Client:	Owner's Engineer:	Local Designer:	Environm. Consultant:

PROJECT: **124054 WEPA VESTA UK BRIDGEND**

CLIENT: **WEPA UK**

PHASE: **PLANNING APPLICATION**

DOCUMENT: **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

ID: **59200-0052**

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Applicant

1.1.1 WEPA UK Limited is the UK subsidiary of the WEPA Group headquartered in Germany. The WEPA Group is an independent, family-owned company, founded in 1948. Since that time, the company has grown considerably and it now operates 22 paper machines at 13 locations across Europe. It employs some 3,900 people. Bridgend Paper Mill itself was built in 1950, over the following decades the site passed through several owners. From 2016 it has been invested in new modern lines and technical equipment ensuring Bridgend remains at the global forefront of the paper industry.

1.1.2 WEPA UK intend to submit a Planning Application to construct a new tissue paper machine, called Vesta. The new development will replace the existing paper machine "Jupiter" which was built in the 1970s. This machine has a high energy demand and water consumption that is not sustainable anymore. The produced paper does not add value to the final products currently required by the market. In order to enhance the production capacity, produce higher paper quality and reduce the power and water consumptions, WEPA is planning to replace the old Jupiter machine with a new machine, named Vesta.

1.2 Requirement for an Environmental Statement

1.2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 2017 No. 571) require that, for certain types of development an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) be undertaken before planning permission can be granted. In accordance with the list of developments in Schedule 1 (No. 18b) of the EIA regulations the proposed development is described as an *"industrial plant for the production of paper and board with a production capacity exceeding 200 tonnes per day*".

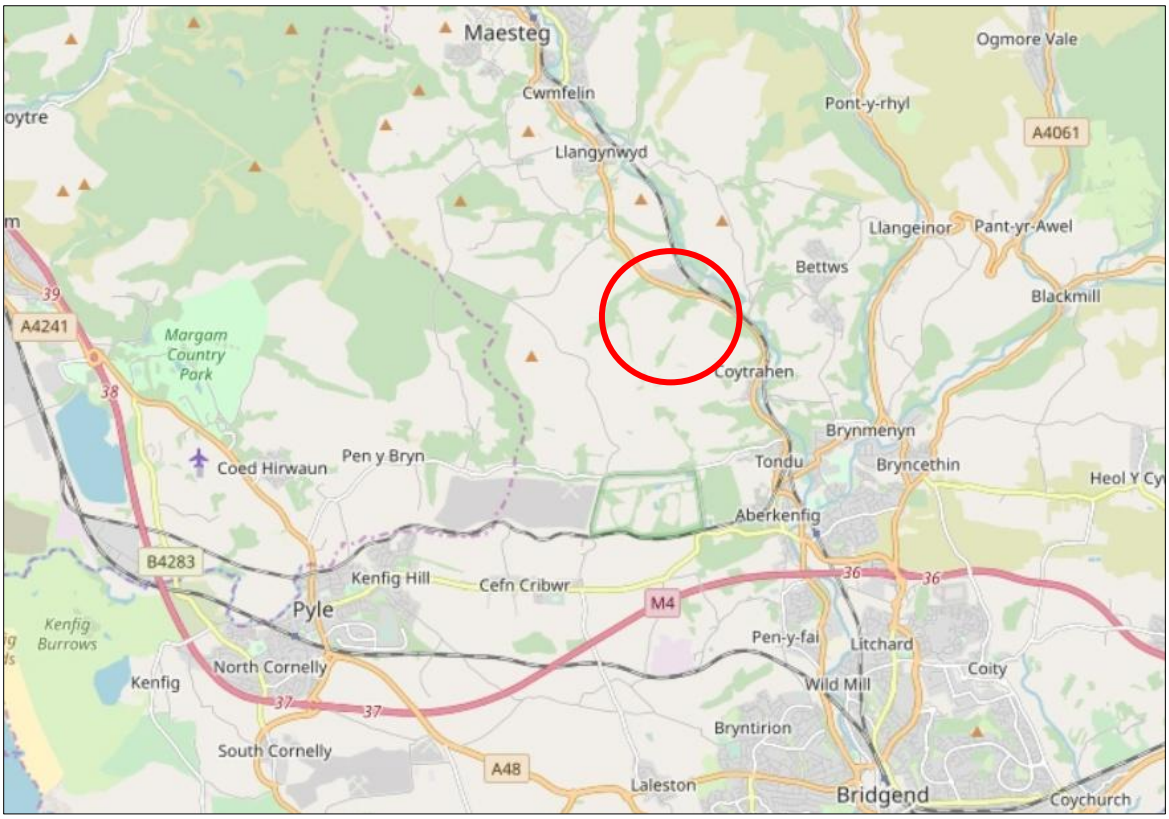
1.2.2 As the capacity of the proposed development exceeds this threshold, an Environmental Statement (ES) is required in every case. This ES has been prepared for the purposes of describing the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed development based on the environmental data which has been collated since the Scoping Report was submitted in 2024 under Article 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017.

2.0 Description of the Development Site and its Surroundings

2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 The proposed development site is located on the site of the existing Bridgend mill site approximately 5 km to the north of Bridgend town centre, in an area bound to the south and to the west by the A4063, to the east by the River Llynfi, and to the north by open farmland. The site is orientated along its long axis in an approximate west to east direction and it is accessed via the A 4063 (Bridgend Road) between Maesteg and Coytrahen, with traffic generally proceeding south towards the M 4. The Bridgend site covers a total area of around 25 hectares of which buildings and other hardstanding areas extend to approximately 15 ha.

Figure 2.1-1: Site Location



Source: Open Street Maps

2.2 Site History

2.2.1 Prior to development of the mill site most of the land in the area was undeveloped farmland with woodland in the bottom of the Nant Gwyn Valley. The two farmsteads of Brynllywarch-fach and Brynllywarch-fawr, were established by 1877, as was the Bridgend to Maesteg railway. Signs of industrial activity, in the surrounding of the present day mill site, were two “old levels” and two quarries on the 1921 OS Map. Other signs of mining activity in the general area were an old tramway, air shaft and levels in the Nant Gwyn Valley. All coal workings in the vicinity had been abandoned by 1944. Aerial photographs indicate that earthworks were in progress at the mill site by 1947. By 1960, the mill was producing 20,000 tons per annum from four paper machines. Expansion took place in the early 1960s. The current “Jupiter” paper machine was installed in 1969. Land in the vicinity of the development site has remained undeveloped with only a few buildings being constructed at the surrounding farmsteads.

2.3 Physical Setting and Baseline Conditions

2.3.1 Figure 2.3-1 illustrates that the WEPA mill site is bordered to the south and west by the A4063. The River Llynfi runs to the east of the site. To the north of the site, there are open fields and farmland. In the immediate surrounding of the site, sheep farming is the predominant land use. Woodland cover in the area is generally sparse, mainly confined to lining roads, around villages and along the River Llynfi.

Figure 2.3-1: Development site and surrounding

Landscape

2.3.3 The proposed development is located entirely on the WEPA UK premises which is heavily industrial and developed land. The new development will be viewed in the context of the existing paper mill. The paper mill site occupies a less elevated position (80–90m AOD) at the mouth of the Nant Gwyn valley. Currently the paper mill is relatively well hidden due to tree screening along the A4063 and as a result of a dip in the topography; the principal markers approaching from the south are a vent stack and steam plumes. It is, however, highly visible from the road and from elevated vantage points around.

2.3.4 It is largely a landscape of farmed valley sides, open topped hills and watercourses flanked by woodland. Hedges are common throughout the area and comprise mainly hawthorn with hedgerow trees. Urban influences are generally limited. Settlement in the immediate vicinity of the paper mill is characterised by scattered dwellings and farmsteads. The central valley landscape is dominated by the large form of the Bridgend Paper Mills with landmark chimneys, along with pylons and other smaller industrial developments and sewage works dotted along the valley floor. There are extensive, open views across and along the valley and the landscape is of moderate value.

2.3.5 Two dwellings look across to the site. Bryn-y-fro, which lies at a distance of less than 400m to the west, has an open aspect towards the site. The nearest dwelling, Brynllywarch-fawr, has a southerly aspect, with a view directly across the existing mill site, the boundary of which is about 10m away.

3.0 Description of the Development

3.1 Site Layout

3.1.1 The proposed development will include the buildings and areas as displayed in the following Figure.

Figure 3.1-1: South view of established paper mill site

Figure 3.1-2: South view of proposed development

Red dot = new Vesta paper machine hall

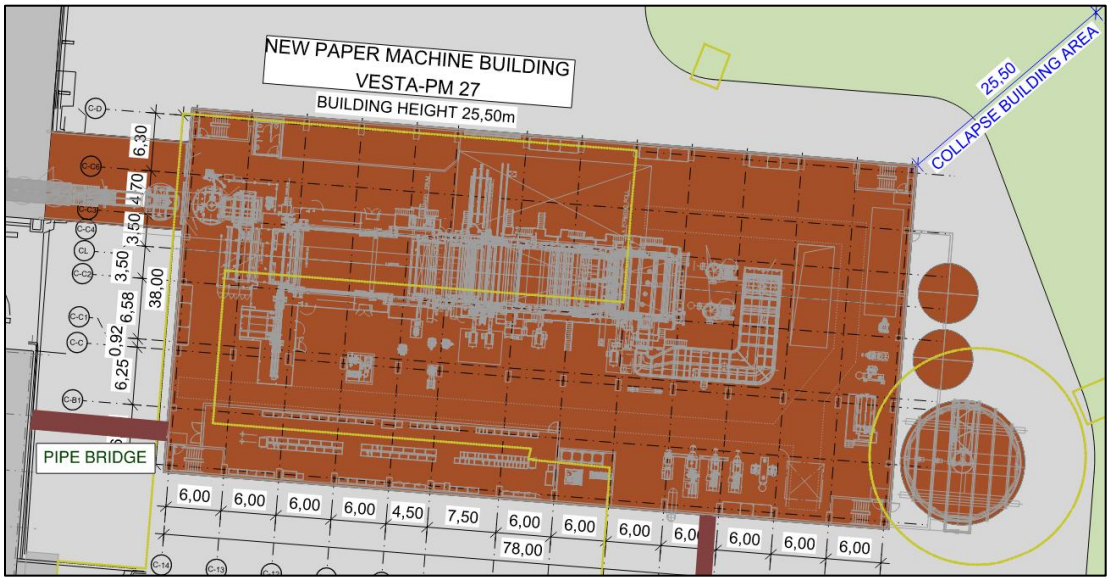
Figure 3.1-3: Final Design

3.1.2 The proposed development will include the following buildings and areas.

Paper Machine "VESTA"

3.1.3 The paper machine building will be located to the north of the existing Department B building and to the east of the existing Jupiter building. The footprint of this building will be around 3,100 m². The maximum daily capacity of the Vesta paper machine will be 227 tonnes/ day.

Figure 3.1-3: Location of Paper Machine building



Pipe Bridge

3.1.4 To keep the production process running, various media have to be supplied, shared or removed. The bridge is mainly occupied by pipelines. Steam pipes, water pipes, cable trays, etc. connect the existing bale handling section B to the new MV substation building and to the new Vesta paper machine building.

Figure 3.1-4: Pipe bridge Dept. B – MV substation

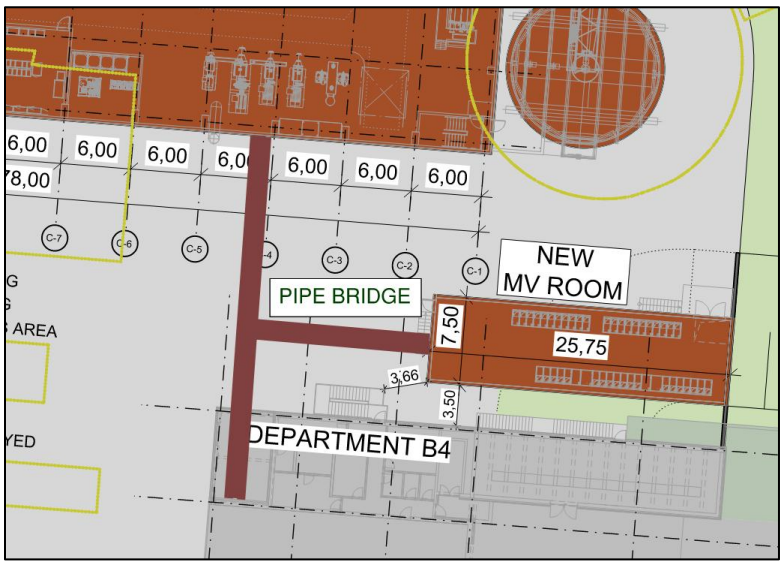
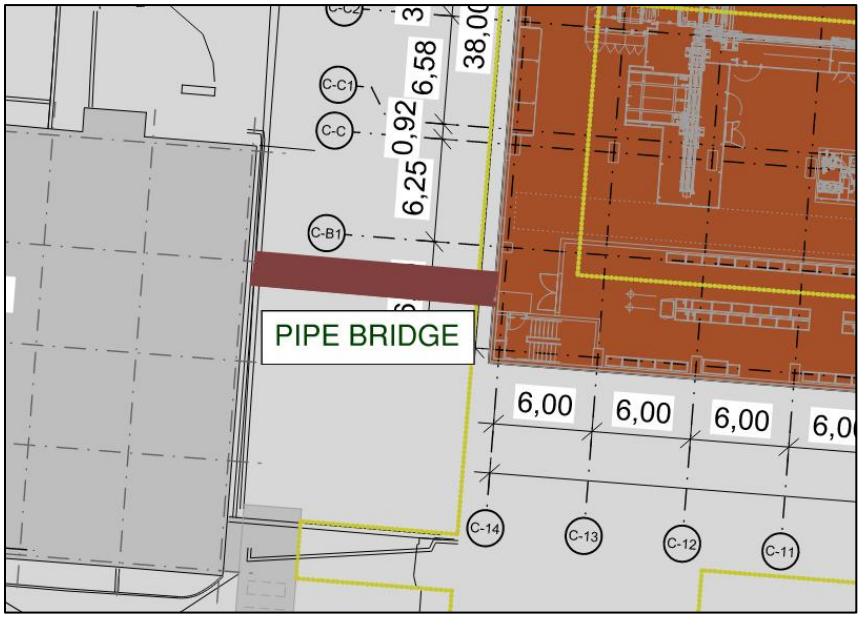


Figure 3.1-5: Pipe bridge Vesta - Jupiter



Utilities and site storm water

3.1.5 The main incoming power supply enters the Wepa site on the east side of the site, with MV cables running under the railway. The new MV substation is needed to house the cabinets that will be connected to the new MV cables that will be installed. The natural gas supply is sufficient for both paper machines and only requires a new connection for the new Vesta building. The existing supply of fresh (process) and potable water (from the River Llynfi under the current licence) is considered sufficient to meet the needs of the new Vesta paper machine, also taking into account that the existing Jupiter machine will be shut down prior to the start-up of the Vesta machine.

3.1.6 Steam will be supplied from the new steam boilers, which are to be constructed on the west side of the Neptune building as part of planning application P/24/406/FUL. The existing CHP plant will be demolished once the new steam boilers are operational.

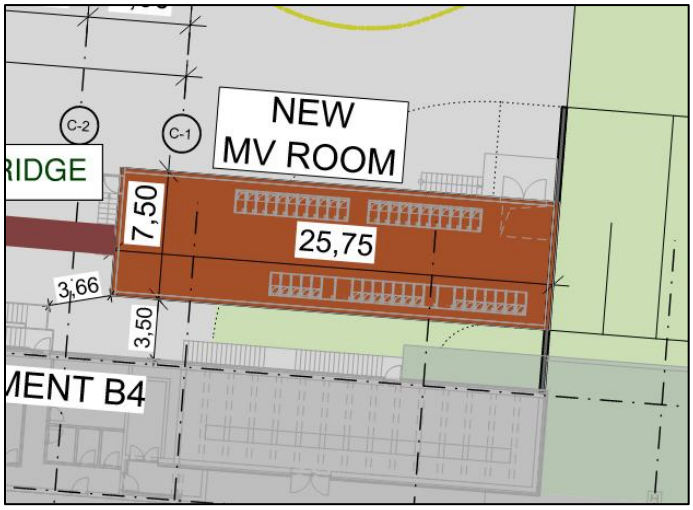
3.1.7 The effluent treatment plant, which is located to the north of the railway line, was originally designed for 4 paper machines and is currently used for the Jupiter and Neptune paper machines. Vesta will not be launched until the Jupiter engine has been shut down. This means that the wastewater treatment plant does not need to be adapted to allow the Vesta machine to operate.

3.1.8 The rainwater collection system will be adjusted in line with new paved areas and new buildings. Rainwater from the roofs of the departments will be discharged directly into the River Llynfi.

MV Substation

3.1.9 A separate planning application has been submitted for the new MV station.

Figure 3.1-6: MV substation



3.2 Paper Making Process Description

3.2.1 The key steps of the production process can be summarised as follows:

3.2.2 The pulp is dissolved using water. The fibers in the pulp can be either fresh or derived from recycled paper. The fibers usually come from wood, although they can also originate from e.g. straw or sugar cane residue. When the stock enters the machine, it comprises more than 99 per cent of water and less than one per cent of fibers.

3.2.3 In the headbox, stock is sprayed into the machine and spread along the entire width of the machine in the gap between two rolls. On one roll there is a wire (screen cloth) and on the other a felt.

3.2.4 The stock attaches to the felt and follows it on into the machine. The felt is made of a thick textile and absorbs some of the water.

3.2.5 In the press roll section, the paper web is pressed between a suction press roll or a so-called shoe press and the large Yankee dryer. The suction press roll is perforated and, together with the felt, removes the water from the paper web.

3.2.6 The cylinder is heated up with steam under pressure. The paper web attaches to the hot surface of the drying cylinder. Water is now evaporated from the paper web.

3.2.7 The creped structure of the tissue paper is achieved when the paper web is scraped away from the drying cylinder using a steel blade.

3.2.8 The finished tissue paper is rolled up onto large jumbo reels. The paper is now ready for processing in other machines in order finally to be made into toilet rolls, kitchen rolls, paper tissues or paper towels.

3.3 Waste Water Treatment

3.3.1 A large proportion of the total water used in the tissue paper production process is made available through intensive wastewater treatment, significantly reducing the total amount of fresh water taken from the River Llynfi. The treatment technology can be considered as a suitable and proven method.

3.3.2 The current wastewater treatment system, which was installed in 1991, has the capability and capability of serving the new PM as well as the current PM. Taking into account that the new paper machine will use considerably less water, it can be assumed that there will no additional waste water being discharged into the waste water treatment plant.

3.4 Surface Water Drainage System

3.4.1 The surface water drainage system of the new development will be connected to the existing drainage system of the site.

3.5 Operational Releases

Emissions to Air

3.5.1 The new Vesta paper machine consumes significantly less energy than the existing Jupiter machine. This means that no additional air emissions are expected to occur when operating.

3.5.2 As the development will not generate any additional traffic movements, no additional air emissions are expected to result from the operation of the new development.

Releases to Land

3.5.3 There will be no solid residues or air pollutants formed that will be disposed of to land. All waste would be returned to the original supplier where possible or removed by a licensed contractor.

Noise and vibration

3.5.4 A complete and detailed noise assessment has been carried out for the site and its surrounding and this has been submitted to the Local Authority as part of the Planning Application.

3.6 Construction Phase

3.6.1 As part of the engineering design work, a detailed programme for the development will be determined. Subject to planning permission, construction work is planned to start in 2026. The construction and commissioning phases of the proposed plant are expected to last approximately 15 months. Standard construction techniques for buildings, roads and pavements, lighting, utility services and telecommunications will be adopted. The full details on site construction are currently not available but would be provided as part of the final project design, depending on the equipment of the contractor selected. The construction workforce peak is anticipated to be between 100 and 120 personnel, however average numbers would be of the order of 70 to 90.

3.6.2 Standard construction techniques for buildings, roads and pavements, lighting, utility services and telecommunications will be adopted. The full details on all site construction activities are currently not available but would be provided as part of the final project design, depending on the equipment of the contractor selected.

3.7 Access

3.7.1 The existing WEPA site has two access points. One at the north-western end of the site, which, through the development of the site, was upgraded in 2019. In order to facilitate the development of the Neptune paper machine in 2019, a second vehicle access point has been constructed at the southern end of the site, primarily to allow HGV access to the site.

Pedestrian Access / Walking

3.7.2 The site is in a rural location and is completely fenced, therefore it is not accessible by foot/ cycle. There are no footpaths along the A4063 leading to the WEPA site.

Cycle provisions on-site

3.7.3 There is no cycleway along the A4063 leading to the WEPA site.

3.7.4 The new car park comprises 15 cycle parking stands on site.

3.8 Parking

3.8.1 In the event of trucks arriving too early for shipping or in case of all docking stations being occupied, HGVs would have to wait on the truck parking area in front of the Gatehouse. 19 parking spaces for HGVs will be provided at the main entrance of the Site. The HGV parking spaces are located off the main access road to the site.

3.8.2 Vehicle parking is provided across the Site. Employees working in the production areas (paper machine, converting, storages, etc.) have a separate access from the main car park, accessing the site via a footpath.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 National Welsh Policies

4.1.1 National and regional planning policy is contained within Planning Policy Wales (PPW) which provides an overall strategic framework. Regard is also given to Technical Advice Notes (TANs), which are material considerations in the decision-making process by Bridgend Council.

4.1.2 The local planning policy framework for the determination of this application is provided by the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP, 2018-2033).

5.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 2017 No. 571), and it documents the findings of the EIA which was undertaken to determine any likely significant environmental impact with regard to the proposed development.

5.2 Scoping

5.2.1 A formal request for a Scoping Opinion from Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), along with a Scoping Report, has been made under Regulation 14 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 for a Scoping Opinion prior to the preparation of the Environmental Statement to accompany an application for permission for the proposed development. The Scoping Opinion including responses from consultees, was received on 5 December 2024. The preparation of the Environmental Statement was guided by those responses and by on-going consultations with the consultees.

5.3 Pre-Application Consultation

5.3.1 The Applicant has undertaken Statutory (Pre-Application) Consultation, under Article 4 of Part 1A of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016. In addition, WEPA conducted a wider local non-statutory consultation exercise which allowed a wide variety of local residents, key community stakeholders and statutory consultees to give their feedback on the proposals.

5.4 EIA Assessment Methodology

5.4.1 The Environmental Statement describes the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which was undertaken to determine any likely significant environmental impact with regard to the proposed development. Mitigation measures developed as part of the design and assessment process have been included in each specialist section. An assessment of the significance of any potential residual effect, namely that which remains after mitigation has been identified for each topic.

6.0 Air Quality and Dust

6.1.1 The assessment has considered the significance of potential effects on the local air quality and amenity as a result of the proposed development of the Application Site. The proposed development incorporates the replacement of an existing paper machine by a new more energy efficient paper machine.

6.1.2 Operational phase emissions have been screened out as the operation of the new paper machine is not associated with additional road traffic. Moreover, the new paper machine will consume less energy resulting in a reduction of air emissions from power generation.

6.1.3 A qualitative assessment of the potential dust impacts during the construction phase of the development has been undertaken. Through good practice and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, it is expected that the release of dust would be effectively controlled and mitigated, with resulting impacts considered to be 'not significant'. All dust impacts are considered to be temporary and short-term in nature.

6.1.4 Due to the low additional number of HDV trips anticipated during the construction phase of the development, these are predicted to result in an 'insignificant' effect on air quality from road vehicle emissions. Furthermore, emissions from plant / NRMM on-site is predicted to result in a 'not significant' impact on air quality.

6.1.5 As such, it is not considered that air quality represents a material constraint to the development proposals, which conform to the principles of Planning Policy Wales, and the Bridgend County Borough Council Local Plan.

7.0 Noise and Vibration

Noise

7.1.1 The results of the Noise Assessment show that at all receptor locations, the significance of effects will be 'Negligible' or 'None'. No residual effects are therefore expected to occur.

7.1.2 An assessment has been undertaken for the potential impacts attributable to the sound emitted from the proposed Vesta paper machine building at the existing WEPA paper mill site in Bridgend.

7.1.3 Information provided by the applicant has been used to calculate the specific and rating sound levels attributable to the proposed and existing activities at the nearest receptors.

7.1.4 Based on the information provided and considerations as presented within this assessment, the excess of the calculated rating over the background sound level indicates that there is low likelihood of newly introduced adverse impacts due to the proposed Vesta paper machine building and associated rooftop plant.

7.1.5 Consideration of the combined sound levels, inclusive of current on-site activities indicates that the combined rating level would also fall below the previously accepted background sound levels, which have been adopted for this assessment.

7.1.6 The assessment has been undertaken based on the information provided and the associated calculations are detailed within this report. The calculations indicate that significant impacts are unlikely.

Vibration

7.1.7 Vibrations from the paper machine would result in vibration levels which are well below the human perception threshold. The effects are considered not significant.

8.0 Landscape and Visual Amenity

8.1.1 The potential impacts of the development on the fabric of the landscape and the perception of landscape character of the area were examined. The assessment also considered the potential impacts of the proposed development on visual amenity. The new plant will be designed so as to be similar in appearance to the existing paper mill buildings and will seek to employ the same finish as the existing buildings which were intended to mask the plant in the existing landscape.

8.1.2 The visual impact assessment has included the preparation of photomontages which provide a representative sample of the views of the proposed development. Based on a conceptual design, from which an impression can be ascertained as to the likely scale and visual impact of the development, photomontages were prepared for a selection of viewpoints, showing the existing view and the predicted view.

8.1.3 The viewpoint analysis arrives at the conclusion that some adverse effects on the landscape and the visual setting will be ‘slight’ to ‘negligible’.

9.0 Ecology and Nature Conservation

9.1.1 A detailed desk study and a Phase 1 Habitat Survey have been undertaken to identify habitats and species present within the site. Statutory and non-statutory conservation organisations and online information sources were also consulted for ecological information regarding the site and its surroundings. A full assessment of habitats and species, which may potentially be affected by the development, has been undertaken, following consultation with the relevant bodies. The potential ecological effects of the development were assessed through its various phases of development.

9.1.2 There are no internationally designated sites or SSSIs close enough to the site whose features would be directly or indirectly affected by the development. Similarly, sites of local nature conservation importance should not be affected.

9.1.3 The development site includes a mix of woodland, scrub, buildings and large areas of hard-standing. Habitats of principal importance include areas of woodland along the eastern perimeter of the site. Although the proposed building footprints and infrastructure do not cover the entire development site, the majority of existing habitats are expected to be lost to facilitate the new development.

9.1.4 The main ecological effect of the proposed development will be net habitat loss in the form of ecologically valuable woodland.

9.1.5 Species of principal importance that are confirmed as present include bat species, reptiles, and a variety of bird species.

9.1.6 The assessment of ecological sensitivities highlights that a number of valued habitats and species are susceptible to the effects of an unmitigated scheme necessitating the requirement for mitigation and compensatory measures. With the proposed mitigation and enhancement strategy successfully in place, all adverse impacts are reduced to an at least slight level of significance.

9.1.7 Impacts of slight significance are predicted because of constructional impacts on woodland habitats, and disturbance to breeding birds.

9.1.8 The loss of woodland habitats remains as key residual impacts judged to be of slight significance. Appropriately positioned, specified and operated lighting will limit effects on bat species.

9.1.9 As only ecological effects that have been identified as large or large / moderate, are considered significant, the proposed development does not result in significantly adverse impacts on the ecological features of the site or its surrounding.

10.0 Flood Risk and Drainage

10.1.1 The Site lies in a valley with levels falling into the site from the West, North and South. The river Llynfi lies to the East of the site and the Nant Gwyn watercourse is culverted through the site before discharging into the River Llynfi. Groundwater has been encountered at a range of depths from 1mBgl. No Dwr Cymru Welsh Water assets are located within the site, and all existing drainage is considered to be private.

10.1.2 As the majority of the site is located in Flood Zone B, a full ‘Flood Risk Assessment’ has been undertaken. The FRA demonstrates that the proposed development is safe and will not increase the risk of flooding. Floor levels and the site drainage strategy will be designed to work together in order that the risk of on-site flooding as a result of site run-off is minimised.

10.1.3 All drainage systems will be designed for a 1 in 100 year + 40% climate change event.

10.1.4 The development can be considered to be at low to no risk from the majority of sources. Surface water flooding mitigation will be provided by existing and proposed drainage systems.

10.1.5 Under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the surface water proposals will need to be reviewed and approved by Bridgend County Borough Council SAB team.

10.1.6 On the basis of the findings of the FRA, there are no grounds for objecting to the proposed development due to flood risk.

11.0 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

11.1.1 Following a review of all readily available sources of data, an assessment was made of the likely form, quality, extent and value of any archaeological and cultural heritage resources and the extent of past and post depositional impacts.

11.1.2 An archaeological assessment of the site and surroundings was conducted in 2003. As the development site lies entirely within the study area of this previous archaeological assessment, all findings of the 2003 assessment also apply for the location of the proposed development.

11.1.3 A total of 21 sites of archaeological interest were identified, including 4 Grade II listed buildings. There is no specific evidence for the existence of potential sites in the development area, although there remains a general possibility that unexpected archaeological remains survive within the area. Furthermore, four medieval wells are believed to be located in the region, although their exact location is unknown.

11.1.4 Within the Maesteg Landscape (04470m), a major road and railway are already apparent, and the proposal will not greatly alter the existing landscape character. There will, however, be a temporary 'minor' effect, due to off-site changes (i.e. noise, pollution, vibration) during the construction phase.

11.1.5 The hedgerow system, which is deemed to be of historic importance will not be affected as no hedgerows would have to be removed as a result of the proposed development.

11.1.6 A designated landscape of Special Historic Importance, 'Margam Mountain' is located 5km to the west of the development area. However, it is located beyond the boundaries of the proposed scheme and it is considered that it will not be directly or indirectly affected by the proposal.

11.1.7 Efforts should be made to reduce the off-site changes (i.e. noise, pollution, vibration) during the construction phase, in order to minimise the effects on the identified archaeological interests. It is also recommended that contingency plans be drawn up, for the unlikely occurrence of unexpected archaeological remains being discovered during the development scheme.

12.0 Water Resources and Water Quality

12.1.1 The surface water and groundwater regimes at the application site have been assessed with reference to information held by the BGS, Natural Resources Wales, Local Authority, and by the consideration of site specific investigation and reports relating to the application site. Key potential receptors identified are the:

- Afon Llynfi, from which water is abstracted and discharged, and which is adjacent to the site;
- Nant-Gwyn, a culverted watercourse through the main operational area and open channel passed the effluent treatment. Nant-Gwyn flows into the Afon Llynfi adjacent to the site;
- Groundwater within some of the superficial deposits and bedrock geology;
- Bridgend Papermill Effluent and Surface Water Drainage networks.

12.1.2 The potential impacts of the proposed development upon the hydrological and hydrogeological environment have been identified and assessed. Key potential impacts relate to the management of pollution during the construction and operation of the site.

12.1.3 Where appropriate, mitigation measures will be implemented during construction and have also been accommodated into the design of the proposed development and ongoing operations. Critically the construction of the extension to the papermill will be undertaken in line with current technical guidance and relevant codes of best practice to limit the potential for contamination of both ground and surface waters. Best practice techniques, including the treatment and controlled release of all process water, will be incorporated within the management procedures for construction and operation activities onsite in order to protect the water environment from both regular discharges and any pollution incidents.

12.1.4 This assessment has found that there would be no significant residual effects on the water environment. It is therefore also concluded that the proposals would not have a significant impact on the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

12.1.5 Assessment of the residual effects of the development proposals on the water environment alongside other approved developments within the area has also been undertaken. This assessment has also identified no significant effects of multiple developments being carried out within the same sub-catchment (draining to Afon Llynfi).

12.1.6 Overall, it is concluded that, with respect to groundwater and surface water, there would be no significant residual or cumulative effects of the proposed development after inclusion of the identified mitigation measures.

13.0 Traffic and Transportation

13.1.1 The proposed development site is accessed via the A 4063 (Bridgend Road) between Maesteg and Coytrahen, with site traffic generally proceeding south towards the M 4. The A4063 in this location is subject to a 60mph speed limit with a comprehensive street lighting system in place. The development site is currently accessed via a wide T-junction and widened northern carriageway lane.

13.1.2 Based upon the appraisal of the impacts discussed above, the residual impacts associated with the construction phase are deemed to be of negligible significance, short-term and temporary in nature, and therefore, no further analysis is required.

13.1.3 There are **no** impacts associated with the operational phase of the development.

13.1.4 Abnormal loads would be scheduled to occur during off-peak periods, at times to be agreed with the Local Authority and the Police in order to minimise delays to other road users.

13.1.5 The implementation of a Travel Plan will assist in minimising any arising impact.

13.1.6 However, it is acknowledged that prior to the start of the construction period there will be a need to quantify vehicle movements especially HGV movements required to construct the “Vesta” project.

14.0 Socio-Economics

14.1.1 The proposed development is important to ensuring the competitiveness of the WEPA group in the tissue paper industry. As such, the proposed development will enable the site to improve efficiency, the competitiveness of the site and, therefore, its longevity.

14.1.2 There will also be substantial annual operating costs. These expenditures will result in economic benefit to the local and regional economy.

14.1.3 During construction, the new development will involve a fairly substantial construction workforce, although during operation the workforce will be lower. The proposed development will also have the capacity to bring economic benefits through supply chain and product related consequences as well as multiplier effects.

14.1.4 In the context of the County Borough, areas of high deprivation are particularly concentrated in the Bridgend Valleys where the industrial development would be located. This is particularly important since the Paper mill is one of the largest employers in the Bridgend area, where manufacturing, mining and heavy industrial jobs markedly are in decline.

14.1.5 The expansion and consolidation of employment – supplemented by 'multiplier effects' – will be a boost to the local economy and will bring a number of socio-economic benefits. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be of moderate beneficial significance.

15.0 Geology and Ground Conditions

15.1.1 An assessment of the baseline ground conditions has been undertaken for the proposed development. This assessment has been based on extensive site investigations, that relate to the Site history, geology, hydrology, hydrogeology, and previously known contamination of the Site.

15.1.2 The contamination test results and investigation observations have not identified any contaminants above commercial screening values and hence the site is suitable for the proposed development.

15.1.3 Perched groundwater has been identified within the site soils and superficial deposits. The geological and hydrogeological setting of the Site suggests that perched groundwater in the underlying superficial deposits and adjacent surface water courses is at little risk of contamination regardless of activities during the construction and development phases.

15.1.4 The Brithdir Member Sandstone and Mudstone area are non-aquifer units. The proposed development does not pose a risk to groundwater resources.

15.1.5 The majority of the Site will comprise hardstanding areas post construction, such that direct human exposure to contaminated soils following development will be negligible. Thus, the inadvertent contact, ingestion and inhalation of soils represents a low risk to human health, and the need for formal remediation of near surface contaminated soils is not considered to be necessary.

15.1.6 The risk of the Site to construction workers and operational workers is low.

15.1.7 All risks to construction works resulting from short-term exposure to soil and / or groundwater contamination will be minimised by the development of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the construction phase.

15.1.8 Site investigation data indicates that ground gas poses a low risk to construction works, with a lesser risk to future site users. The data also indicates that ground gas protection measures should not be required for the development.

15.1.9 In conclusion, there is considered to be a low risk that significant contamination exists beneath the site for the proposed development. Further intrusive investigation is not considered to be necessary at this stage.