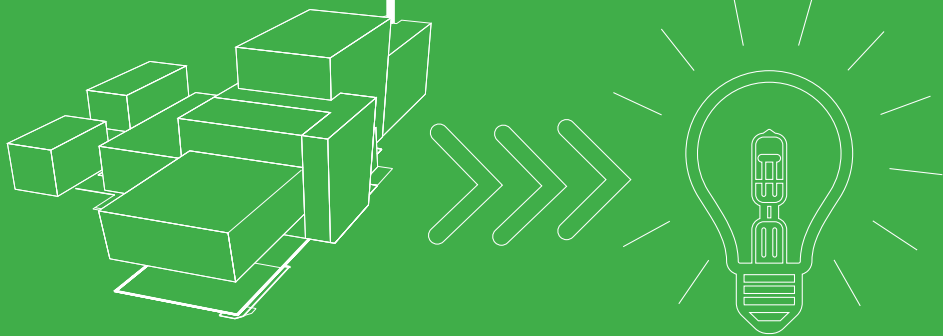




RINGASKIDDY RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTRE

Issue 2 | 2025



Planning Report

ARUP



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTS

FINAL PLANNING REPORT ON THE

PROPOSED RINGASKIDDY RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTRE, RINGASKIDDY, CO. CORK

on behalf of

INDAVER

Prepared and submitted in

AUGUST 2025

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1. Introduction and Purpose

This planning report has been prepared to accompany the application made under section 37E of the *Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended*, by Indaver NV ("Indaver") for permission to develop the Ringaskiddy Resource Recovery Centre, comprising a Waste to Energy Facility (waste incinerator with energy recovery, and associated works on lands located in the townland of Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork.

The purpose of this planning report is to set out the planning policy context within which the proposed development is advanced, and to consider issues of compliance with the development management standards of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028. An assessment of the proposed development in the context of the planning history of the site, including reference against the previous decision of An Bord Pleanála (now An Coimisiún Pleanála, hereafter referred to as 'the Commission' (other than previous planning history, where it is 'the Board' that is referred to)) is also set out in the report.

2. Site Location and Zoning

2.1 Site Location and Context

Chapter 4 of the EIS describes the proposed development site in detail. The proposed development site covers an area of approximately 13.55 hectares and is situated on a north-facing slope, approximately 800m east of the village of Ringaskiddy. The land rises from north to south, and also generally from east to west. The site is currently covered in scrub with some pockets of trees and open grass areas.



Plate 1: Proposed Development Site in Context



Plate 2: Aerial image of the Proposed Development Site in Context

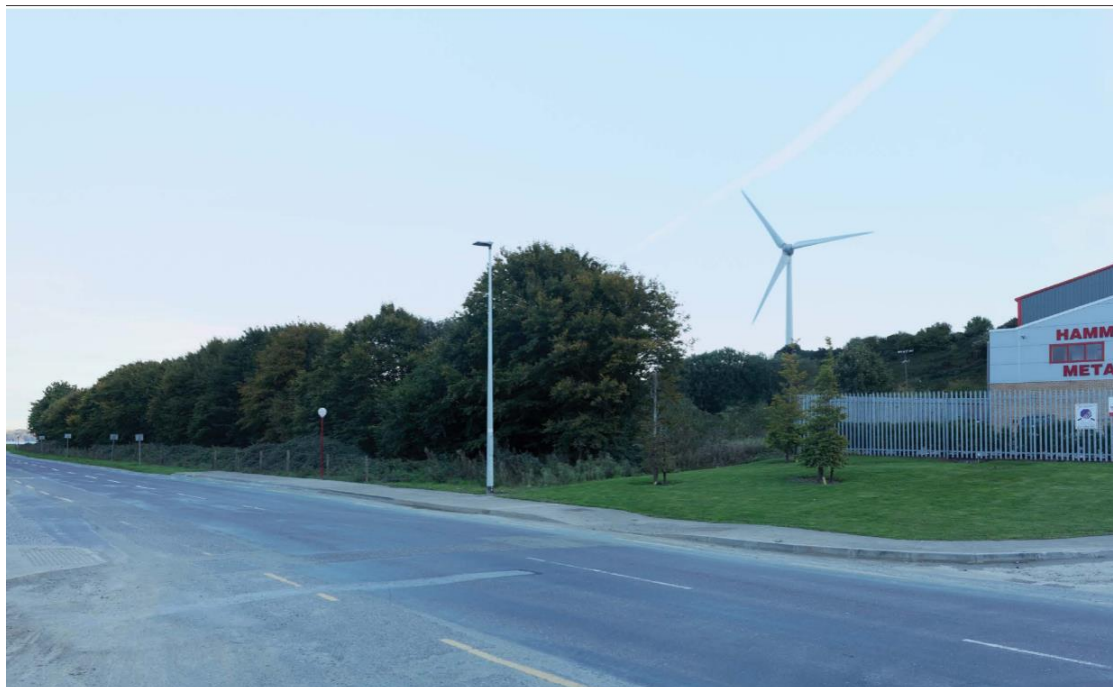


Plate 3: Proposed Development Site from the L2545 adjacent to Hammond Lane Metal Recycling



Plate 4: Proposed Development Site when viewed from Gobby Beach to the east



Plate 5: Proposed Development Site when viewed from the bridge to Haulbowline to the north

The overall outer boundary of the site is roughly rectangular in shape with narrower sections at the eastern and western ends, and with the Hammond Lane Metal Recycling Company Ltd metal/scrap processing yard located centrally within the site with its own direct access from the local L2545 road to the north. This yard does not form part of the proposed development site. There is a small rectangle of land not in Indaver's ownership that is encircled by the proposed development site. There is also an ESB Networks compound (referred to as Loughbeg station) located between the eastern boundary of the Hammond Lane yard and the Indaver site.

The proposed development site is bounded to the north by the L2545. The L2545 is an extension of the N28 that leads from Ringaskiddy past the proposed development site and over the bridge to the crematorium on Rocky Island, Haulbowline Naval Base and Haulbowline Island Recreational Park.

The National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) and the University College Cork (UCC) Environmental Research Institute (ERI) Beaufort Building are both located opposite the Indaver site. The NMCI opened in 2004 and is a public-private partnership between Cork Institute of Technology, the Irish Naval Service and Focus Education.

The UCC ERI Beaufort Building is located on the site to the east of the NMCI. MaREI (Centre for Marine and Renewable Energy) and the Lir National Ocean Test Facility are both located in the UCC ERI Beaufort Building. Further developments for these institutions may be located on the remainder of the land to the east of the NMCI.

The land to the immediate south of the Indaver site is owned by IDA Ireland and is in agricultural use. Just beyond the southern boundary, the site is further visually defined by a high voltage electricity line that runs west overhead to connect with the ESB sub-station near Shanbally and east (then north) to Haulbowline Island. Further to the southwest, the land continues to rise slightly to create the ridgeline on which a Martello Tower is located at the highest point.

A 1.5 km single carriageway section of the M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Motorway Project, referred to as the 'Protected Road Scheme', is currently under construction. This section extends from Barnahely to the eastern side of Ringaskiddy and intersects the northwestern boundary of the proposed development site. The construction stage of the Protected Road Scheme is nearing completion at the time of writing this EIS. The remaining elements of the main M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Motorway Project, which will upgrade the corridor to a dual carriageway standard, are expected to have a construction duration of approximately 36 months.

There is a single, large, white-painted residential property (Ring House) located approximately 50m from the boundary, set within a field and surrounded by trees. This property is owned by the Port of Cork.

The roads and public realm through Ringaskiddy village and along the L2545 to Gobby Beach have recently been upgraded to facilitate active travel modes.

There are currently four 100 metre hub-height 3MW wind turbines in operation on industrial sites in Ringaskiddy. The two DePuy wind turbines are located 290m south and 1.2km southwest of the Indaver site boundary on two separate sites in Loughbeg.

The Cork Harbour area has a mixture of urban developments, such as Cobh, Rushbrooke and Monkstown, and pockets of industry near the shore. Spike Island is located approximately 500m to the east of the site, with the disused Fort Mitchell prison being situated there and is a popular destination for tourists. There is an Irish Naval Service base situated on Haulbowline Island and a crematorium on Rocky Island. Both

islands lie to the north of the site. Haulbowline Island Recreational Park was opened in 2021 and is located approximately 1km to the north of the site.

2.2 Zoning

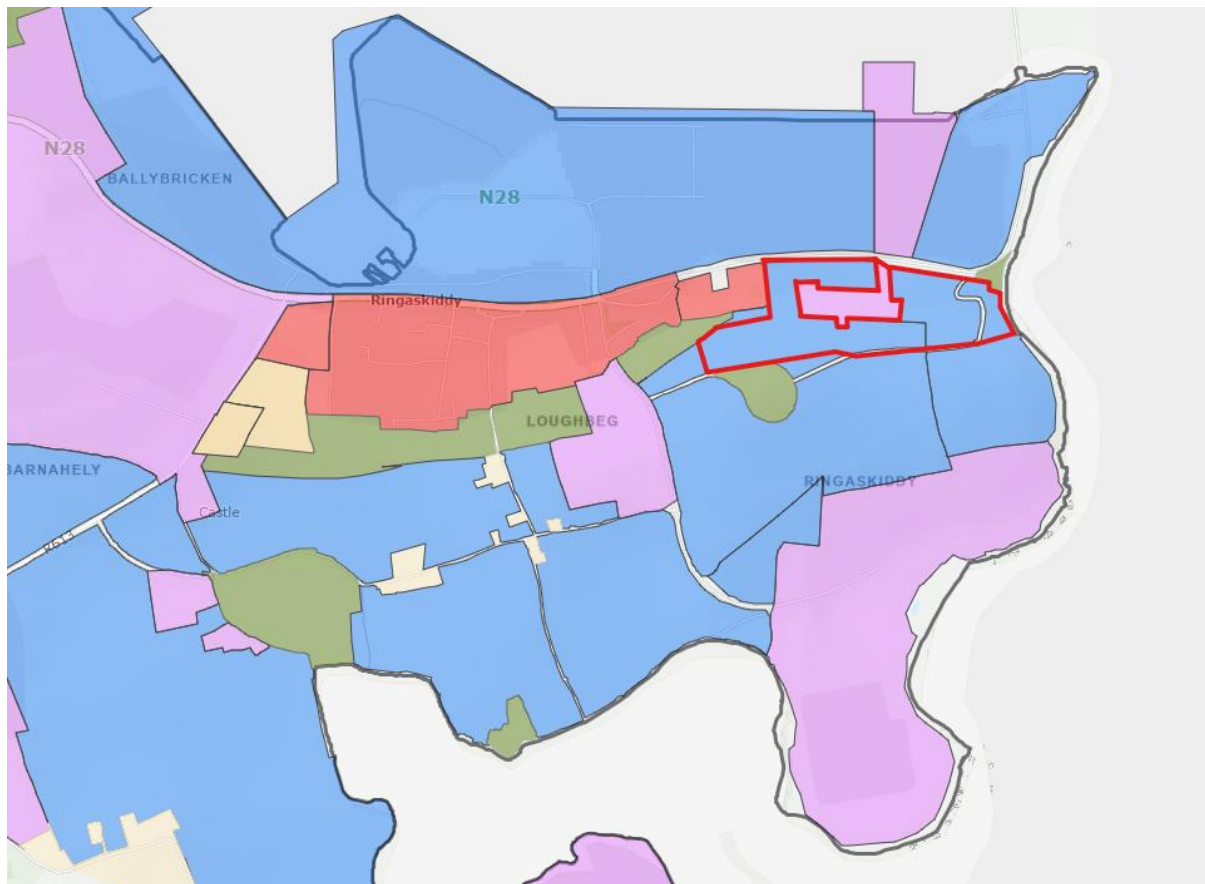


Figure 1: Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 (Site outlined generally in red)

As illustrated in Figure 1, the site is predominantly zoned RY-I-15 and part zoned RY-I-09. The zoning objectives are as follows:

Objective No. RY-I-15: (c. 28.84ha) Suitable for large stand-alone industry with suitable provision for appropriate landscaping and protection of the access points and provision for open space buffer to the Martello Tower and its associated pedestrian accesses. Any development proposals will need to protect the special function and integrity of the setting of the Martello Tower and maintain the existing line of sight from the Martello Tower to the other four fortifications in the Harbour (Fort Camden Meagher, Carlisle Davis, Westmorland and the Martello Tower on Haulbowline Island).

Objective No. RY-I-09: (c.10.19ha) Suitable for the extension of the Third Level Educational campus and enterprise related development including marine related education, enterprise, research and development. Consideration will also be given to established operators in Ringaskiddy for the provision of ancillary office accommodation and for Research and Development facilities.

This site is considered inappropriate for any short or full-time residential accommodation.

Any existing access to the nearby Martello tower which crosses this site should be protected and provision for an open space buffer to any existing access will need to be provided.

Areas within this zone may be used by Special Conservation Interest bird species for which the Cork Harbour SPA is designated. Account will be taken of this when considering new development proposals in this area. Part of the site is liable to flooding.

3. Planning History

3.1.1 2016 Application – (reactivated under ABP Ref. No. ABP-318802-24)

An application for permission under section 37E of the 2000 Act, as amended, for a Resource Recovery Centre development, comprising a Waste to Energy Facility (waste incinerator with energy recovery) for the treatment of non-hazardous and hazardous waste, including an upgrade to a section of the L2545 road; coastal protection measures on Gobby Beach; a connection to the national electricity distribution grid; the raising the ground levels in part of the site; the provision of an amenity walkway along the eastern and part southern boundary of the site and associated works. was submitted to the Commission on 13th January 2016 (ref. no. PA04.PA0045). An EIS and NIS accompanied the planning application.

Permission was granted by the Commission on 29th May 2018. In granting permission, the Commission generally had regard to:

- the European policy framework for waste management including the Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC
- national and regional waste management policy, including A Resource Opportunity – Waste Management Policy in Ireland, 2012
- national and regional spatial planning policy
- the provisions of the Cork County Development Plan
- the pattern of existing and permitted development in the area
- the planning history of the site, and
- the fact that the proposal would be subject to an Industrial Emissions Licence.

From a planning perspective, the Commission considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development:

- would be consistent with European, National, and regional waste management policy, including in particular:
 - the Southern Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 which supports the principles of proximity and self-sufficiency and the development of additional thermal capacity for the treatment of non-hazardous municipal waste, over the period of the plan, and

- the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2014-2020, in so far as a certain amount of hazardous waste would also be accepted for energy recovery treatment,
- would be strategically located in the national context to serve Cork and the South West Region and would provide an infrastructural asset to the region as it grows in accordance with the policies of the *National Planning Framework Project Ireland 2040*,
- would be consistent with the policies and objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2014-2020, and with the industrial land use zoning for the area in the Ballincollig Carrigaline Local Area Plan 2017,
- would be compatible with the pattern of existing development in this area of Cork Harbour, which includes large-scale industrial plants and utilities and other strategic facilities including the nearby Port of Cork container terminal facility,
- would be compatible with the continued development of the marine-related research and development/employment campuses in the vicinity of the site,
- would be compatible with the continued development of heritage and tourism assets in the harbour,
- would not have unacceptable impacts on existing traffic patterns on the nearby N28 route or on other roads in the area,
- would not be prejudicial to public health,
- would not be at risk from localised flooding or from coastal erosion patterns,
- would not have unacceptable impacts on visual amenities or on architectural and cultural heritage assets of the area, and
- would not otherwise seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity.

The Commission concluded that the proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

It was further noted that, in relation to the Inspector's 1st recommended reason for refusal on the compatibility with emerging campus developments and heritage developments, the Cork County Development Plan 2014-2020 enables the location of large scale waste treatment facilities, including waste to energy facilities in industrial areas designated as 'Strategic Employment Areas', which is the overarching land use objective applying to Ringaskiddy in the Development Plan.

Furthermore, the Commission considered that the development of a modern waste-to-energy facility would be compatible with continued development of the educational campus facilities in the area and with the ongoing improvement of tourism and amenities in the lower harbour. The Commission concluded that the proposed facility would integrate successfully with the multi-faceted nature of existing and proposed development in the area and would not be contrary to the development plan policies for the area or undermine the achievement of any of its objectives.

In relation to the Inspector's 2nd recommended reason for refusal in relation to alternatives, the Commission noted that the consideration of alternatives (Chapter 3 of the environmental impact statement) sets out a comprehensive record of the project's origin and evolution. It documents site

selection processes followed in 1999/2000, but then goes on to update the site selection to take into account changes in circumstances in the intervening period including:

- changes to the development plan,
- the guidance in relation to site selection included in the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 (the subject site is tested against the relevant criteria), and
- changes in physical and planning circumstances in the area.

The Commission did not agree with the Inspector that the environmental impact statement analysis lacked robustness or is deficient in relation to site selection. The changes in the vicinity of the site (such as the education/research campuses, the investment in heritage/ tourism assets, and increase in cruise tourism) are considered in the environmental impact statement. Other changes in the area (such as the erection of tall wind turbines, the expansion of Port of Cork facilities, and proposed improvements to the N28 road) are also considered.

The Commission was satisfied that the consideration of alternatives as set out in the environmental impact statement complied with the legal requirements of the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), had regard to relevant guidance, took into account environmental factors, and was robust. Therefore, notwithstanding that a 'de-novo' site selection exercise was not carried out for the purpose of this planning application, the Commission was satisfied that it could complete its environmental impact assessment and make an informed decision in relation to the site suitability.

In relation to the 3rd reason for refusal in relation to the adequacy of the EIS, specifically in relation to air quality and human health, the Commission was satisfied that the proposed development did not pose any significant risk to human health by the proposed development.

In relation to the 4th reason for refusal in relation to overdevelopment, the Commission considered that the design had responded adequately to the site constraints, that there was adequate room on the site to accommodate buildings, circulation areas, and landscaping buffers, and that traffic management arrangements, combined with the design of the vehicular access, would avoid any external queuing of vehicles on the public road. There is no information to suggest that facility operations would be impaired by the site size. The proposed landscaping combined with high quality external finishes of the buildings will mitigate the visual impact on the immediate vicinity of the site adequately. It was not considered, therefore, that there would be any serious injury to the amenities of the area, or that overdevelopment would occur.

Following the grant of planning permission in 2018, Indaver applied to the EPA for an Industrial Emissions Licence (IE Licence) in 2019. This remains a live application.

However, by order of the High Court on 1st June 2022, the permission was quashed and remitted back to the Commission on 8th January, 2024, ref. no. ABP- 318802-24.

In June 2024, the Commission required Indaver to *“furnish the following further information in relation to the effects on the environment of the proposed development –*

Due to the passage of time since the initial submission of the application, please submit any updated or further information of relevance on the application.

- *An updated Environmental Impact Statement.*
- *An updated Natura Impact Statement.”*

3.1.2 2008 Application

An application was submitted directly to An Bord Pleanála on 28th November 2008 (ref. no PL04 .PA0010) under section 37E for a 10 year planning permission for a waste to energy facility for hazardous and non-hazardous waste and a transfer station facility, on a 12 hectare site located on lands opposite the National Maritime College, at Ringaskiddy, County Cork.

On 9th June, 2011, the Board decided to refuse permission for four reasons, which can be summarised as follows:

- The Board was not satisfied that the provision of incineration capacity at this site was appropriate having regard to both the layout and limited size of the site and to the incompatibility with the Waste Management Strategy for the region or the Waste Management Plan for County Cork 2004
- While the provision of an incinerator to treat hazardous and industrial waste (100,000 tonnes per annum) was in accordance with national policy, the Board required the omission of the proposed treatment of municipal waste to reduce the scale of the development, as the development as proposed would constitute overdevelopment of the site.
- The Board was not satisfied that the impacts of the works proposed to the road serving the site were fully described and assessed, and that there was certainty in terms of their implementation and the responsibility for same and, consequently, that access to the proposed development would be available at all times.
- The Board was not satisfied that the proposed measures to prevent coastal erosion were sufficient in relation to implementation of such coastal protection measures and the impact of these works, including on other nearby property.

However, notwithstanding its decision to refuse permission, the Board considered that the incineration of hazardous and industrial waste might be acceptable for the following reasons:

- The provision of an incinerator of the order proposed, to cater for hazardous and industrial waste, was in accordance with national policy and constitutes an important element of national strategic infrastructure. Furthermore, it was also satisfied that decisions in relation to this matter should not be influenced by short term fluctuations in the precise make up of hazardous waste arisings from one year to another. The Board had previously concluded, in 2004 in making its decision on PL 131196, that Ringaskiddy is an appropriate location for a hazardous waste/industrial waste incinerator.

- In relation to visual amenity, the site was on the north facing slope of a low hill, located in an area containing a number of large factories and Ringaskiddy Port, as well as relics of industrial archaeology from an earlier time. The Board had regard to the zoning of the land for a large stand-alone industry, as set out in the Carrigaline Electoral Area Local Plan, 2005. Any such industrial development would have a significant visual impact.
- The Board noted the deficiencies in the road network in the area, as well as evidence of some congestion. The Board noted that a reduction in the volumes of traffic to/from the development, resulting from omission of the grate incinerator, would mitigate adverse impacts. Furthermore, the Board considered that the proximity of the site to the National Primary Road N28, which it was proposed to improve, constitutes a factor in favour of the location for the development.
- The Board was generally satisfied that adequate measures had been taken to protect the overall development site from flooding, including designing the ground floor at an appropriate level. However, in relation to flooding of the access to the site, the Board was not satisfied that this matter, including associated remedial works such as raising the level of the road, had been adequately addressed.
- The Health and Safety Authority gave the Board advice in relation to land use planning, under Article 27 of S.I. No. 74/2006 — European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006. In particular, the Health and Safety Authority did not advise against a grant of planning permission in the context of major accident hazards.
- The Board noted that the development is proposed on the basis of complying with the relevant EU emission standards. It was noted in this regard that incineration is an acceptable form of waste treatment under EU Directives and in Irish waste management policies. There was no objective scientific evidence to justify a refusal of permission for a properly licensed incinerator on the basis that the development would be prejudicial to public health.
- In relation to municipal waste incineration, the Board considered that the energy efficiency level of the proposed development had not been definitively established either way. It noted that the applicant had firmly argued that it would meet the 0.65 efficiency standard for a “recovery” operation, notwithstanding the case to the contrary put forward by those opposing the development. In any case, within the EU waste hierarchy and policy, incineration with energy recovery was preferred over landfill (Municipal Solid Waste – Pre-treatment & Residuals Management; EPA, 2009).

3.1.3 2001 Application

On 13th November, 2001, Indaver made a planning application to Cork County Council for permission for development (register reference 01/6215) comprising the construction of a waste management facility a waste transfer station and a community recycling park, incorporating a main building, turbine building, office buildings, sampling building, warehouse, storage tanks, security buildings, electricity substation, service yards, car parks, roads, landscaping and site works including sewage treatment plants to treat sanitary effluent.

Cork County Council decided to refuse permission on 27th May 2003. However, on appeal, on 15th January, 2004, An Bord Pleanála granted permission (under ref. no. PL04.131196) for a waste management facility comprising a waste-to-energy facility, a waste transfer station, community recycling park, warehouse,

storage tanks, security buildings, electricity substation, service yards, car parks, roads, landscaping and site works including sewage treatment plants subject to 27 conditions. Condition no. 2 restricted the development to the treatment of hazardous and non-hazardous industrial/trade waste as proposed in phase 1. Condition no. 3 stated that no hazardous waste from outside the state shall be accepted for treatment at the site. Condition no. 4 limited the annual tonnage of industrial/trade waste to be terminally treated to 100,000 tonnes.

The Board decided to grant permission in respect of the then proposed development having regard to:

- (a) the provisions of Section 54(3) of the Waste Management Act, 1996, and Section 98 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992 which preclude An Bord Pleanála from consideration of matters relating to the risk of environmental pollution from the activities associated with the proposed development,
- (b) the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan published by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2001, under Section 26 of the Waste Management Act, 1996,
- (c) the national waste management policy framework and strategy as set out in Government policy statements “Changing Our Ways” and “Delivering Change” published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in 1998 and 2002 respectively, particularly the preference for thermal treatment with energy recovery over landfill disposal of residual waste,
- (d) the provisions of the Cork County Development Plan, 2003 in relation to waste recovery and recycling,
- (e) the geographical distribution of hazardous waste arisings within the state,
- (f) the location of the proposed development in the Cork Harbour Area which is the principal established area in Cork County for large scale pharmaceutical and chemical industry,
- (g) the location of the proposed development in an area zoned for stand alone industry in the current Cork County Development Plan (Ringaskiddy), notwithstanding the overall strategy in the plan to ensure the protection of land with potential for port related development and not to permit contract incineration facilities in industrial areas,
- (h) the location of a proposed national waste management facility adjacent to the N28 National Primary Route and the proposals for the improvement of the national road network in the area,
- (i) the topography of the site and the pattern of development in the area, and
- (j) the advice given by the National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health under the EC (Control of Major Accidents and Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, S.I. No. 476 of 2000,

In arriving at its decision, the Board determined that the Ringaskiddy site is an appropriate location for a necessary national public utility and that the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area (including the Martello Tower, a protected structure), would not be prejudicial to the future development of the area for port related development, would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience and would be in accordance with the proper planning and development of the area.

3.2 Waste/Industrial Emissions Directive Licence

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) granted a waste licence to Indaver in November 2005. The licence was amended by the EPA in January 2014 to bring it into conformity with the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EC.

Following the grant of planning permission in 2018 (see 3.1 above), Indaver applied to the EPA for an Industrial Emissions Licence (IE Licence) in 2019. This remains a live application.

4. Proposed Development and Need for Development

4.1 Proposed Development

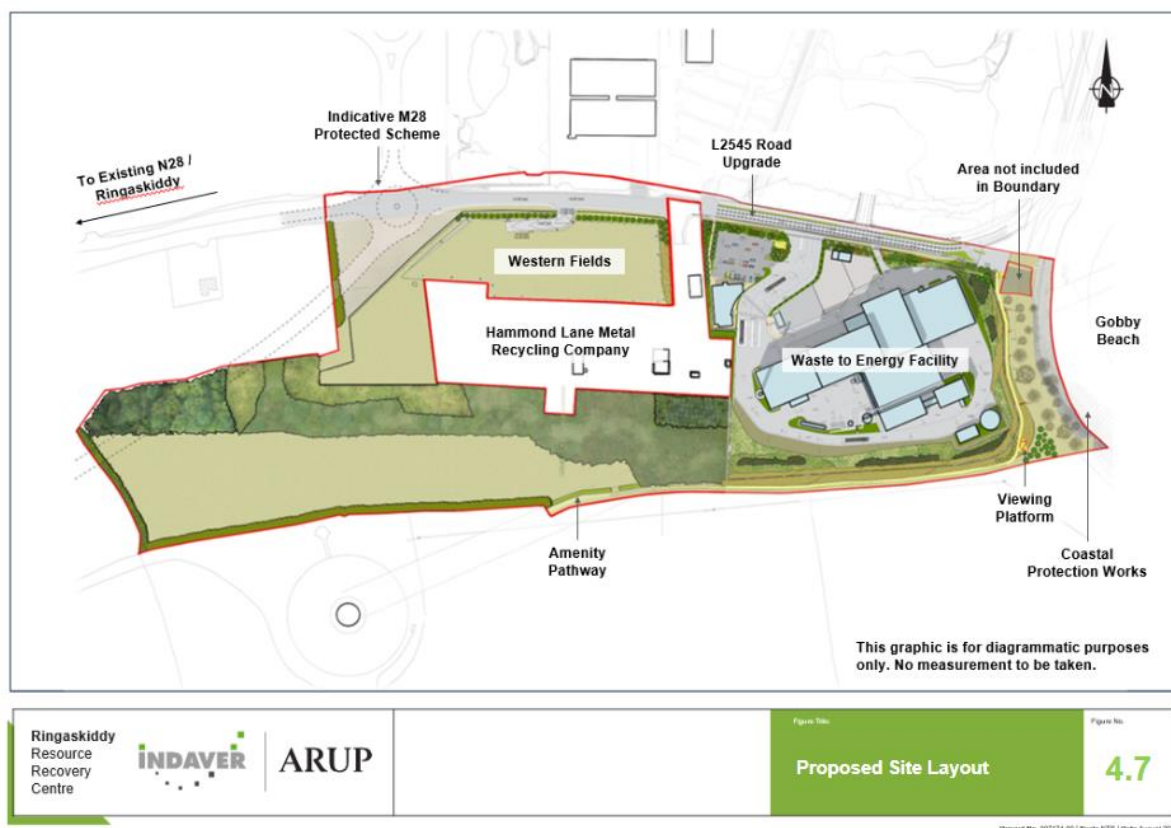


Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout Plan (Site outlined generally in red)

Chapter 4 of the EIS describes the proposed development in detail.

Indaver proposes to develop a Resource Recovery Centre in Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork. The main elements of the waste-to-energy facility are described below and include:

- Main process building, with a stack extending to 75mOD
- Turbine hall and aero-condenser structure
- Security building/gate house and weighbridges
- Administration building

- Firewater storage tank and pump house
- Surface water attenuation tank and firewater retention tank
- Light fuel oil storage tank, aqueous ammonia storage tank and unloading area
- Aqueous waste storage tank and tanker unloading area
- Electricity substation, compound and grid connection
- Emergency access
- Site lighting

The other elements of the proposed development include:

- Public amenity footpath
- L2545 road upgrade
- Increase in levels on site
- Coastal protection measures
- Diversion of services

The proposed development will consist principally of a waste-to-energy facility (waste incinerator) for the treatment of up to 240,000 tonnes per annum of residual household, commercial and industrial non-hazardous and hazardous waste and the recovery of energy. Of the 240,000 tonnes of waste, up to 24,000 tonnes per annum of suitable hazardous waste will be treated at the facility. The proposed development will maximise the extraction and recovery of valuable material (in the form of ferrous and non-ferrous metals) and energy (in the form of 21 megawatts of electricity) resources from residual waste.

In addition to the provision of the waste-to-energy facility, the proposed development will include an upgrade of a section of the L2545 road, a connection to the national electrical grid, an increase in ground levels in part of the site, coastal protection measures above the foreshore on Gobby Beach and an amenity walkway towards the Ringaskiddy Martello tower.

There will be three solid residues from the waste-to-energy facility in Ringaskiddy: c. 53,630 tonnes of bottom ash, c. 2,037 tonnes of boiler ash, and c. 9,271 tonnes of flue gas cleaning residues. It is expected that the bottom ash, boiler ash and flue gas cleaning residues from the Ringaskiddy facility will be similar in composition to the bottom ash, boiler ash and flue gas cleaning residues from Indaver's existing Meath facility.

The bottom ash will be recovered or disposed to landfill, sent to another EU member state for treatment and subsequent recovery, or if appropriate facilities are developed, will be recycled following treatment in Ireland. The boiler ash and flue gas cleaning residues will be in the form of fine particles and will contain heavy metals. The boiler ash and flue gas cleaning residues will be suitable, after solidification, for use to backfill the void space in an underground salt mine, which can receive a recovery code, or in a hazardous waste landfill. It is proposed that, depending on the availability of outlets, the boiler ash and flue gas cleaning residues from the proposed Ringaskiddy facility will also be shipped to an existing salt mine in Northern Ireland and existing salt mines in Germany. An annual average of 2,444 tonnes of ferrous metals, such as steel and 244 tonnes of non-ferrous metals will be recovered from the bottom ash for recycling.

The proposed development will involve an investment of over €200 million, and if permission is granted it is expected to be operational in 2030. Up to 320 people will be employed during the construction phase and 63 people will be employed when the facility is operational. It is proposed that the waste-to-energy facility will operate for 24 hours per day, seven days a week, and for an average of 8,000 hours per year. There will be planned shutdowns for maintenance. Waste acceptance will be limited to the hours 06.00 to 20.00 on weekdays and 09.00 to 14.00 on Saturdays.

The construction of the proposed development including site development works will take approximately 31 months. However, in view of the complexity of the proposed development, licensing requirements and the need for the advance agreement of all conditions, Indaver is applying for a 10-year planning permission to commence and complete the construction phase. In addition, permission is sought to operate the proposed development for an initial period of 30 years after commissioning.

The design of the proposed development which was submitted as part of the planning application to the Commission in 2016 ((ref. no. PA04.PA0045) has remained the same, with the exception of:

- Minor alterations to the design of the interface with the public road, to integrate the proposed development with the recently completed public realm/ active travel improvements on the L2545 local road.
- Minor alterations to the proposed design at the interface of the proposed development with the coastal zone, to reflect the passing of time and updated information in relation to coastal erosion.
- An additional electrical power connection option to the site.
- The gas transmission main located within the site has been decommissioned and as such there is no requirement to divert this gas transmission main. However, due to the nature of the works, sections of the in-situ grouted gas main will require removal.

The drawing package and EIS has been updated to take account of these design changes.

The overall conclusions of the 2016 EIS and the 2016 Natura impact statement (NIS) have not changed, and the same conclusions are documented in the updated EIS and updated NIS.

The Ringaskiddy Resource Recovery Centre will be an important infrastructural development that reduces Ireland's reliance on the export of waste, and that produces electricity from a valuable indigenous resource.

4.2 Principal Design Objectives

As noted in section 4.3 of Chapter 4 of the EIS, the principal design objectives for the proposed development are as follows:

Waste-to-Energy Facility

The principal design objectives for the waste-to-energy facility can be summarised as:

- the facility should treat industrial hazardous and non-hazardous waste and municipal solid waste with energy recovery.
- the facility's capacity should be selected to ensure that the incentive to minimise waste is maintained.
- the technology should be robust and adaptable to the small and changing Irish market.
- safety and environmental protection should be given the highest priority.
- the existing need for waste management facilities should be addressed, in conformance with Irish Government and EU policy, in a sustainable manner.
- the facility should meet all current and foreseeable future regulatory standards.
- the facility must be Best Available Techniques (BAT) in accordance with the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Reference Document on the Best Available Techniques for Waste Incineration (BREF) (EC 2006) and the requirements of the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU.
- the facility's construction and operation should minimise resource consumption and the generation of waste.
- the facility should optimise existing site features and have the minimum feasible impact on the neighbourhood.

L2545 Road Upgrade

The principal design objective for the upgrade of the L2545 road is to improve the surface water drainage so that the road does not flood after prolonged rainfall and to raise the level of the road above the 1 in 200 year tidal flood event with an added allowance for climate change.

Increase in levels of the Indaver Site

The principal design objective for raising the ground levels of the Indaver site is to raise the levels above the 1 in 200 year tidal event with an allowance for climate change. The site is classified as Flood Zone C.

Coastal Protection Measures

The principal design objective for the coastal protection measures is to reduce the rate of erosion of the glacial till face, which forms the eastern boundary of the Indaver site, while minimising the impact on recreational users of the beach and on the adjoining coastline to the north and south. The design of the coastal protection measures includes an allowance for climate change. The proposed waste-to-energy facility is not reliant on these coastal protection works.

4.3 Need for Proposed Development

Chapter 2 of the EIS sets out the need for the proposed development, which is summarised below:

- To support the provision of 200,000 to 300,000 tonnes of additional dedicated thermal recovery capacity for the treatment of non-hazardous residual wastes nationally, and to ensure there is adequate active thermal treatment capacity, aligned with the provisions of the National Waste

Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030 (NWMP)¹ and the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (NHWMP) 2021-2027².

- To ensure self-sufficiency in waste treatment within the State and reducing Ireland's vulnerable reliance on exports of hazardous waste and non-hazardous residual municipal waste.
- To divert residual waste away from landfill and recovering energy from it in line with the EU's Circular Economy Strategy³, the revised Waste Framework⁴ and Landfill Directive⁵, and Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025⁶, as well as the broader goals of the European Green Deal⁷ and 8th Environment Action Programme⁸.
- To ensure national competitiveness and balanced regional development.

5. Waste and Planning Policy Considerations

Chapter 2 of the EIS also sets out in detail the key policy provisions against which the proposed development has been formulated.

In summary, EU waste policy requires waste to be managed in an economic, sustainable and environmentally appropriate manner. Implementing the EU waste hierarchy, waste should be managed as a resource and disposal should be the last resort. EU and national policies support the recovery of energy from residual waste. In particular, the Circular Economy Package through the amended Directives on Waste and Landfilling and the NHWMP require that Ireland should be self-sufficient in waste management.

The proposed Ringaskiddy RRC will support the achievement of targets on the landfilling and recycling of municipal waste, moving away from landfill disposal to a higher tier of the waste hierarchy.

National

At a national level, the requirement of the NWMP 2024-2030 includes 200,000-300,000 tonnes capacity for residual municipal waste. There is currently a lack of suitable recovery capacity within the Southern Region while a large quantity of residual municipal solid waste (MSW) is being exported for recovery in similar facilities in continental Europe. This is not a sustainable option in the long term as it infringes the proximity principle and does not meet the objective of moving towards self-sufficiency.

The NWMP identifies the relevant criteria for the type of facility that constitutes "nationally and regionally important infrastructure" and endorsing the need for this infrastructure through a Core Policy (CP12). At a capacity of 240,000 tonnes per annum, the proposed development would be categorised as nationally and regionally important infrastructure.

¹ National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030 - My Waste

² National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2021 - 2027 | Environmental Protection Agency

³ Circular economy strategy - European Commission

⁴ Waste Framework Directive - European Commission

⁵ Landfill waste - European Commission

⁶ Climate Action Plan 2025

⁷ The European Green Deal - European Commission

⁸ Environment action programme to 2030 - European Commission

The EPA's NHWMP anticipates that the private sector will develop technically and economically feasible treatment options, including thermal treatment. Similarly, the NWMP notes that the required infrastructure will not be delivered by the Local Authorities as the investment is anticipated from the private sector.

The proposed development will help to address the deficit in thermal treatment capacity in Ireland for suitable hazardous waste, making a significant contribution toward hazardous waste self-sufficiency (reducing exports by up to 24,000 tonnes per annum) and proximity principles by minimising hazardous waste exports.

In energy and climate change terms, the proposed development will generate 21MW of electricity of which 18.5MW will be exported to the national grid. A portion of this electricity will be generated from the biodegradable fraction of industrial and municipal waste and is therefore considered to be energy from renewable sources. Furthermore, waste-to-energy supports high-quality recycling by treating polluted and complex waste, thereby keeping harmful substances out of the circular economy. Waste-to-energy can also contribute to recycling through the extraction of ferrous and non-ferrous metals.

In planning policy terms, from a national planning policy perspective, the National Planning Framework – First Revision 2025 specifically provides that planning for waste treatment requirements to 2040 will require waste-to-energy facilities which treat residual waste that cannot be recycled in a sustainable manner. National Strategic Outcome 9: Sustainable Management of Environmental Resources supports managing waste in an environmentally safe and sustainable manner. National Policy Objective 76 seeks to sustainably manage waste generation, invest in different types of waste treatment and support circular economy principles.

The proposed development is in alignment with this objective and the broader overarching aim of the Framework centred on achieving balanced regional and sustainable development.

Regional

In regional terms, the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) 2019 sets out the objectives and policies for securing balanced regional development in line with the NPF and NDP. The RSES endorses the Waste Management Strategy for the Southern Region 2015-2021, which has since been replaced by the NWMP, the core objective and goals of the plans align, and are still relevant. Strategy 9 of the RSES seeks to provide infrastructure and services in a sustainable, planned and infrastructure-led manner to ensure the sustainable management of waste resources.

Local

Local planning policies and objectives, as set out in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, support the development of a facility such as the proposed Ringaskiddy Resource Recovery Centre on the proposed site in Ringaskiddy. Section 6.4.11 of Plan states that the provision of strategic large-scale waste treatment facilities will be considered in 'Industrial Areas' designated as Strategic Employment Areas in the local area plans subject to the requirements of National Policy, future Regional Waste Management Plans and the objectives set out in local area plans. Ringaskiddy is one such Industrial Area designated as a Strategic Employment Area. Therefore, the provision of a strategic large-scale waste treatment facility at

the proposed development site in Ringaskiddy, which is both an Industrial Area and Strategic Employment Area, is endorsed by Section 6.4.11 of the Plan.

The proposed development is supported by policy objective BE 15-14 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 which supports the policy measures and actions of the prevailing waste policy and Management Plan, including recovery as one of the waste management priorities, and also supports the provision of adequate waste recovery facilities in the county.

Furthermore, the proposed development is supported by the zoning objective for appropriate uses in Industrial Areas, objective ZU 3-7(b).

Specifically, strategic large-scale waste treatment facilities will be considered in 'Industrial Areas' designated as 'Strategic Employment Areas'.

The proposed Ringaskiddy Resource Recovery Centre is located in an industrial area designated as a Strategic Employment Area, in which large scale waste facilities will be considered, in accordance with zoning objective ZU 3-7(b) of the Plan.

The proposed development is a strategic large-scale waste treatment facility. It is strategic as it addresses an identified need in the NWMP and of a large scale that is well within the thresholds for hazardous and non-hazardous waste treatment capacity.

The proposed development is supported by the provisions of national, regional and local waste and planning policy with respect to waste management facilities.

Waste to energy– incorporating avoid, reuse and recycle – is sustainable, and that the need for additional capacity over and above that already permitted remains.

6. Planning Assessment

6.1 Principle of the proposed development

The proposed development is a plan-led development, located, in an area designated as an Industrial Area that is a Strategic Employment Location where large scale waste treatment facilities are to be considered as dictated by national, regional and local planning policy.

The overarching land use objective applying to Ringaskiddy is Industrial Area, and Ringaskiddy is also a Strategic Employment Location. The provision of a strategic large-scale waste treatment facility at the site is in line with the Plan.

Having regard to the prevailing waste, energy and climate policies,

- at a capacity of 240,000 tonnes per annum, the proposed development would be categorised as nationally and regionally important infrastructure in the NWMP, and the need for it is endorsed through a Core Policy (CP12) of the NWMP.
- and in the context of the EPA's NHWMP, the proposed development will help to address the deficit in thermal treatment capacity in Ireland for suitable hazardous waste, making a significant contribution toward hazardous waste self-sufficiency (reducing exports by up to 24,000 tonnes per annum) and proximity principles by minimising hazardous waste exports.
- the proposed development will reduce the quantity of non-hazardous industrial, commercial and municipal solid waste going to landfill and also the need to export municipal solid waste for thermal treatment/recovery in Europe.
- the proposed development will produce approximately 21MW of electricity, with approximately 18.5MW for export to the National Grid. This is enough energy to power approximately 30,000 homes annually and replaces non-renewable fossil fuels in the generation of electricity, which is a significant positive long-term residual impact.
- the proposed development will be strategically located in the national context to serve Cork and the South-West region and would provide an infrastructural asset to the region.

In this respect, the proposed development complies with the provisions of prevailing waste, energy and climate policy.

Waste to energy has been identified as part of the solution for Ireland's waste needs.

From a site layout and context perspective, the proposed development has been designed to address a wide range of factors including the operational requirements of the process and is in line with similar facilities permitted elsewhere. The proposed design meets with all relevant statutory regulations and standards with regard to building design, fire regulations and access for emergency services. The proposed design has also been informed by the corporate campus style character of the immediate area, while also reflecting Ringaskiddy's strategic industrial role. It has also been designed to integrate within its landscape without significant effect on the character of views and prospects from scenic routes, and without

significant effect on Cork Harbour's cultural heritage. In this context, the proposed development will not be visually obtrusive either in the context of the wider Cork Harbour area or relative to adjoining developments, including the wind turbines.

The proposed development is compatible with other Cork Harbour activities. It is notable that the Commission, in granting permission for the relocation of Port of Cork facilities to Ringaskiddy (Ref: 04.PA0035), concluded it would not compromise the amenities of Cork Harbour in terms of tourism, heritage and recreation.

The proposed development will also enhance the provision of tourist facilities in the area by the amenity walkway including viewing point. The dedicated viewing point will enable tourists to appreciate the natural, built and cultural heritage of Cork Harbour.

In this context, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle.

6.2 Locational Issues

Cork is the most appropriate for additional capacity – it is the area where the greatest need arises outside the well-served Greater Dublin Area.

In this context, an examination of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 was undertaken in order to ascertain what reasonable alternative locations in the Cork Metropolitan Area could be determined to be compatible with the zoning and land use policies of the Plan.

In the County Metropolitan Area, the Plan identifies Ringaskiddy as one of five Strategic Employment Locations in the County, the others being Carrigtwohill, Kilbarry, Little Island, and Whitegate. It is an objective of the Plan to promote the development of Strategic Employment Locations suitable for large scale developments at these areas, where such development is compatible with relevant environment, nature and landscape protection policies as they apply around Cork Harbour. The areas are also recognised by the Cork MASP, in particular the potential for foreign direct investment and development by indigenous enterprises.

Accordingly, the Plan sets out Objective EC: 8-3 Strategic Employment Locations:

- a) Promote the development of Strategic Employment Locations suitable for large scale industrial developments at Carrigtwohill, Little Island, Ringaskiddy, and Whitegate where any such development must be sensitively designed and planned to provide for the protection of any designated sites. Any development must be compatible with relevant environment, nature and landscape protection policies as they apply around Cork Harbour and the protection of residential amenity.
- b) Protect lands in these areas from inappropriate development which may undermine their suitability as Strategic Employment locations.

In relation to Industrial Areas, zoned 'I', as is the case in this instance, policy objective ZU 18-16 states that:

The provision of strategic large scale waste treatment facilities including waste to energy recovery facilities will be considered in 'Industrial Areas' designated as Strategic Employment Locations in this Plan subject to the requirements of National Policy, future Regional Waste Management Plans and the objectives set out in this Plan.

The five Strategic Employment Areas are Industrial Areas where the provision of strategic large scale waste treatment facilities including waste to energy recovery facilities will be considered.

An additional site, that of Bottlehill (which is not listed as a Strategic Employment Area) was also examined as policy objective BE 15-15b) in relation to Waste Prevention and Management of Waste Facilities seeks to:

b) Support the sustainable development of the Bottlehill facility for specialised and appropriate uses primarily associated with achieving the aims of the circular waste economy.

These areas were assessed in order to determine whether these could be regarded as "reasonable alternatives" for the proposed development.

The following five areas were identified as possible areas for siting a large-scale waste facility, as they comprise Strategic Employment Areas, including:

- Carrigtwohill
- Kilbarry
- Little Island
- Ringaskiddy; and
- Whitegate

In addition to these areas, the Bottlehill area was also examined. All six areas may also be said to be compatible with locating the proposed facility in a location that minimises the amount of road transport required to deliver waste to the proposed facility as all of these sites are within the environs of Cork City, with Bottlehill and Whitegate being the most distant.

After the foregoing comprehensive review was carried out, the identified areas were subject to a review from a planning perspective as to their suitability for large scale waste facilities. The areas were screened in relation to their size and zoning in order to evaluate as to whether areas could be regarded as "reasonable alternatives" in planning terms to the proposed development site. This report from Coakley O'Neill entitled, "*Planning Report, In Relation to Industrial Lands Within Metropolitan Cork*" is presented in Appendix 3.1 to the EIS. The planning report concluded that there were a number of sites in Ringaskiddy, Little Island, Carrigtwohill and one in Bottlehill that could be considered reasonable alternatives for the proposed development.

The chosen site in Ringaskiddy is in the ownership of Indaver - Indaver purchased the proposed development site in or around December, 2000 - and is located proximate to the strategic M28 motorway. In addition, Indaver has previously secured an EPA licence for a waste management facility on the site. The planning history indicates that the site is suitable for the treatment of residual household, commercial, industrial, non-hazardous and suitable hazardous waste. The site also benefits from closer proximity to producers of hazardous and industrial waste and producers of municipal waste.

6.3 Environmental Impact

6.3.1 An updated EIS has been prepared by Arup Consulting Engineers. A summary of the key environmental effects of the updated EIS notes the following:

- It is anticipated that with the proper construction management, the construction of the proposed development will not give rise to any significant negative residual effects.
- A Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment study was carried out and determined that the proposed development will not be a major accident establishment and that the Seveso III Directive and Regulations will not apply to the proposed development.
- With control measures in place, the risks posed to human health and the environment by the facility will be as low as reasonably practicable.
- The assessment concluded that no significant effects on human health are predicted from the proposed facility.
- The assessment concluded that the proposed development will not result in a significant intake of dioxin and furan, and no effect on human health is likely.
- The proposed mitigation measures will either avoid, prevent or reduce effects to human beings during the construction and operation phases of the proposed development.
- The potential economic benefits both direct from employment in the facility itself and indirect from positive effects on other sources of employment have potential to give positive health effects.
- There may be some minor temporary disruption to local residents due to traffic, dust and noise during the construction phase. It is anticipated that with the proper construction management, the construction of the proposed development will not give rise to any significant negative residual effects on residential or recreational amenities.
- The operation of the proposed development, while not encroaching on the shoreline or the L2545 road, will have an amenity effect due to increased traffic noise, the industrial ambience, and a visual effect. This effect will not, however, be significant.

- The development will not have a significant effect on tourism associated with the ferry port or cruise ship traffic during either the construction or operational phases.
- An amenity walkway, incorporating a viewing platform, is proposed as part of the development. The walkway will provide a connection from Gobby Beach towards the Ringaskiddy Martello tower. The walkway and the upgrade of the local road adjacent to the Indaver both constitute a planning gain for the benefit of existing and future users of the immediate area.
- From a traffic perspective, the applicant has approached the design, construction and operation of the resource recovery centre of the principle of minimising traffic at peak periods through the implementation of a HGV booking system, and the arrangement of operational personnel shifts and visitor traffic so that the facility generates minimal traffic on the local road network during the peak traffic periods once operational in the scenario where the M28 is not yet operational. In order to minimise the potential effect of traffic flows during the construction stage, HGV, workforce and general site traffic will be scheduled so as to ensure no vehicles arrive at or depart from the proposed development site during the 07:00-09:00 and 16:00-18:00 peak periods. The impact of the construction of the proposed development on local junctions was considered to have minimal to no impact during the morning peak (06:00-07:00), with exception to a moderate impact at Shannon Park in both morning (06:00-07:00) and evening peak (18:00-19:00). After consultation with Cork County Council and An Bord Pleanála, Indaver proposes to control the arrivals and departures of waste delivery vehicles to and from the site during the two-hour network morning and evening peak periods using the same SAP waste delivery management software system that Indaver already uses to control the delivery of waste in Meath. The traffic assessment concluded that the operation of the proposed development will have no significant effect on the local road network west of the Port of Cork Junction during the AM peak period in the scenarios where the M28 is and is not operational in the opening year. During the afternoon peak period, the relative effect on the local road network will not be significant in both scenarios, except east of the Ferry port junction which will be lightly trafficked and have slight effects. There will also be little or no effect on the local road network during the network AM or PM peak periods due to the restrictions on waste acceptance and the scheduling of staff working hours outside of the network AM peak, with the exception again of the link east of the Ferry Port Junction, which will be lightly trafficked in the AM and PM peak in both scenarios. With the adoption of the mitigation measures, the traffic generated by the proposed development will have no significant effect. In relation to air quality, a series of mitigation measures are specified for implementation during the construction stage to ensure that dust emissions from the site are minimised. No adverse effect on public health or the environment, including the Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA), is envisaged to occur at or beyond the facility boundary. No adverse effect on public health or the environment, including the Cork Harbour SPA, is envisaged to occur at or beyond the facility boundary.
- The proposed development has incorporated climate adaptation measures to address the effects associated with climate change, for example, the rise sea levels or more extreme weather events and flooding. The levels of the low-lying parts of the site will be raised to well above the predicted

flood level, with an allowance for climate change. The drainage in the L2545 will be upgraded to mitigate the risk of flooding of the road. During the operation of the facility, the energy generated will be recovered and converted to electricity to meet the electrical demand of the facility. Surplus electricity will be exported to the National Grid. There is the potential for carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions to atmosphere during the construction from construction vehicles, generators etc. However, it is not anticipated that greenhouse gas emissions during the construction phase will be significant in the context of Ireland's total greenhouse gas emissions. In the operational phase the contribution to total greenhouse gas emissions is minor in the context of strategic infrastructure. In addition, the export of surplus electricity to the national grid (18.5MW) will have a direct benefit in terms of preventing greenhouse gas emissions from the production of that electricity in a fossil fuel-based power station. In the absence of the proposed facility, waste would be collected and disposed of to landfill or exported for incineration in Europe. Landfills produce methane which is twenty-eight times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas, and by diverting waste from landfill, the negative effect of the production of methane is avoided. Reducing the export of residual waste will also reduce carbon emissions from transport of waste. Based on the scale and temporary nature of the construction works and the intermittent use of equipment, the potential effect on climate change from the direct effect of the proposed development in relation to Ireland's obligations under the EU 2030 target is deemed to be short-term, not significant and negative. The potential for changes to long-term weather effects as a result of climate change are not considered to be significant in the context of the construction phase of the proposed development which will take place over a short-term period in the near future. The proposed development will have in effect net positive GHG emissions when the displacement of fossil-fuel burning power stations and replacement of landfilling is taken into account. The likelihood of extreme weather and flooding was assessed to be of low likelihood and with a low or medium exposure leading to a finding of low vulnerability and thus a not significant effect.

- The construction noise assessment has identified that the use of high impact activities such as rock breaking have the potential to lead to exceedances of the evening-time criteria, specifically on the L2545 road upgrade and drainage works, without specific noise mitigation. The use of these activities will therefore be restricted to daytime periods only. Any construction activities undertaken on the site will be required to operate below the recommended vibration criteria during all activities. The results of the modelling assessment indicate that the operational noise levels during daytime, evening and night-time periods are all below the relevant noise criteria i.e. the EPA's noise criteria for licensed industrial activities, at the nearest noise sensitive locations. The operational traffic assessment predicted that increases in traffic noise in the vicinity of the proposed during peak hour flows are of imperceptible to not significant noise effect.
- From a landscape and visual impact perspective, due to the scale of the proposed development, it will be visible from a wide number of locations with varying sensitivities to change in the visual environment. To mitigate the visual impacts, the form, height, positioning and cladding of the proposed main process building has been carefully chosen to reflect the shape of the existing natural ridgeline, and to sit within it. For example, the varying dark and mid tone green colours

visually recede the buildings against the landform, and the breaking down of the facades and roofline also helped to reduce the overall appearance of scale of the building. The overall strategy for the landscape planting proposals throughout the site is to utilise and emulate the species that are already present on the site and environs of Cork Harbour. Retaining as much vegetation as possible and also planting with the same native species as found in the local area will blend the site visually with the surrounding established vegetation particularly when viewed from a distance. Initial potential effects will be significant and negative on the adjacent local landscape, but as planting matures, these will reduce to moderate, negative effects. Effects on the character of the greater Cork Harbour Area will be slight to moderate and neutral due to the existing mix of industrial elements within the area of the proposed development. There will be lighting effects at night-time from the lights on the stack and site lighting. This will lead to an intensification of the existing night-time character rather than a complete change of character to this area. The majority of the lighting will be at low levels and will therefore be predominantly screened or mitigated by the mounding and planting. The cumulative effect on the landscape character will be negative in the short term but is deemed to be positive in the medium to long term once operational as the area transitions from a slightly unkempt, semi-industrial area to a more developed cluster of industry, energy and education campus style landscape.

- In terms of biodiversity, the habitats recorded within the site are considered to be of lower to higher value. Bat surveys recorded limited usage of the site of the proposed development, with no potential roosting sites identified with the proposed development site. The loss of denser scrub and immature woodland and treeline at the east of the proposed development site will remove bat foraging areas. However, linear features on the boundary of the proposed development site will be retained and/or enhanced to provide commuting routes within the wider landscape. The proposed development will not impact directly on the active sett of badgers within the proposed development site. No other protected mammal species were recorded within the proposed development site. A number of cetaceans species have been recorded within the overall harbour, but effects on cetaceans during site works are predicted to be negligible. No significant effects on water quality in the marine environment or significant effects on prey availability for cetaceans have been identified. The terrestrial bird species recorded during bird surveys are typical of the types of habitats noted on the proposed development site and are generally common. No rare or uncommon species or species of high conservation value were recorded. Disturbance/displacement of terrestrial birds may occur during construction due to increased noise and disturbance. However, this will be short in duration. Birds in the surrounding landscape are expected to habituate to the volume of activity proposed. A range of mitigation measures were specified to minimise ecological impacts including measures to minimise the impact on birds, mammals and habitats and to create replacement habitat where possible. Detailed mitigation measures are specified to ensure that invasive species will be controlled. An assessment of the residual impact concluded that there will be some localised impacts due to the loss of common habitats used by species of bats, breeding birds, wintering birds, and other species of small mammals. However, the residual effects range from slight to imperceptible. The conclusions of the NIS are that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites including the Cork Harbour SPA. Although increases in

noise/disturbance could arise from several different projects in-combination the effect is likely to be most pronounced during construction. This is a short-term effect which will be localised. Given the nature of the projects proposed and distances between them, significant effects during operation are unlikely.

- In relation to soils, geology, hydrology, hydrogeology where possible, excavated materials will be reused on site. Circa 75,000m³ of surplus material will be generated during the construction phase and will be removed from the site. Where a re-use for the material cannot be found, the material may be sent to suitably permitted waste facilities or licenced soil recovery facilities in accordance with relevant waste legislation or disposed at suitable authorised waste facilities. Circa 30,300m³ of engineering fill and crushed stone will be imported onto the site. These materials will be sourced from local quarries. It is proposed to raise the footprint of the entire site to the proposed site flood defence level of 4.55m OD, to ensure that the risk of flooding to the site is remote. It is also proposed to upgrade the L2445 to address the risk of flooding of the road, which will offer a high level of protection to the road from tidal flooding and can help ensure that access and egress routes are maintained during flood events. A new dedicated surface water drainage system will be installed as part of the L2545 upgrade works. These measures are sufficient to ensure that the risk of flooding of the site and its access road is very low. With the implementation of mitigation measures, the construction and operation of the proposed development will not result in significant negative effects on soils, geology, hydrology or hydrogeology.
- There are no recorded archaeological sites within the proposed development site. The nearest recorded archaeological site to the proposed development site is Ringaskiddy Martello tower (CO087-053), which stands 70m to the south at its nearest point. There are no protected structures within the proposed development site. The closest protected structure is the Ringaskiddy Martello tower (RPS No. 575). The construction of the proposed development will have a negative, moderate, indirect, and long-term effect on the line of the path from Gobby Beach to Ringaskiddy Martello tower. No direct or significant adverse operational effects on recorded archaeology, architectural heritage or cultural heritage are anticipated as a result of the operation of the proposed development. Archaeological monitoring will be undertaken of the works to the beach and the L2545. The proposed development will result in direct and permanent changes to views *from* the Martello Tower toward the northeast including Marloag Point and the northwest portion of Spike Island, and views *toward* the tower from surrounding parts of Cork Harbour, particularly from the northeast. This potential effect will be mitigated through a combination of design measures and site layout considerations. Accordingly, this will result in a negative, moderate, indirect and permanent effect.
- In relation to material assets, the proposed Ringaskiddy Resource Recovery Centre will be constructed and operated in accordance with good practice in energy and resource conservation, and efficiency.

- The cumulative effect of existing and known proposed developments on the landscape character will be negative in the short term but is deemed to be positive in the medium to long term once operational as the area transitions from a slightly unkempt, semi-industrial area to a more developed cluster of industry, energy and education campus style landscape.

6.4 Community Gain

In addition to the amenity walkway, incorporating a viewing platform, the upgrade of the local road (L2545), and the construction and operational jobs, the applicant is proposing a community fund similar to that in operation at its Meath Waste-to-Energy Facility, which would fund environmental and other community projects and initiatives in the Ringaskiddy area. The local community will benefit from the distribution of this fund annually for local projects including new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities. In Ringaskiddy it is estimated that the fund will be approximately €240,000 per year for the life of the facility. So far in Meath, the fund has amounted to over €3,000,000 which has been invested in a range of important projects and community initiatives.

7. Conclusion

Having regard to the provisions of:

- the European policy framework for waste management including the Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC
- national and regional waste management policy, including A Resource Opportunity – Waste Management Policy in Ireland, 2012, and the National Waste Management Plan, 2024 and the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan, 2021
- national and regional spatial planning policy, including National Strategic Outcome 9 and National Policy Objective 76 of the National Planning Framework First Revision 2025
- the provisions of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028
- the pattern of existing and permitted development in the area
- the planning history of the site
- the fact that the proposal would be subject to an Industrial Emissions Licence, and
- the location of the site in an industrial area which is a Strategic Employment Area where large scale waste facilities can be considered, and its proximity to a national transport network.

it is the conclusion of this report that the proposed development would be in compliance with national, regional and local waste, energy, climate and planning policies, would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, would not be prejudicial to public health, would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.