

Chapter 19 Summary and Conclusions

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- 19.1 The proposed development will specifically deal with residual waste which at present is sent to landfill.
- 19.2 EU legislation requires that the volume of municipal waste going to landfill must be reduced to 35% of 1995 levels by 2020.
- 19.3 The Northern Ireland Executive has endorsed the need to meet the EU targets through the diversion of waste from landfill to other treatment methods by developing significant new waste management infrastructure (para. 4.20 Regional Development Strategy 2035). It identifies that these will be developed at a limited number of key sites, convenient to the major centres of waste production (para. 4.22) with research suggesting that to meet the Landfill Directive targets, Northern Ireland will require a combination of up to seven MBT and three EfW plants.
- 19.4 arc21's strategy for dealing with residual waste across its 11 Council areas is to develop the twin technologies of Mechanical Biological treatment (MBT) and Energy from Waste (EfW) as part of an integrated residual waste management facility on the site of an existing operational quarry at Hightown. These technologies have been established throughout UK and Europe and the proposed development at Hightown will for the first time in Northern Ireland co-locate these as part of a residual waste management treatment facility.
- 19.5 Waste will be transported from existing Council waste depots to the proposed facility at Hightown where recyclable and reusable material will be recovered mechanically in the MBT building before residual waste is used as a fuel in the EfW facility that will have the benefit of producing electricity and heat.
- 19.6 The technologies will enable arc21 to manage waste from its Councils in an efficient and environmentally sustainable manner which will have a useful output in the form of electricity generated and in the recovery of recyclates and metals at the front and back end of the process, as opposed to the current approach of putting waste into a hole in the ground. Potential remains for future re-use and recovery of value from the sales of IBA aggregate, subject to further exploration of a viable market in NI, UK or Europe dependent on improved construction sector conditions.
- 19.7 The proposed development has been the subject of a comprehensive and exacting Environmental Impact Assessment, the findings of which are articulated over four volumes of this Environmental Statement.
- 19.8 This has followed a wide ranging process of engagement with DoE Planning and its statutory and non-statutory consultees in scoping the content of the EIA, sharing the proposed approach and findings and seeking feedback from them as part of the Pre-application discussion (PAD) process. Subjecting the proposal to extensive public consultation has also been an integral part of the EIA process, with ten drop in sessions completed over a 12 week period in parallel with consultee review of the PAD draft ES.

19.9 The ES has been prepared to accord with the requirements of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 and all other related environmental legislation, guidance and planning policy.

19.10 It has described the potential effects on the environment and the significance of these, considering both the construction phase of the project and when it is operational. In doing so it has addressed a range of environmental factors, including:

- Chapter 6: Geology, Soils and Agriculture;
- Chapter 7: Water Environment;
- Chapter 8: Land Quality;
- Chapter 9: Ecology;
- Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage;
- Chapter 12: Transport;
- Chapter 13: Noise;
- Chapter 14: Air Quality;
- Chapter 15: Climatic Factors;
- Chapter 16: Population/Socio Economic; including Economic Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment;
- Chapter 17: Material Assets, including aviation safeguarding, grid connection and service infrastructure assessment; and
- Chapter 18: Significance of Effects and Impact Interactions.

19.11 It has described:

- The background to the project and the experience of the Becon Consortium in designing, constructing and managing these types of technologies in Europe;
- In comprehensive detail, the existing context associated with the operational quarry landscape into which the development is to be integrated, making best use of the existing terraced profile of the site to minimise landscape impact as well as the nature of its relationship with the wider landscape character;
- The inter-related elements that collectively comprise the project;
- Explained the main alternatives that have been studied by arc21 and the Becon Consortium and an indication of the main reasons for choosing the Hightown Quarry site

taking into account the environmental effects as well as capturing the design iteration that has occurred in bringing the development forward as part of the planning process; and

- The consultation process to date with DoE Planning and its consultees as well as the wide ranging pre-application public consultation exercises.

19.12 The ES describes the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development in Chapters 6-17 and the inter-relationship between these in Chapter 18.

19.13 It fully documents the significance of identified environmental effects by reference to direct, indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium, long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects after mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects have been taken into account.

19.14 The ES has not identified any severe or substantial long-term negative environmental effects. Adverse effects that do arise do not exceed recognised environmental standards with the majority of impacts arising during construction and consequently where the environmental effects are of temporary duration.

19.15 The development of the facilities has a substantial positive effect in providing an environmentally sustainable alternative to landfill. It will be located in an already degraded (operational quarry) landscape which has a strong utilitarian character, within close proximity to the strategic highway network.

19.16 The ES has identified that:

- There will be no demonstrable harm to human health or result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment;
- The design of the facilities has been specifically responsive to the character of the quarry site, the surrounding area and adjacent land uses;
- The built elements have been designed to anchor into the existing quarry landscape and over time to assimilate successfully with the surrounding landscape character to ensure that their impact, judged against the utilitarian character of the receiving environment, does not give rise to perceived unacceptable impact;
- The access to the site and the nature and associated frequency of associated traffic movements will not prejudice safety and convenience of road users or constitute a nuisance to neighbouring residents by virtue of noise, dirt and dust;
- The public road network will be upgraded to accommodate the traffic generated;
- Adequate arrangements will be provided within the site for parking, servicing and circulation of vehicles;
- Alternative transport modes have been considered;

- There will not be an unacceptable adverse impact on nature conservation or archaeological/built heritage interests;
- The types of waste to be deposited or treated and the proposed method of treatment will not pose any environmental risk to air, water or soil resources that cannot be prevented or controlled by mitigating measures;
- The proposed site is not at risk of flooding and the proposal will not cause or exacerbate flooding elsewhere; and
- The proposal avoids (as far as practicable) the permanent loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.