only the stacks would be visible in this distant view. However the subsequent ZTV included in this assessment for the final design shows that the viewpoint is no longer covered by the ZTVs for the development.

11.178 Taking all the above into account, it is assessed that there would be no magnitude of visual change.

Viewpoint 5 - View northwest from Western Farm

11.179 This viewpoint is situated on the entrance to Western Farm, a two storey development with windows facing the application site, located approximately 80m southeast from the application site. In the foreground the view looks northwest across the Overton Road. Mature, native planting lines Overton Road; a mixture of mature deciduous trees and understory planting that reduces long distance views from the viewpoint and has signs of management through flailing. Planting within the site, predominantly scrub planting established through nature regeneration, is visible between the trunks of the mature trees along Overton Road.

11.180 The initial ZTV indicates that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible in this landscape. However, analysis of the 3D models indicates that owing to the dense woodland belt between the boundary of the application site and Overton Road, and the development sitting approximately 10m lower than the road, it is likely that during the summer months little of the proposed building would be visible, with parts of the roof and the flue stacks just discernible between gaps in the belt. In the winter months, when the trees have lost their leaves, the views would be more open with more of the building mass and stacks discernible beyond the mature tree belt. The trees provide a significant vertical influence which break up the view and provide

screening of the development in the background although the development would be partially visible owing to its proximity.

11.181 However, the proposed access to the application site and associated visibility splays would produce a break in the tree belt and necessitate pruning / trimming, which would increase visibility of the development and views into the application site, altering the character of the roadside. Mitigation planting would be carried out behind the splay. In addition, the movement of lorries to and from the application site (northwards to the A303 and during the daytime only) would be discernible from this point.

11.182 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be medium and adverse.

Viewpoint 6 - View north from train platform at Micheldever Railway Station

11.183 This viewpoint is situated on the end of the platform at Micheldever Railway Station. The view looks north towards the application site, which lies approximately 500m in this direction. In the foreground of the view lies the South Western Mail Line, railway sidings and railhead, including the railway stations infrastructure, light columns, traffic lights and signage. Looking north towards the application site, the topography of the application site is engineered in appearance and sits much lower than the surrounding area. The railway line has been cut into the landscape with embankments to either side of the track. An exposed chalk face is visible to the east, in the distance, around the railway tunnel. Mature, deciduous vegetation, trees and understory covers the embankment to either side of the railway line and frames the railway tunnel to the north. The character of this view is industrial in nature.

11.184 The initial ZTV indicates that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible within this view. Analysis of 3D models indicate that the building mass and stacks would be clearly visible on the plateau in the distance before the railway tunnel. The mature woodland belts to the edge of the application site would provide a back drop to the development.

11.185 The infrastructure (including lighting columns and railway movements) and the tree belt provide a combination of medium-scale, built elements in the foreground which reduce the overall contrast of the character and scale of the new industrial building.

11.186 The new stacks would not break the wooded skyline, due to the maturity of the woodland belts to the periphery of the site and existing retained vegetation within the site's boundary. The view would also benefit from the following mitigation:

- colour – the use of material in the development which are similar in colour to those found locally within characteristic landscape features such as red brick, flint and slate, exposed chalk and green vegetation would help to blend the building into its surroundings; and

- additional hedge planting in front of the development would help to soften the form of the building.

11.187 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be medium and neutral.

Viewpoint 7 - View north from Church Street, northern edge of Micheldever Village

11.188 This viewpoint is situated on Church Street, on the northern edge of Micheldever Village approximately 4km to the south of the application site. The viewpoint looks towards North Brook Dairy across an open pastoral field in the foreground, bounded by a hedgerow in the mid ground to the west and north. Thatched residential properties, mature specimen trees and ornamental planting frame the view to the east. In the distance, the elevated railway line and the associated woodland belt can be seen lining the horizon.

11.189 The initial ZTVs for the proposed development, used in consultation with HCC, indicated that only the stacks would be visible in this distant view. However the subsequent ZTV included in this assessment for the final design shows that the viewpoint is no longer covered by the ZTVs for the development.

11.190 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that there would be no magnitude of visual change during operations.

Viewpoint 8 - View north east from footpath

11.191 This viewpoint is situated on the footpath within a gap in the native hedge running from Western Down Cottages to Andover Road, approximately 2.2km southwest from the application site. In the foreground the view is framed by a dense, mature, native hedgerow approximately 1.8m high. The view looks across open arable farm land which rises to the north and falls away to the south. In the distance a mature, deciduous woodland belt lines the field boundary. Views beyond the tree belt are limited. Vegetation along the railway embankment can be seen between the tree trunks and gaps in the tree belt.

11.192 The initial ZTVs, used in consultation with HCC, indicated that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible within this view. However the subsequent ZTVs included in this assessment for the final design shows that the viewpoint is no longer covered by the ZTV for the main building. Further analysis of the 3D models indicates that due to the height and density of the mature woodland belts to the railway embankments and field boundaries the entire development, including the flue stacks, would not be visible.

11.193 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that there would be no magnitude of visual change during operations.

Viewpoint 9 - View east from footpath south of A303

11.194 This viewpoint is situated on the public footpath that runs parallel to the railway line from the A303 to Micheldever Station village. This viewpoint is approximately 100m west of the application site and looks directly onto it. In the foreground of the view a post and wire fence lines the edge of the footpath. Remnants of a hedgerow to the rear of the fence are still visible. To the west of the view is a 2.4 m high palisade fence, which lines the boundary of the Council Depot. Security lighting and associated lighting columns are also visible. Between the two fence lines the public footpath runs south towards Micheldever Station village. At the bottom of the retaining feature to the west of the application site runs the South Western Mail Line. In the middle ground of the view sits the application site. Redundant lighting columns follow the edge of the retaining feature and site boundary. The plateau steadily rises for 100m -150m to the east, where it meets a chalk face to the north (approximately 10m height difference), changing to a sharp incline to higher ground further south. Natural regeneration of vegetation is prominent on the site; scrub planting, unimproved chalk grassland and birch trees are all visible from this viewpoint. The upper eastern boundary of the application site is lined by a dense section of scrub and understory planting. Beyond, a row of trees and understory following the horizon and Overton Road south.

11.195 The initial ZTV shows that the building mass and flue stacks would be visible from this viewpoint. Analysis of the 3D models indicates that the building mass and stacks would be clearly visible, sat on the plateau approximately 100m from the viewpoint. The mature woodland belt to the edge of the application site would again provide a back drop, along with the exposed chalk cutting, to the development.

11.196 The engineered topography of the application site, the concrete retaining wall and existing railings provide a combination of large-scale elements in the foreground, which would reduce the overall contrast of the character and scale of the new industrial building.

11.197 The new flue stacks would not break the skyline, due to the maturity of the woodland belts to the periphery of the site. The view would benefit from the following mitigation:

- colour – the use of material in the development which are similar in colour to those found locally within characteristic landscape features such as red brick, flint and slate, exposed chalk and green vegetation would help to blend the building into its surroundings; and
- additional hedge planting in front of the development would help to soften the form of the building.

11.198 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that the magnitude of visual change during operations would be medium and neutral.

Viewpoint 10 - View east from Unnamed B Road

11.199 This viewpoint is located on a B road running from the A303 to Laverstoke Lane. Looking east, the application site is approximately 1.2km away. In the foreground a mature hedge lines the road, with gaps for access to farmland.

The existing view looks across rolling arable farm land, rising from the north to the hedge line in the centre of the view and falling from the hedge line to the A303 to the south. The A303 is located along the field boundary to the east. In the middle ground, the field boundaries are lined with dense hedgerows and mature trees. In the distance, to the centre of the view, woodland planting minimises the visibility of Hampshire Grain Ltd's buildings; these structures can be seen just above the tree line.

11.200 The initial ZTVs for the proposed development, used in consultation with HCC, indicated that only the stacks would be visible in this distant view. However the subsequent ZTV included in this assessment for the final design shows that the viewpoint is no longer covered by the ZTVs for the development, albeit on the very edge of the stack. The mature vegetation surrounding the site and along the A303 would also provide screening of the development.

11.201 Taking the above into account, it is assessed that there would be a negligible magnitude of visual change.

Summary of Residual Visual Impacts

11.202 The magnitude of visual impact has been assessed by direct changes to ten specific viewpoints.

11.203 The magnitude of change would be greatest at the viewpoints in close proximity to the east and south of the application site. However this would be no more than a "medium" degree of visual change and would be limited to a relatively small area as follows:

- Viewpoint 5 at 80m to the east the degree of change is medium and adverse;
- Viewpoint 6, 500m to the south the degree of change is medium and neutral; and
- Viewpoint 9, 100m to the west the degree of change is medium and neutral.

11.204 The existing context of the application site and mature trees provide screening of the development, which would be set down in the landscape. Mitigation, colour treatments and landscape planting would be effective. Residual adverse effects relate to the road access and removal of mature trees at viewpoint 5 near to Western Farm.

Potential Significance of Landscape Impacts of the Proposals

11.205 Overall the application site would have a low sensitivity to the development proposals given that the character of the application site is already 'Previously Developed Land'.. The magnitude of landscape change would be medium and neutral, mainly due to the introduction of an industrial structure within an industrial setting and resulting in a change in character to "Active Industrial Land". The significance of landscape impacts during operation would therefore be slight to moderate and neutral.

11.206 Overall, these changes would cause a few changes and affect a few receptors. Therefore, there would be no significant landscape impacts on the landscape fabric of the application site itself.

11.207 In terms of effects on the wider landscape resource, the small footprint of the application site and the area of land affected is a limited portion of the wider North Dever Downs Landscape Character Area defined by Winchester City Council. Furthermore, the analysis of views has indicated very limited extent of visibility beyond the site boundaries and therefore any change to the wider landscape character, as experienced from specific viewpoints, would be very limited in extent. The majority of the fabric and views from the published Landscape Character Area would remain intact.

Potential Significance of Visual Impacts of the Proposals

11.208 The significance levels are summarised in Table 11-7 for all viewpoints.

Table 11-7
Significance of Effect for each Viewpoint

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance
1	Medium	None	None
2	High	Negligible Neutral	Slight/moderate Neutral
3	Medium	Negligible Neutral	Slight Neutral
4	High	None	None
5	High	Medium Adverse	**Moderate/Substantial Adverse**
6	Medium	Medium Neutral	Moderate Neutral
7	High	None	None
8	High	None	None
9	Medium	Medium Neutral	Moderate Neutral
10	Medium	Negligible Neutral	Slight Neutral

11.209 Significant adverse visual effects are limited to viewpoint 5, Western Farm, a residential receptor, where loss of mature trees from the site entrance at 80m away and the assumed visibility splays would be visible as would vehicle movements to and from the site, albeit in a northwards direction away from the viewpoint rather than running past it. The building itself would be set down in the landscape, behind the remaining roadside trees.

11.210 There are no other significant effects, adverse or otherwise predicted, reflecting the contained visibility of the development and mitigation offered.

Potential Effects in Relation to Landscape Planning Policies

11.211 A detailed consideration of Planning Policy is provided in Chapter 4 of the ES and landscape planning policies have been identified as relevant to the proposed development in Appendix 11/1.

11.212 This sub-section considers the predicted potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development in relation to these policies.

11.213 In relation to National Planning Policy Framework, it is considered that the development incorporates good design into its building materials, colours and landscape planting treatments. There would be no national landscape designations affected by the development. The qualitative review of additional artificial light would be limited in extent.

11.214 In relation to the RSS for South East England Policy CC6, NRM15, C4 and policy 45 of the Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1998, and Policy CE.5 of Winchester District Local Plan and LDF and Policy DC3 Hampshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2008), it is confirmed that the development is located on previously developed land rather than open countryside, and it is considered that it would respect the local landscape character.

11.215 In relation to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy paragraph 26.11 and Winchester District LDF, Policy CP8, it is confirmed that there would be no registered parks and gardens affected by the development.

CONCLUSIONS

11.216 This chapter of the ES has assessed the potential landscape and visual implications of the proposed development at Micheldever Station, south of the A303. The nature of the development hasbeen described in Chapter 3.

11.217 This included a baseline study of the existing site and its surroundings, a study of the landscape and visual characteristics of the development and an assessment of the residual landscape and visual impacts likely to be generated after mitigation has been considered and their significance.

11.218 The application site is set down in the landscape and enclosed by mature tree belts adjacent to an area safeguarded as a rail-head aggregates depot in the Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and waste local plan 1998.

11.219 There are no national landscape designations within the 6km study area. The site itself is designated as a part of a SINC for its calcareous grassland habitats and there is a group Tree Preservation Order along the eastern boundary.

11.220 The landscape surrounding the application site is consistent with the key characteristics for the “North Dever Downs Character Area” and “Open Arable Character Type” as set out in the published assessments. For example, the rolling and relatively large fields with straight boundaries, strong field boundaries, with tall, thick hedges, a relatively high proportion of hedgerow trees and small assorted semi-natural ancient woodlands give a degree of visual enclosure. There are long panoramic views of open farmland, contained by distant woodland to the east and north and a well-treed railway embankment running in a north-south direction, which is a visually prominent feature within the area. The wider area has a remote, rural character, although the A303 and railway detracts from this to the north of the area.

11.221 However, more locally the application site and adjacent railway sidings contrast with the character of the wider study area. The site consists of bare ground (with large areas of species-rich unimproved chalk grassland), has an engineered, linear form and although there is some natural regeneration and mature trees/woodland plantation around the periphery of the site, the character is of a largely abandoned/derelict state. Overall the character of the site is of "Previously Developed Land".

11.222 The proposed development would alter the landscape character of the application site to 'Active Industrial Land' and thus constitute few changes to its fabric and therefore of a slight to moderate and neutral effect.

11.223 The effect on the wider landscape resource (North Dever Downs Landscape Character Area) would be very limited, due to the small footprint of the 3ha site and its existing condition; but also limited visibility. The majority of the fabric and views from the published Landscape Character Area would remain intact. Overall there would be no significant landscape effects.

11.224 The viewpoint assessment identified a localised significant adverse visual effect, immediately adjacent to the isolated residential property at Western Farm, at Viewpoint 5 east of the site. This very restricted viewpoint position would receive views of the site entrance, vehicle movements and associated tree loss.

11.225 All other representative viewpoints in the study area, as agreed with the HCC, were less than significant and either neutral in nature, or considered to be none resulting from the final development design, degree of screening and nature of landscape mitigation.

11.226 A landscape mitigation strategy would include replacement trees, additional planting around the site and colour treatments to the building.

APPENDIX 11/1 – LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICIES

The following planning documents are relevant to the landscape of the application site and surrounding areas:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012);
- The South East Plan (May 2009);
- Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1998;
- Hampshire Minerals & Waste Core Strategy (2008); and
- Winchester District LDF.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council boundary is located approximately 300m to the north.

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Under paragraph 17 it sets out twelve core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking, including taking account of *"the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it."*

Under paragraph 56 it states that *"good design is a key aspect of sustainable development"* and under paragraph 58 describes how planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments *"function well and add to the overall quality of the area...establish a strong sense of place...respond to character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials...are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping".*

Under paragraph 109 it refers *to "protecting and enhancing valued landscapes..."* with paragraph 115 emphasising the "*Great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty".*

Under paragraph 125 there is a requirement that *"...decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation".*

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), sets out specific criteria in relation to landscape and visual effects in relation to biomass/waste projects. Although this relates to projects which generate more than 50MW of

electricity, and therefore much larger than the scale of plant proposed for the site, they may provide contextual considerations for the review of constraints. This includes reference to how:

- *good design that contributes positively to the character and quality of the area will go some way to mitigate adverse landscape/visual effects. Development proposals should consider the design of the generating station, including the materials to be used in the context of the local landscape;*
- *mitigation is achieved primarily through aesthetic aspects of site layout and building design including size and external finish and colour of the generating station to minimise intrusive appearance in the landscape as far as engineering requirements permit; and*
- *landscape sites to visually enclose them at low level as seen from surrounding external viewpoints to make the scale less apparent, and helps conceal its lower level, smaller scale features. Earth bunds and mounds, tree planting or both may be used for softening the visual intrusion and may also help to attenuate noise from site.*

The South East Plan

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South East of England (known as the South East Plan) sets out the long term spatial planning framework for the region over the years 2006-2026. It provides a spatial context within which Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans need to be prepared, as well as other regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes that have a bearing on land use activities.

Poilicy CC6: Sustainable communities and character of the environment states that, "Actions and decisions associated with the development and use of land will actively promote the creation of sustainable and distinctive communities. This will be achieved by developing and implementing a local shared vision which:

- *respects, and where appropriate enhances, the character and distinctiveness of settlements and landscapes throughout the region*
- *uses innovative design processes to create a high quality built environment which promotes a sense of place. This will include consideration of accessibility, social inclusion, the need for environmentally sensitive development and crime reduction"*

Policy NRM15: Location of renewable energy development states that, *"Local development documents should encourage the development of renewable energy in order to achieve the regional and sub-regional targets. Renewable energy development, particularly wind and biomass, should be located and designed to minimise adverse impacts on landscape, wildlife, heritage assets and amenity. Outside of urban areas, priority should be given to development in less sensitive parts of countryside and coast, including on previously developed land and in major transport areas. The location and design of all renewable energy proposals should be informed by landscape character assessment where available. Within areas of protected and sensitive landscapes including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the national parks, development should generally be of a small scale or community-*

based. Proposals within or close to the boundaries of designated areas should demonstrate that development will not undermine the objectives that underpin the purposes of designation".

Policy C4: Landscape and countryside management states that, *"Outside nationally designated landscapes, positive and high quality management of the region's open countryside will be encouraged and supported by local authorities and other organisations, agencies, land managers, the private sector and local communities, through a combination of planning policies, grant aid and other measures. In particular, planning authorities and other agencies in their plans and programmes should recognise, and aim to protect and enhance, the diversity and local distinctiveness of the region's landscape, informed by landscape character assessment".*

Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1998

Policy 45 of Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1998, states that, "*The Waste Planning Authorities will normally permit waste processing facilities which enable the recovery of resources (materials and energy) from waste and reduce the volume of waste requiring disposal by landfilling provided that", amongst other points that:*

- *(iv) the proposed site is located within an urban area or within an area which is permitted or allocated for industrial development, or is a site within the countryside that has already been disturbed by permanent development (a brown field site); and*
- *(v) the proposed site is not located within the South West Hampshire Green Belt or a Strategic Gap or open countryside unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the County Council that there is no other suitable site available and that the overall benefit to be gained from the proposed facility outweighs the adverse environmental impact that it would have on the area concerned; and*
- *(vi) the proposed site is located and the proposal includes adequate measures to ensure that no unacceptable impact would be likely to be caused to the occupants or users of houses, other residential buildings, schools, hospitals and other environmentally sensitive buildings and land uses by reason of noise, dust, fumes, smell or other cause; and*
- *(vii) the proposed site is located so as to avoid unacceptable impact on landscape, nature conservation and archaeological interests; and*
- *(ix) the proposed siting, design and landscaping of the facility are of the highest practicable standard and are appropriate to the location of the proposed development to ensure that it would not cause unacceptable visual intrusion".*

Hampshire Minerals & Waste Core Strategy (2008)

In the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Core Strategy (2008), under clause 3.8 it is stated that *"The Downland area, which spans central Hampshire from Andover in the west to*

Petersfield in the east, is characterised by large areas of chalk downland, farmland, small rural villages and market towns like New Alresford".

Under paragraph 11.1, ix. reference is made for the need to *"Protect land with international and national biodiversity designations, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and historic heritage sites and building of national importance from the impact of mineral and waste development". and under x., to "Protect local communities and areas of environmental interest from the adverse impact of mineral, waste and resources developments".*

Under paragraph 26.8 it is stated that *"Planning permission for major proposals, including land-won sand and gravel, non-hazardous landfill and 'strategic' recycling, aggregate processing and recovery and treatment facilities, within or likely to impact upon the New Forest National Park, the proposed South Downs National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will not be permitted. Planning permission for minor proposals will only be granted where these would not prejudice the purpose of the designation or where the reasons for development exceed the likely impacts of development and any adverse impact can be mitigated, provided the development primarily serves the communities within these areas and the development is designed appropriately to a high standard".*

Under paragraph 26.11 it is stated that *"Planning permission for minerals and waste proposals within, or which would adversely affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Sites on the National Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest will not be permitted, unless the reasons for development outweigh the likely impact".*

Under Development Control policy DC3 - Impact on Landscape and Townscape it is stated that *"Minerals and waste development will only be permitted if due regard is given to the likely visual impact of the proposed development and its impact on, and the need to maintain and enhance, the distinctive character of the landscape or townscape. If necessary, additional design, landscaping, planting and screening, including planting in advance of the commencement of the development, should be proposed".*

Winchester District LDF

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the emerging Local Plan for Winchester District being developed under The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended). The LDF will eventually replace the saved policies of the adopted Local Plan Review (2006).

Within Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy Policy CP8 Cultural Heritage and Landscape Character it is stated that, "*The City Council will require new development to recognise, protect and, where appropriate, enhance the District's distinctive landscape and cultural heritage, including natural and manmade elements associated with existing landscape character, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, listed buildings, and historic battlefields. Particular emphasis should be given to: recognised landscape and built character that includes features and elements of natural beauty, cultural or historic importance; local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting".*

The site is located within an area identified as "Countryside" within Winchester District Local Plan (Adopted 2006). Policy CE.5 States that: "*Development which fails to respect the character of the landscape, or harms the key characteristics of the Landscape Character Area concerned (as set out in Appendix 2) will not be permitted".* The Appendix 2 that is referred to in this policy is Winchester City Council's Landscape Character Assessment and the key characteristics from this document are set out below.

Proposals for "agri-industrial" and "agri-distribution" development in the countryside will only be permitted where they accord with Policy CE.13. In the Micheldever Station area, "agri-industrial" and "agri-distribution" development will not be permitted unless:

- *it requires a railhead location, can be satisfactorily served by the railhead and is located within the area defined on Inset Map 15; or*
- *(ii) it involves the limited expansion of an existing firm or organisation where this can be accommodated on its existing site, and where the site has a lawful use for the same proposal.*

It is also stated that *"Proposals for such development within the Micheldever Station area will only be permitted where the operation requires a railhead location, and this should be within the area defined on Inset Map 15. The Local Planning Authority should be satisfied that the development can be served by the railhead and that any requirements imposed by the railhead operator can be accommodated."* And that *"This area is also safeguarded for use as a railhead aggregates depot by the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. While the area is considered to be large enough to accommodate both an aggregates depot and agriindustrial/ distribution development, the Minerals Planning Authority (Hampshire County Council) will be consulted on planning applications for such development".*

APPENDIX 11/2 – METHOD STATEMENT FOR ZTVS

Comparative zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV) were calculated for the initial dimensions of the proposed building and stack, using 3D digital terrain model in LSS. This analysis is based on topography only and does not take account of the screening effects of any buildings or vegetation.

The receptor point grid interval was set to 25m, with a 1.7m eye height (above the digital terrain model).

The following target points were then set for ZTV calculation of Drawing MRS 11/5, to include representative points on the building only:

- E 451916.100, N 143620.760, 137.000m aod;
- E 451950.804, N 143617.974, 137.000m aod;
- E 451926.486, N 143559.966, 137.000m aod;
- E 451904.448, N 143497.398, 137.000m aod; and
- E 451940.165, N 143493.091, 137.000m aod.

The following target points were then set for ZTV calculation of Drawing MRS 11/6, to include representative points on the stack:

- E 451952.166, N 143479.774, 145.000m aod;
- E 451910.922, N 143487.680, 145.000m aod;
- E 451903.097, N 143524.930, 145.000m aod; and
- E 451903.423, N 143529.006, 145.000m aod.