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# Non-Technical Summary

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## Purpose and Contents of this Non-technical Summary

This is a non-technical summary of the results of the assessment that has been undertaken into how the proposed reclamation and infrastructure works to facilitate the Telford Millennium Community (TMC) development would affect the environment. The findings of this 'Environmental Impact Assessment' (EIA) are reported in full in the Environmental Statement (ES) that accompanies the planning application, to which readers requiring technical information may wish to refer. The following sections of this non-technical summary describe:

- the EIA process;
- the existing environment at the site;
- the proposals for the development; and
- the predicted changes resulting from the development that are likely to significantly affect the environment.

## The Environmental Impact Assessment Process

EIA is a process that involves collecting information about the existing environment likely to be affected by a project. The nature and scale of the project's effects on the environment are then assessed in an impartial manner and presented in a systematic way. The process is designed to allow environmental concerns and opportunities to be addressed during the planning and design of a project, by incorporating into the proposals measures to mitigate adverse effects or enhance beneficial ones.

The EIA process is controlled by a series of Regulations which, in the case of reclamation and certain infrastructure works, relate to the planning control system administered by the local planning authority (LPA). In the case of the TMC, the LPA is the Borough of Telford and Wrekin (BTW). The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) Circular 02/99 provides guidance on the process of deciding whether an EIA is required for new developments; referred to as the screening process. No screening opinion has been sought from BTW on whether an EIA is required as the project sponsors and the developer team believed that an EIA was required under the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England and Wales) Regulations, 1999*.

In July 2004 an ES was submitted to accompany an outline planning application for the reclamation of the site, and construction of 750 dwellings and associated infrastructure. Entec UK Ltd was commissioned by Taylor Woodrow Developments Limited (TW) and English Partnerships (EP) to undertake a study to define the scope of the assessments needed to describe all likely significant environmental effects and to evaluate their significance for this development proposal. The findings were set out in a scoping report, which was submitted to BTW together with a request for it to adopt a scoping opinion.

In addition, the scoping report was sent to a wide range of other organisations, with a request that they submit their comments to BTW. The scoping opinion and the detailed responses of consultees were used to guide the detailed assessment work that was undertaken in preparing the July 2004 ES.

In developing the detailed proposals for the reclamation and installation of strategic infrastructure that are the subject of the planning application accompanied by this NTS and ES, reference has been made to this earlier scoping exercise, including the comments received from consultees and the draft planning conditions issued as a result of BTW's decision to grant permission for the July 2004 outline planning application. As a result of the ongoing discussion undertaken both during and following the submission and consideration of the July 2004 outline planning application it has been possible to refine this reclamation proposal, and the scope of environmental assessment.

The assessments were undertaken in relation to the 'baseline' environment that is relevant to the effects being considered, dealing with the reclamation of the site and installation of strategic infrastructure. Having characterised the predicted effects their significance was evaluated. Significance was defined as being at one of two levels:

- significant - in simple terms, a significant effect is an effect that is of such concern that it should influence the decision as to whether or not the development should be granted planning permission; and
- not significant (many non significant effects were 'scoped out' of the assessment but some effects were sufficiently uncertain that they needed to be assessed in detail explaining the reason why some non-significant effects (e.g. on traffic numbers during construction) have been taken right through the assessment process).

The findings of the assessment are designed to assist consultees and, ultimately, decision-makers in coming to a view about whether or not, and how, a proposed development should proceed. This decision-making also forms a part of the EIA process.

## Description of the Existing Environment

The TMC application area covers some 36 hectares situated in Ketley, approximately 3 km to the north of Telford town centre. It is partly bordered by the A518 Holyhead Road to the south, the A518 Wombridge Way to the east, the Shrewsbury to Telford railway to the north and the Hadley to Ketley Road to the west (see Figure 1.1 of the ES).

The site is located on a north-facing slope with ground levels at 120-130 m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) along the south boundary, and at 105-115 m AOD along the north boundary. The TMC site contains three distinct areas which are briefly introduced below:

- The eastern area centred upon Beveley Glen Landfill. The landfill forms a steep-sided mound which is the highest area of the site with a rough grassland land cover.
- The central area is made up of many mounds of colliery spoil that have been tipped onto the original ground surface of flat meadows. These mounds are typically flat topped and steep sided. There are a few remaining areas of meadow that appear to be undisturbed natural ground currently used for grazing.

- The western area comprises sports pitch, the 'Rose Garden' and former golf driving range. Surface drainage collects in ponds at the north end of the former driving range.

## Description of the Proposed Development

### Reclamation and Strategic Infrastructure Installation

The reclamation and infrastructure period will be approximately 2.5 years, including measures to mitigate effects on existing flora and fauna. Construction access will mainly be from Wombridge Way however later phases will require access from Holyhead Road, in particular, to construct the spine road, although this will only commence following the relocation of the Parkside Centre.

No ground works will take place on those parts of the site that are likely to contain protected species or important habitats until a programme of translocation has been undertaken. Once this has been undertaken certain colliery spoil mounds will be regraded with the material used to create 'development platforms'. Local areas of contamination will also be treated, and if necessary material removed from site. As the land forming takes place new infrastructure will be installed; this will consist of the spine road, and School Square, a sustainable urban drainage system, including ponds and swales, structural landscaping including a new footpath network and services and utilities.

### Completed Development

Following completion of the works referred to above the site will be landscaped, surface drains will be operative and access will be provided along a spine road to areas of the site known as development platforms. These will be the subject of future planning applications for residential development, a school and community building. A significant area of the site will be safeguarded for nature conservation.

## Assessment of Environmental Effects

As a result of the iterative design process that has been undertaken there remain only a small number of effects that could be significant - some of these are beneficial whilst others are adverse. These effects are summarised below.

## Summary of Effects

The ES covers the range of environmental topics. These are the same as those addressed at the scoping stage and are as follows:

- Geology and Land Quality;
- Hydrology and Water Quality;
- Flora and Fauna;
- Landscape and Visual;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Traffic and Transport;
- Noise;

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- Air Quality;
  - Socio-economics;
  - Open Space and Recreation; and
  - Community Safety.

The key findings for each topic are summarised below.

### **Geology and Land Quality**

The geology under the site comprises Glacial Till (Boulder Clay) over Middle and Upper Coal Measures rocks. The site occupies brownfield land which has an industrial legacy dominated by former underground coal workings. In addition to the coal mining legacy, the site contains areas affected by land-filling of wastes and a small sewage treatment works.

There are some land stability issues caused by the known mine shafts on the site. The areas of colliery spoil are also potentially unstable as they can have very steep slopes. The site is not heavily contaminated, but that the colliery spoil and land-filled areas could pose a risk to the environment and human health and safety, if they are not properly managed in the proposed reclamation strategy.

Brick Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a geological SSSI located 250 m to the north of the TMC site.

The potential changes and effects on the identified receptors, (construction workers, groundwater, surface water) have been addressed either in other technical chapters (such as effects on hydrology and water quality, flora and fauna, noise and dust), in other documents (reclamation strategy) or through health and safety procedures and have not been addressed here. However, effects on the geological SSSI have been assessed. It is concluded that the implementation of an effective reclamation strategy will ensure that potential effects upon Brick Pit SSSI will not be significant.

### **Hydrology and Water Quality**

Surface water features on the site itself are limited to:

- Beveley Glen Stream, which is a small ordinary watercourse that flows along the western toe of the Beveley Glen Landfill; and
- Four ponds which appear to be fed by surface run-off and remain wet for most of the time as a result of poor drainage.

Site drainage is affected by a number of factors, including Beveley Glen Landfill, the disused golf driving range and the railway embankment along the northern edge of the site. The extensive mine workings on site have also modified drainage. Drainage from the site is potentially constrained by the capacity of the culverts under the railway embankment.

With regard to groundwater, sandstone layers present under the TMC site are defined as a Minor Aquifer<sup>1</sup>. However the limited available data for the site indicates that the groundwater levels do not affect surface drainage features.

Groundwater quality has been affected by mining activity and contamination sources exist on the site which represent an on-going source of groundwater contamination. In terms of surface water Beveley Glen Stream may be subject to limited contamination from colliery spoil and runoff from roads treated with salt.

The Environment Agency requires the run-off from the site meet certain flow and quality criteria and requested that a Flood Risk Assessment be undertaken. This was submitted with the original outline planning application and it has now been supplemented by a more detailed addendum, reflecting the greater degree of work undertaken to support this application. In combination with standard mitigation measures it is considered that the effects of run-off from the site on the quality and quantity of water entering receiving watercourses from the development will be effectively mitigated. Any discharges made during construction will be subject to EA consents, which will be monitored and enforced. No significant effects are therefore predicted and no detailed assessment has been undertaken.

### **Flora and Fauna**

The site of the proposed TMC development site comprises predominantly amenity grassland, neutral grassland, dense scrub, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and acid grassland. There are also 4 ponds present. The western and eastern central areas of the site support the habitats of greatest nature conservation value. Japanese knotweed, which is an invasive pest species is also present on site but is undergoing treatment to eradicate it.

A number of species of animal of nature conservation value have also been recorded on site including great crested newts, bats, birds, common lizard, dingy skipper butterfly and other terrestrial invertebrates of brownfield sites. Badger has used the site historically although the species is not currently present.

There are no designated sites of nature conservation value within 1 km of the site.

Effects on the majority of species can, and in some cases - notably great crested newt and bats - must be effectively mitigated.

Where effects cannot be effectively mitigated, detailed assessment has taken place of the effects of the development on habitats and species considered to be of district level importance or greater. These are the effects on habitats and linkages on the site, foraging bats, common lizard and dingy skipper butterfly and other invertebrates of brownfield sites.

The assessment has concluded that there will be two significant effects. A positive effect is predicted on habitats and species through the commitment to manage habitats on-site in the long-term which will lead to their long-term survival. A negative effect is predicted on the population of reptiles as a result of reduced habitat areas available in the long term, leading to a potentially smaller population and increased vulnerability. There is a degree of uncertainty in this assessment and additional mitigation for the reptile population has been proposed, which

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<sup>1</sup> Minor aquifers can be important for local water supplies and in supplying base flow to rivers but are not major sources of water.

includes population monitoring in the longer term, in addition to management and enhancement of retained and newly created habitats.

Negative but non-significant effects identified include the reduction of areas of habitat, effects on habitat linkages and effects on linkages and foraging areas for bats. Non-significant positive effects arise through the translocation of habitats. Effects on dingy skipper and terrestrial invertebrates of brownfield sites are predicted to be negative in the short-term and positive in the longer term.

### **Landscape and Visual**

The 36 ha TMC site contains a diverse range of landscape and visual resources that reflect its complex land-use history. Over recent years with the end of mining, formal recreation and landfill activities, much of the site has been subject to a *de facto* landscape management strategy of 'benign neglect' which has allowed the development of a mosaic of woodland, scrub and rough grassland types that is used primarily for informal recreation.

In a wider context, Telford has naturalistic landscape areas that form buffers, links and corridors throughout the town. This situation applies to the Ketley area so that the TMC site is not surrounded by extensive recent development. Instead the site is presently seen in a wider context of an extensive network of tree and shrub cover that extends over large parts of Ketley and Red Lake.

The following landscape and visual effects as being likely to be significant during the construction and operation of the TMC:

- Loss of existing visual elements leading to changes in views;
- Introduction of new visual elements that will intrude into, frame, filter or foreshorten existing views;
- Loss of existing landscape elements leading to changes to existing local landscape character; and
- Introduction of new landscape elements leading to changes to existing local landscape character.

### **Landscape Effects**

The assessment of the landscape effects during reclamation and infrastructure works has concluded that the changes to the existing landcover and topography of the TMC site, combined with the operation of a full range of plant and equipment, will result significant negative effects on the landscape over nearly all of the construction period. However the assessment also notes that once landscaping is in place, and begins to mature it will begin to have positive landscape effects.

Overall the landscape effects of the operation of the TMC will be positive and will provide a landscape structure to support a sense of place for the future development. One of the primary objectives of the development proposal is to retain the green mantle of the site and ensure that it retains at least a proportion of its present landscape character and function. The assessment concludes that, although the landscape character of the TMC site will be modified, the changes will be generally positive with the strongest elements of the present landscape being retained and patterns reinforced by new planting and increased maintenance of retained elements.

## Visual Effects

Although the site is well screened by mature planting and the area's topography, a range of people who would potentially have at least some views of the reclamation or final development form have been identified. These people are called visual receptors and it is believed that none of them has a clear view of the entire site (except possibly some residents at the tower block in Ketley).

During the course of the reclamation works, the principal visual changes will be generated by the loss of vegetation required to allow the reclamation works and the subsequent earthmoving activities to form the new landform. Nevertheless nearly all the reclamation activities will take place away from the edges of the site with the result that the woodland and tree planting around the edge of the site will be kept and will continue to screen views towards the main part of the site. The visual receptors that are predicted to sustain significant adverse visual effects as a consequence of the changes to their views will be:

- Residents in Glen Cottages for the entire construction period, except the new clearance phase;
- Houses and public houses (an estimated 14 houses, the Methodist chapel and three pubs) on the northern side of Holyhead Road in the period 2006/7;
- Houses (an estimated seven houses) and the public house on the north side of Beveley Road from the commencement of reclamation works to facilitate the stream crossing until 2007;
- Houses on Red Lees (an estimated six houses) in the period up to late 2006/2007;
- Residents in east-facing apartments in the block of flats near Ketley Crossroads in the period up to late 2006/7;
- Users of the public footpaths across the site for the entire construction period;
- Users of facilities around Ketley Crossroads in the period up until late 2006/2007.

Hence the assessment shows that, aside from the residents of Glen Cottages and Public Rights of Way users who are actually within or completely surrounded by the proposal site, significant adverse visual effects are likely to be restricted to the most sensitive receptors to the south-west and south of the site who have close distance views of the most open parts of the site and for whom the reclamation process will substantially alter present views. For other receptors views of most reclamation activities will be restricted by a combination of intervening topography, the retention of nearly all the peripheral landcover and much of the mature tree cover within the development blocks and the layout of the existing surrounding housing areas.

The following groups of receptors are predicted to sustain significant visual effects following the completion of the reclamation and infrastructure works. The type of predicted effect varies, although the majority will be negative or neutral:

- Residents in Glen Cottages are predicted to sustain significant adverse effects;
- Houses and public houses (an estimated 14 houses, the Methodist chapel and three pubs) on the northern side of Holyhead Road will sustain neutral effects;
- Houses on Red Lees (an estimated six houses) will sustain neutral effects;

- Houses at Nos 35-63 The Broadway will sustain neutral effects;
- Residents in east-facing apartments in the tower block at Ketley Crossroads will sustain neutral effects.

This list represents a small proportion of the potential visual receptors leading to the conclusion that the final landform and infrastructure on site will not be especially visually intrusive. This is due to a number of site and design specific factors such as:

- A lack of locations from where good views of more than a part of the site are available;
- The TMC will retain visually important tree groups and lines of mature planting on site wherever possible;
- The strong visual separation between the western part of the proposal site and the main body of the site which will mean that for a proportion of visual receptors the only change will be the views into and across the existing sports fields.

### **Cultural Heritage**

The remains of coal extraction are the only known features of cultural heritage interest within the site, and the visible remains are limited to the coal spoil mounds. A brickworks is recorded within the site and shown on historic maps, although no remains of this are known to exist.

There are few areas within the site where original ground levels are likely to have survived intact following the extensive previous disturbance. Even in areas where disturbance has not been identified from historic map sources and ground investigations, undisturbed ground has not been proven to exist.

Features of cultural heritage interest recorded around the site are also mostly related to industry and include coal and iron works and associated transport infrastructure. However the twelfth century Augustinian monastery, St Leonard's Priory, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), lies some 500 m to the northeast of the site. Other designated features identified in the area are listed buildings of local importance. Some Roman and Medieval activity is also known within the area surrounding the site.

However, the site is not visible from the SAM. Therefore it is considered that there will not be a significant effect on this feature as a result of the reclamation works. Listed buildings will also not be affected.

Mitigation of the other environmental effects includes the retention of some of the spoil mounds, and the commitment to record features if found during the construction process. As a result of these measures being undertaken, effects on any unrecorded cultural heritage resources as a result of the development are considered to be not significant.

### **Traffic and Transport**

The detailed Transport Assessment undertaken in support of the July 2004 outline application has been used to inform the Traffic and Transport assessment. This TA also incorporated traffic flows associated with the proposed Hadley Private Finance Initiative (PFI) site as this will result in an increase in traffic passing the TMC site during the reclamation phases. Given that there will be no uses consented on this site as part of the planning application accompanied by this ES operational traffic has not been assessed.

Baseline traffic flows have been established in order to evaluate the effects of additional traffic flows during the reclamation and infrastructure construction.

Standard mitigation measure will be employed to reduce both the numbers of construction traffic movements and the effects of these movements on other road users. Construction access will mainly be from Wombridge Way however later phases will require access from Holyhead Road, in particular, to construct the spine road, although this will only commence following the relocation of the Parkside Centre. The potential change in traffic flows has been considered against guidelines set by the Institute of Environmental Assessment. The percentage change shows that there will be no significant effect during the construction phase.

### **Noise**

The site is currently largely unoccupied and the main source of noise on site is road traffic from the A518 and other local roads. The other noise source is the Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury railway line that runs along the northern boundary of the site. Noise sensitive receptors include the residents of Glen Cottages and the residents of the housing areas close to the site's western, eastern and south-eastern boundaries.

In order to mitigate potential effects best practice construction management measures will be undertaken and reinforced with a Control of Pollution Act 1974 Section 61 Agreement with the Local Authority. The proposed mitigation measures have been proven to be effective on other large-scale construction sites.

There is potential for disturbance to the existing residents on and around the site, caused by the noise from reclamation activities.

Comparison was undertaken of predicted noise levels for the reclamation periods with widely accepted standards. The result of the assessment was that reclamation noise levels will not be significant for any of the identified receptors.

### **Air Quality**

The site is in an area considered to have good air quality with background pollutant concentrations being significantly below national air quality objectives.

Landfill gas is generated from some parts of the site.

Dust will be generated during the reclamation phase. This is most likely during the site reclamation phase and to a lesser extent during the construction of infrastructure. As a general rule, dust nuisance would not be expected at a distance beyond about 250 m from the source (assuming no mitigation) and then only when these receptors are downwind of the dust source.

The reduction of potential air quality effects is a standard requirement on construction sites. A dust management strategy has therefore been proposed that would utilise best practice techniques that are widely accepted as an effective means of mitigation. The issue of landfill gas will be effectively mitigated by the reclamation strategy.

The potential receptors that would be affected by increased pollutant release by vehicles during reclamation, dust generation and landfill gas are occupants of residential properties, schools & hospitals, including existing on-site receptors.

The assessment indicates that during some phases of the reclamation period there is a risk of dust deposition at nearby receptors such as Glen Cottages. However provided that the proposed mitigation measures are put in place, dust deposition will not cause significant effects for sensitive receptors within or around the site. Likewise potential effects of emissions from vehicles using the haul roads will not result in exceedence of the air quality standards and hence these are not considered to be significant. As a result of the expected effectiveness of the site reclamation strategy, potential effects on people as a result of exposure to landfill gas are considered to be not significant.

### **Socio-Economics**

Historically, the site has been subject to various traditional employment uses such as the extraction of coal and marl, a brick-works and the widespread tipping of colliery spoil. Access to facilities and services in the centre of Telford is via the main public transport route that passes along Holyhead Road. Local facilities are also provided nearby. Since its foundation as a New Town in 1968, the population of Telford has grown to 128 000 and it has been very successful in attracting jobs and economic activity.

The receptors with the potential to be significantly affected by the proposed development are the local workforce; the local economy; local facilities, shops and services, and local residents.

The reclamation and infrastructure works will create approximately 70 jobs. Although positive, these are not considered to be a significant contribution to the jobs market.

The employment of construction workers on site will create demand for local businesses. The local shops, eateries and public houses can expect to benefit from an increase in trade during the construction period. Taylor Woodrow proposes to adopt a local procurement policy which could provide a new market for some local businesses although the scale and extent is not likely to be significant.

The closure of the Parkside Centre, a well-used local social facility, would be a significant direct social effect on local residents both on and off-site. However the opening of a new community facility, prior to the closure of Parkside Centre, will ensure that the closure does not represent a significant effect.

### **Open Space and Recreation**

The site is currently used by local residents for both formal and informal recreational purposes and facilities include a sports pitch, children's play area, BMX track and several Public Rights of Way and roads used as public paths.

To mitigate effects of the loss of access to the existing sports pitch the applicant proposes to provide a financial contribution to the development and upgrading of sports pitches at Ketley Bank which should take place prior to the commencement of reclamation works on the existing sports fields.

During the 2.5 year long construction period, the majority of the Public Rights of Way will sustain adverse effects in the form of diversions, or through the temporary effects caused by the movement of plant and machinery around the site. The resultant difficulty in gaining access onto parts of site is considered to be a significant adverse effect on users during the construction period.

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Following the completion of reclamation, and the installation of a new footpath network, public access into the site will be enhanced.

### **Community Safety**

The site is currently predominantly open access. There are a number of Public Rights of Way across the site, some of which can be accessed by vehicles. However some areas are relatively secluded and have been the locations for cars being burned or dumped. Fires are also set on site and fly-tipping also takes place.

During the reclamation phase a crime prevention strategy will be employed to minimise the opportunities for criminal acts. As a result no significant effects are predicted.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Consideration has been given as to whether any of the individual effects of the proposed works will combine to create a cumulative effect on people that is greater than the sum of the individual effects, and which is considered significant.

Effects on people considered in this assessment generally arise as a result of changes in their visual surroundings and/or as a result of changes to traffic, noise and dust levels, access to open space and recreational facilities and to their safety.

Effects generated by changes in these environmental topics are most likely to be experienced in the immediate vicinity of the site and hence the assessment has been limited to receptors on and immediately adjacent to the site.

The assessment of cumulative effects has resulted in an additional significant cumulative effect from several environmental issues being identified for the residents of Broadway during the reclamation and infrastructure phase.

### **Overall Conclusions**

There are predicted to be significant effects during the reclamation of the site, and the construction of new infrastructure.

The main significant effects of the works proposed relate to landscape and visual changes that will take place. The main potential for significant negative landscape and visual effects is during the early reclamation stages. Significant neutral visual effects have also been identified for the post reclamation period when views will have changed but are considered no better or worse than those experienced previously.

Other predicted significant effects during the reclamation phase are the disturbance to the users of the existing Public Right of Way network and to the availability of informal access to the site.

Predicted significant effects post reclamation comprise the negative effect of the works on the population of reptiles. Significant positive effects arise through habitat management in the long term.

The assessment of cumulative effects resulted in an additional significant effect being predicted to be caused by the combination of effects from several environmental issues for the residents of Broadway.