

**Planning Application by Biffa Waste Services Ltd**

**Application Number: 2011/1088/02**

**County Council Identity Number: 2011/C472/02**

**Details: Application for an Energy Recovery Facility and ancillary facilities**

## **Submission to Public Consultation**

# **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT**

# Table Of Contents

1.	LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT	3
1.1	SLR CONCLUSIONS	3
	Illustration 1.1	6
1.2	SLR PHOTOGRAPHS	7
1.3	PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOCAL RESIDENTS	10
1.4	ENVIRONMENTAL REPUTATION OF LOUGHBOROUGH	12
	Illustration 1.2	14
	Illustration 1.3	15
	Illustration 1.4	16
1.5	CHARWOOD FOREST REGIONAL PARK	17
1.6	GARENDON ESTATE, PARK AND GARDENS	18
	Illustration 1.5	20
1.7	GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL	22
1.8	SHERWOOD FOREST INCINERATOR	22
APPENDIX 1/1	SLR PHOTOGRAPHS	24
APPENDIX 1/2	LOCAL RESIDENTS PHOTOGRAPHS	39
APPENDIX 1/3	MAP OF AREA	47

# 1. Landscape and Visual Impact

The Environmental Statement (ES) was prepared and submitted to Leicestershire County Council by SLR Consultants on behalf of Biffa Waste Services Ltd. SLR made a presentation to the Biffa Liaison Committee last year where they were introduced as ‘an independent consultancy firm’. We beg to differ with this description. SLR is employed by Biffa to present the best possible case in support of the Application for an incinerator and therefore their report needs to be treated with some circumspection. The ES is also couched in technical and pseudo-scientific terms whereas most of the conclusions in the Landscape and Visual Impact Section of the Report are a question of judgement and viewpoint – not scientific certainties.

## 1.1 SLR Conclusions

Section 7 of the ES, Landscape and Visual, reaches a number of conclusions which we contend are to a large extent invalid, as detailed below.

*7.262 The application site includes parts of a disused quarry and adjacent offices with an existing planning permission for non-hazardous landfill and associated waste management buildings and infrastructure, including a material recycling facility, in-vessel composting and waste transfer station. In the absence of the proposed ERF development it is assumed that the planning permission for the development of Newhurst Quarry as an integrated waste management facility would be carried out.*

This is only partly true. Current planning permission is only for landfill and the associated waste management activities. It is not an open door for **any** integrated waste management facility. The site was granted planning permission because of the available quarry void but it would not be suitable for all waste management activities. Biffa have on numerous occasions said they would **not** go ahead with the landfill project because it is no longer economically viable. We are not aware of any changes in the economic climate that would persuade Biffa to change their assessment, so it is wrong to assume that previous planning permission would be carried out.

*7.263 Although there is some natural regeneration and mature trees/woodland plantation, the character of the application site is of a largely abandoned/derelict state. This is irrespective of the Charnwood local landscape designation (“Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside”), proposed Charnwood Forest Regional Park and National Forest designation which covers most of the application site.*

The current character of the application site **is** of a largely abandoned/derelict state. But this will not necessarily be so in the future. There are proposals to regenerate the area and bring it back into use for recreational and countryside activities. Had the landfill project gone ahead TNF were already in discussions about regenerating the area after landfill was complete, as they have done very successfully in other parts of the Forest. Leicestershire County Council (LCC) are already discussing proposals for hard rock quarry restoration in Leicestershire (a workshop was held at County Hall in April 2011). Their ‘Vision for the Future’ includes ideas to use the quarries (including Newhurst) for recreation and nature with activities such as scuba diving, shooting ranges, climbing, fishing and unofficial kids playgrounds, with wildlife filling in the gaps.

If the incinerator project goes ahead, none of these regeneration proposals could be undertaken for many decades.

*7.264 The proposed development would not alter the “industrial” local landscape character of the application site, as the proposed buildings and operations are similar to those that would otherwise occur.*

The proposed buildings and operations would be on a much bigger scale than those that might otherwise occur thus making the local landscape even more “industrial” and would certainly have a much greater visual impact on the surrounding countryside.

*7.265 The overall significance of landscape impacts would be slight and adverse mainly due to the introduction of a larger scale industrial structure within an industrial setting. Therefore there would be no significant landscape impacts.*

It is difficult to see how SLR has reached this conclusion and it is certainly not shared by other agencies. LCC state that:

- 1) The development would have an unacceptable impact on the countryside by virtue of its scale, intrusive appearance and visual impact, contrary to Policies WCS10: (Environmental Protection) and WDC5: (Countryside) of the Leicestershire and Leicester Waste Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies document and Policies EV/1(i), CT/1, CT/2 and CT/6 of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan.
- 2) The development would also have an unacceptable impact on the designated Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside by way of the introduction of a prominent, visually intrusive and incongruous building and would not maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the landscape, contrary to Policy CT/7 of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan.
- 3) The development would conflict with Policy WCS12 of the Leicestershire and Leicester Waste Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies document insofar as it would have a detrimental impact upon the landscape, cultural heritage and built heritage of the Charnwood Forest and the siting and scale of the development do not reflect and compliment the character of the surrounding landscape.

Charnwood Borough Councillors, representing residents throughout Charnwood, resolved:

‘Notwithstanding the thought given to their design, the Borough Council objects to the height, size, colour and visual impact of the building and the flue stacks, and the effect these would have on the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan as being within a designated Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside.’

Lesley Eddleston, LCC’s Landscape Officer, in a submission to the consultation, concluded that ‘In the light of the additional information provided to assist in the landscape and visual impacts of the proposal, I object to the proposal on the grounds of its scale and intrusive appearance on the edge of Charnwood Forest.’

More than 1,545 individual letters were sent in to the consultation objecting to the plans to build an incinerator. Of the letters, 1,367 focused on the landscape and visual impact of

the development particularly in respect of the National Forest and Charnwood Forest Regional Park. They pointed out that the main building mass, flue stacks and plume would be visible from many viewpoints both approaching and within Shepshed as well as from the many footpaths in the surrounding countryside.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report – Waste Site Allocations of February 2011 includes the following conclusions (Appendix B: Site Assessment Tables) for Newhurst Quarry incinerator project.

*‘This proposal would be upon greenfield land within an existing quarry. The land is designated as an ‘Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside’ in the Charnwood Local Plan and resides within the Charnwood Forest and National Forest boundaries and has the potential to have a significant negative impact. The scale of the building is such that it cannot be screened from views outside of the site and would have a significant negative impact upon the landscape. The proposal is also of such a scale that the character and setting of the Garendon historic park, and the setting of the listed buildings within it, would be further eroded by this development, thus causing significant negative impacts upon the historic environment.’*

The National Forest comments on visual impact in the landscape as follows:

*The proposed building associated with the development is a very significant structure measuring 240 metres long with a height of 46.5 metres to the apex of the upper roof. Its impact is further exaggerated by the inclusion of flue stacks measuring 96.5 metres in height. Notwithstanding the existing enclosed landform and woodland screening it is obvious that the proposed built development will have a significant visual impact when viewed from existing rights of way, local properties and the surrounding road network to the detriment of the character and appearance of the landscape.*

In fact we have not come across **any** individual or organisation that supports the SLR conclusion that *‘there would be no significant landscape impacts’*.

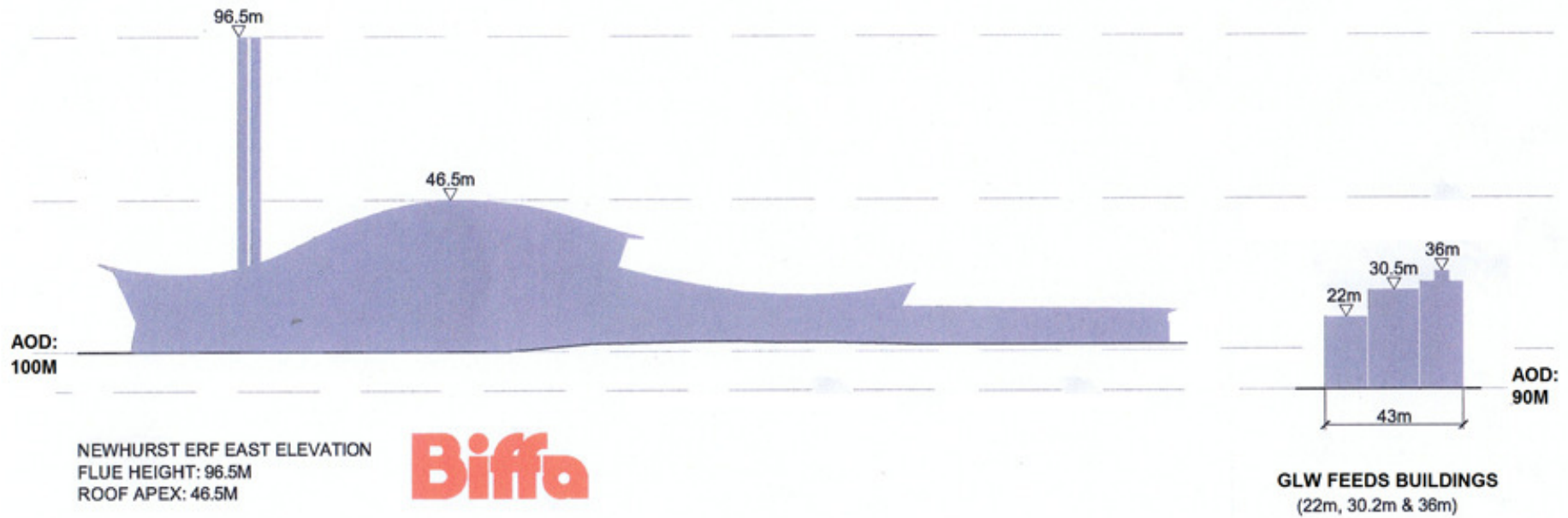
The huge size and height of the facility is clearly shown in Illustration 1.1. This shows the incinerator complex in relation to the GLW Feeds buildings to the north of Ashby Road East, which is already a prominent industrial building in the locality. The incinerator building is 10.5 metres higher than GLW and the flue 60.5 metres higher. In practice, the difference in height is even greater because of an additional 12mAOD between the buildings. That means that the incinerator flue would be no less than 72.5m higher than the GLW building.

*7.267 Notwithstanding this, the proposed development is large in scale and height and the main building mass, flue stacks and plume all have the potential to be visible, depending on conditions. The main approach to mitigation has therefore focused on the building being of a high design standard in terms of concept and layout.*

The main building mass, flue stacks and plume have more than the **potential** to be visible. They **will** be highly visible from many points in Charnwood Forest, the National Forest and Garendon Park and Estate. Whatever ‘high design standards’ are used, the development will remain a huge industrial building totally at odds with the surrounding countryside. The buildings will also quickly deteriorate. Emissions from the flue stack will be 24/7 and every day hundreds of HGVs carrying every type of waste will enter the complex as well as toxic waste being exported. There is no way in which Biffa will be

**Illustration 1.1**

Comparison of height of incinerator complex and GLW Feeds building



able to maintain the visual standards that might be achieved initially. A coat of paint every few years will not solve the problem.

*7.268 The assessment has concluded that the proposed development would not result in significant visual effects for the majority of viewpoints within the study areas, with the exception of a very localised area around viewpoint 6 at Junction 23 of the M1, east of Shepshed. At this location the upper parts of the proposed facility would be visible above the existing tree planting on the eastern side of the application site and break the skyline.*

*7.269 These visual effects would be limited in extent and would reduce very quickly within relatively close proximity of approximately 1-2km surrounding the ERF including the majority of rights of way, National Cycle Route 6, recreational and receptors.*

These conclusions simply emphasise the utterly invalid assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development by SLR. Given that the Consultant was paid by Biffa to produce an Environmental Statement that supports implementation of the incinerator project, maybe this was to be expected. We are confident, however, that the Inspector will recognise the weakness of the ES, as have Leicestershire County Councillors, and reject the Appeal.

## **1.2 SLR Photographs**

SLR has provided a number of photographs taken from different viewpoints, some of them as far as 10+km from the incinerator site. We fail to understand the utility of many of the views and, except for a few cases, don't see their relevance to the visual impact of the proposed incinerator complex. The photographs are included in Appendix 1/1.

### Viewpoint 1 – Donington Park Motorway Service Area

There seems no efficacy in using this viewpoint. The view does not include any montage to show how the incinerator would look, and we doubt that anyone would care at this distance and in this location.

### Viewpoint 2 – Nottingham Road

This view is from such a distance that the building mass and flue stacks would be barely discernable. We doubt that ramblers and residents in The Wolds would be likely to look towards Junction 23 of the M1 for any reason. Again, we don't see the efficacy of including this viewpoint.

### Viewpoint 3 – Beacon Hill Country Park

This view is much more relevant though it does not include a montage of the incinerator complex. Residential properties can be seen to the right of the view. Such properties are, perhaps, 10m high compared with the incinerator flue at 96.5M and the main building at 46.5m. This gives some idea of how prominent the incinerator complex would be and how it would spoil the view in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (listed as such in the 'Pictures of England.com' Leicestershire website).

#### Viewpoint 4 – Snell’s Nook Lane

The view clearly shows the GLW building. The incinerator building would be even more visible given its size, height and elevation. The path in fact goes west along the perimeter of Longcliffe golf course towards the incinerator site, continuing down the side of the M1 to Junction 23. The incinerator would therefore become increasingly visible. The path also goes south west and behind Longcliffe Quarry which is linked to Newhurst Quarry by a motorway underpass. The path is in fact Walk 6 in ‘Countryside Walks from Shepshed’. The incinerator development would clearly have a major visual impact on this well used country walk.

#### Viewpoint 5 – Junction of A512 with Snell Nook Lane

Very few pedestrians pass this point so the view doesn’t have any particular significance. At the top of the road is J23. The incinerator complex would probably be visible over the trees at the A512/Snell’s Nook Lane junction, certainly in winter, and would increasingly come into the view of vehicular passengers as they approached J23.

#### Viewpoint 6 – M1 J23 bridge

The photomontage version of this view is the only one that gives a realistic impression of the size of the incinerator complex and the huge visual impact it will have and we doubt that even this montage represents the full size, height and elevation. Most visitors to Loughborough/Shepshed come via the M1, exiting at J23. Their first impression will be of a huge industrial building with a smoke plume rising from a very high flue stack.

#### Viewpoint 7 – Lubcloud Farm bridleway

This view has the greatest potential for presenting a clear and accurate picture of the visual impact of the incinerator complex on an area of beautiful countryside. But because no photomontage has been included, the opportunity has been missed. However, the write-up for this viewpoint does give a good description of the visual impact: ‘the building mass and flue stacks would be visible within the middle ground of this view. The development would sit at the centre of the view. The building mass would be visible against the greens and browns of the woodland blocks in the middle ground ..... The flue stacks would also be visible ..... The plume from the flue stacks would be visible, depending on conditions’.

It should also be noted that Lubcloud Farm is an organic farm. ‘Set in the beautiful borough of Oaks in Charnwood. Lubcloud Dairy Limited and Lubcloud Organic Farm uses the milk from the Dairy Herd to produce and bottle their own milk and cream.’ We doubt whether the farmer or his customers would relish the sight of a huge incinerator with a plume of smoke of questionable composition as they collect their organic milk.

#### Viewpoint 8 – Entrance of application site off A512

The only useful viewpoint here is the photomontage. This clearly shows the visual impact though we would question the proportions of the incinerator building mass and flue compared to the building in the foreground. In practice it would be much higher than shown. In any case, a view from just a few metres further along the A512 would have provided a much more dominant visual image of the incinerator complex. Again we



wonder why SLR has taken the picture from this particular viewpoint showing the incinerator building mass as largely obscured by the Quarry Managers office?

#### Viewpoint 9 – Pedestrian/cycle bridge across M1

This bridge is well used by Shepshed residents to reach Garendon Park and Estate. The view therefore has some relevance. The GLW building is just about discernible in the winter view so the incinerator complex, particularly the flue stack and plume, would be clearly visible given its extra height and elevation. Passengers in vehicles on the M1 approaching J23 from the north would have an increasingly clear view of the incinerator. A Biffa video montage presented to the Liaison Committee at the start of the application process shows the incinerator complex dominating the landscape for visitors or residents joining or exiting at J23 of the M1. Perhaps this video montage could be shown to the Inspector?

#### Viewpoint 10 – Public Right of Way off B5324

Owing to the distance from the incinerator site, this view is of little relevance. However, there are many footpaths between the B5324 and Shepshed and the incinerator complex would be a much more prominent feature, blighting the view for walkers and ramblers. The footpaths are frequently used by Shepshed, Belton and Long Whatton residents.

#### Viewpoint 11 – Public Right of Way off Shepshed Road

This view is across the Garendon Estate and Park, the Estate being much used for walking, cycling and other recreational pursuits. The GLW Feeds building is visible amongst the woodland in the middle ground of the view so the incinerator complex would be clearly seen because of its extra mass and height. The incinerator would be even more prominent further into the Estate and Garendon Park where there are many pathways as well as Cycle Route 6.

#### Viewpoint 12 – Railway Bridge on Stanford Road

There seems little utility in recording a view from this location. Only the roof of the building mass and flue stacks would be visible, and even then at some distance.

#### Viewpoint 13 – National Cycle Route 6

SLR state that ‘the proposed development would be partially screened with only the roof of the building mass and flue stacks potentially visible.’ But following south west along the cycle route and along the edge of Garendon Park, the incinerator complex would become increasingly prominent with the visual impact changing to moderate/high from slight/moderate. Again, SLR has chosen a viewpoint that minimises the visual impact of the development. To a cyclist the submitted view would merely be transient and an open aspect would predominate.

#### Viewpoint 14 – Shepshed

Since the GLW building can be clearly seen from this view and the incinerator complex is significantly higher, then both the building mass and the flue would be prominent. There would be even more visual impact at nearby locations, for instance at the top of Leicester Road, the bus stop on the A512 and the popular restaurant at the end of Ingleberry Road.

Part of Walk 6 of the Shepshed Walk Guide emerges onto the A512 opposite the site entrance.

### Viewpoint 15 – The White Horse, A512

The GLW Feeds Mill can be clearly seen in this view. Since the both the incinerator building and the flue stacks are higher than this building, then they would be even more visible. Of more concern are other viewpoints along the A512 in the direction of J23. The further along the road the greater the visual impact with the significance moving from slight/moderate at the White Horse to moderate/high after the Iveshead Road junction.

In general, we are concerned that the chosen viewpoints are often distant from the development site and have very little significance in assessing the visual impact of the incinerator complex. The main concern of Charnwood residents is the visual impact on the areas of outstanding natural beauty in Charnwood Forest Regional Park and The National Forest. But only 3 of the 15 viewpoints are actually in these rural areas. We cannot understand why these particular viewpoints were chosen. Another major weakness in the SLR report is that in only 2 views has a montage of the incinerator complex been included. The many references to ‘visible vertical angles’ are of little significance or help to County Councillors and other interested parties who have to take decisions on the visual impact. Many more montages should have been included – perhaps in every view. Otherwise the report and photographs do not provide a clear picture of the visual impact of the incinerator development.

## **1.3 Photographs by Local Residents**

There are 86 footpaths within 2km of Shepshed most of them within Charnwood Forest, the National Forest and Garendon Park and Estate. We have taken photographs (Appendix 1.2) from many viewpoints on the country footpaths and Map 1 in Appendix 1.3 shows the location of 15 of these. Comments on the various viewpoints are shown below.

### Viewpoint 2.1 Morley Quarry Nature Reserve footpath

This view looks to the east where the GLW building can clearly be seen. The incinerator building and flue stack would dominate the view being respectively some 23m and 72m higher.

### Viewpoint 2.2 Near Iveshead Lane and Farm

Similar comments apply as for Viewpoint 2.1

### Viewpoint 2.3 Oaks in Charnwood

This shows the beautiful countryside around Oaks in Charnwood. The incinerator complex would be clearly seen from many points in this area.

### Viewpoint 2.4 Longcliffe Quarry footpath (K61)

This footpath passes behind Longcliffe Plantation and Quarry. The GLW building is prominent but the incinerator complex would be considerably larger.

#### Viewpoint 2.5 Public right of way, Lubcloud Farm

This panoramic view shows what a huge impact the incinerator complex would have on the landscape. The facility would be in the centre of the view on a much larger scale than the nearby GLW building.

#### Viewpoint 2.6 Fairway Road, east Shepshed

This view illustrates the visual impact on the east side of Shepshed. The incinerator would overshadow the already prominent GLW building.

#### Viewpoint 2.7 Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve

Taken from Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve, this view is towards the incinerator site with Lubcloud Organic Farm in the middle distance.

#### Viewpoint 2.8 Warren Hills

Looking north east over Charnwood Lodge to Iveshead.

#### Viewpoint 2.9 Junction of A512 with Snell's Nook Lane

A National Forest roadside sign welcomes visitors to the area at this junction. But the first thing tourists will see as they travel towards J23 is the incinerator.

#### Viewpoint 2.10 Hurst Farm footpath (K62)

The incinerator complex will dominate the view from this footpath. It will be the same view from the new LU Science Park to be built on land east of the M1. Longcliffe Golf Club advertises itself as being located in '*Beautiful Charnwood Forest and as the perfect venue for weddings and other celebrations*'. The incinerator complex would be at the centre of the view from the Golf Club.

#### Viewpoint 2.11 M1 J23 roundabout

GLW building is seen on the right. The incinerator would be to the left on a higher elevation with a 96.5m flue stack towering above the scene. This viewpoint is located at the south west corner of Garendon Park.

#### Viewpoint 2.12 Nanpantan footpath to the Outwoods

GLW is visible from this popular footpath and is much used by walkers and runners.

#### Viewpoint 2.13 Stapleford Park

This view looking west from Stapleford Park, which is adjacent to Garendon Park, would include the incinerator facility.

#### Viewpoint 2.14 Garendon Park

In this view from the south east corner of Garendon Park, the GLW building, 36m high, is visible as is the Orange mobile phone mast at 35m though on a higher elevation. The

incinerator building would be 22.5m higher than GLW and the flue stack 72.5m higher. The landscape would be dominated by the incinerator complex.

#### Viewpoint 2.15 Temple of Venus

This view of the Temple of Venus on the Garendon Estate shows how the Temple is on higher ground than Viewpoint 2.14. The visual impact of the Incinerator on the view from the Temple of Venus would therefore be even more dominant.

## **1.4 Environmental Reputation of Loughborough**

A high proportion of visitors to Loughborough and Shepshed, as well as residents, travel on the M1 motorway, exiting at Junction 23. If the development goes ahead their first view of our towns would be of a huge incinerator with industrial buildings 54.6m high and a 96.5m flue stack – often with a plume of smoke rising from it. The visual impact will be enormous, as can be seen from Illustration 1.2 (Photomontage) and Illustration 1.3 (Artists Impression).

Another way of visualising the huge size of the incinerator is by comparing it with the ‘Angel of the North’. This is a stunning sculpture by Antony Gormley erected in February 1998 as a welcome to visitors to Gateshead and Newcastle on Tyne. Rising 20 metres from the earth near the A1 in Gateshead, the Angel dominates the skyline, dwarfing all those who come to see it. The Angel of the North is a major visitor attraction and provides a wonderful visual image as an introduction to this area of the north east.

A comparison between the Angel of the North and the Newhurst Quarry Incinerator is shown in Illustration 1.4. At 96.5m the flue stack is almost 5 times higher than the Angel. Even the building mass is some 3 times higher. Instead of the work of art that is the Angel of the North we will have ugly industrial buildings and a smoke plume to greet visitors to our area. Perhaps it would become known as the Demon of the East Midlands!

**Loughborough University** is one of the country’s leading universities, highly regarded, justifiably proud of its many achievements and named University of the Year by the Sunday Times for 2008/09. The University is also the UK’s premier university for sport and has perhaps the best integrated sports development environment in the world. The campus is home to some of the country’s leading coaches, sports scientists and support staff. It also has the country’s largest concentration of high quality sports training facilities, equipment and support resources in the world.

The then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Ben Bradshaw MP, visited the £15million SportPark project at the University in 2010. This is now home to a host of national sport bodies, allowing a diverse range of organisations to share best practice and innovations across their different disciplines. Mr Bradshaw praised the visionary thinking behind the Project. SportPark is located just 1 km downwind of the incinerator site.

This excellence has been recognised by the university being chosen to provide the official preparation camp headquarters for both Team GB and the Japanese Team for the 2012 Olympics. Not only will both Teams be based on campus in the lead in to the 2012 Games, but other agreements also create opportunities beyond the core provision of a preparation camp. As the university becomes even better known internationally, many athletes and sports students will be attracted to Loughborough thus signalling a very bright future.

But this bright future could be significantly jeopardised if an incinerator were to be built at J23 of the M1. It would be clearly seen by athletes and other sports men and women as they exit the motorway, and would also be visible from parts of the University Campus. Of particular concern would be the plume of smoke rising from the flue stack which will often be carried towards the university by the prevailing wind. LU already faces air quality challenges from the traffic on Epinal Way and the A512. The new Science Park will add to the problems. Emissions from an incinerator would cause a further deterioration of air quality, as would the additional HGV movements along the A512. There is little unanimity amongst scientists as to how much toxicity is emitted from incinerators and their effect on air quality, but certainly the public perception is that they do cause health problems. No doubt many of the potential athletes, students and staff considering joining the University will have similar perceptions and may well be discouraged from applying.

***Illustration 1.2***

Photomontage from Junction 23 Roundabout



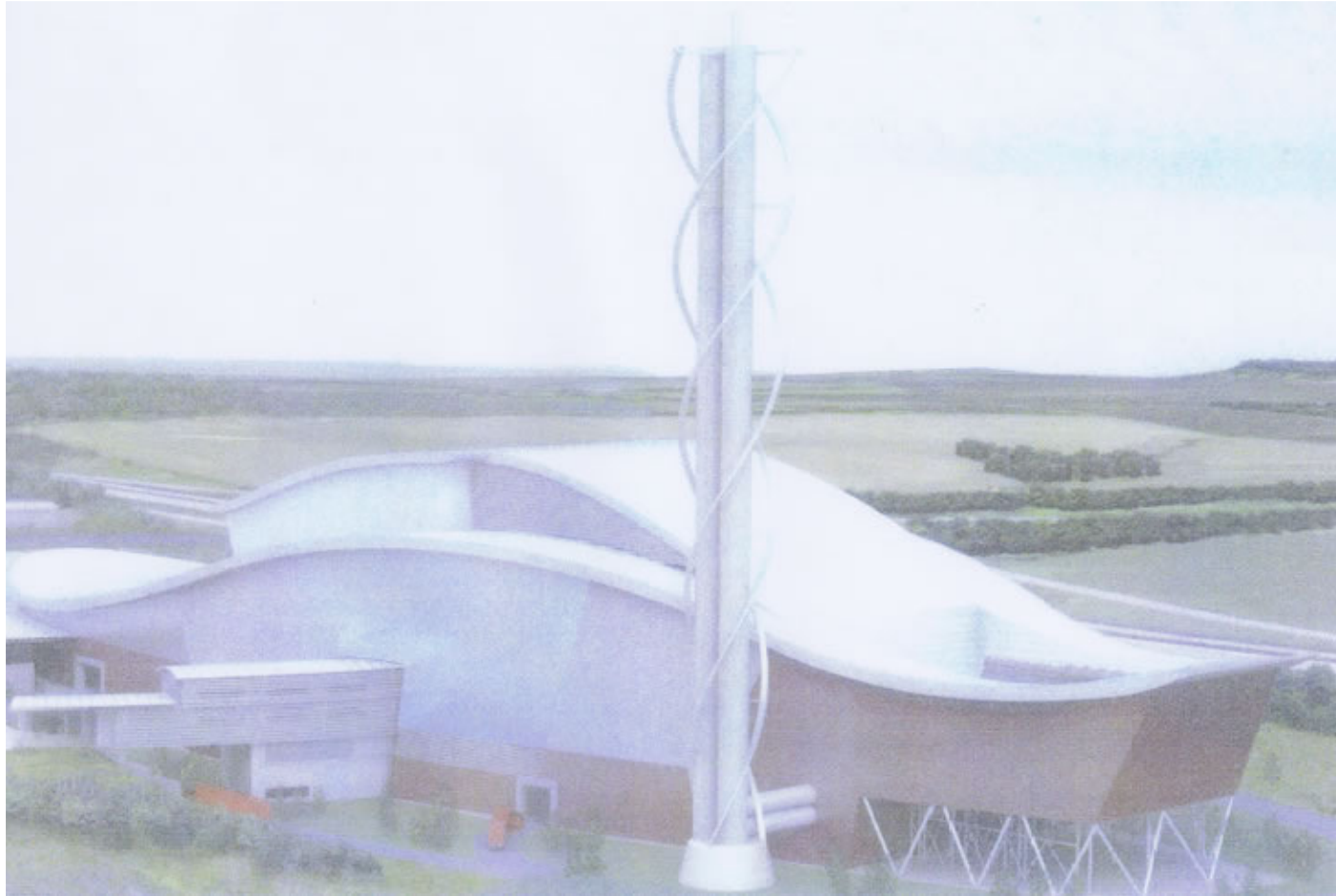
***Illustration 1.3***

Artist's impression of incinerator buildings and flue stack



***Illustration 1.4***

Comparison of visual impact of the Newhurst Incinerator with the 'Angel of the North'





LCC Officers advice on the impact of the development on Loughborough University is given in paragraph 371 of the Report of the Chief Executive to the Development Control and Regulatory Board on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010, as follows:

*The University has been consulted and has not responded formally on this application. It is acknowledged that the University may be extending westwards towards the M1 in the future and there is the possibility that it could take advantage of the waste heat that an incinerator would generate. With regard to the 2012 Olympics, if permission is granted then building works would take three years to complete, and they could only commence building once pre-commencement conditions have been discharged and an Environmental Permit is in place. Given these factors, it is unlikely that the facility would have a detrimental impact on the 2012 Olympic Games training camps.*

Biffa have not put forward any plans to provide waste heat to the University or to any other educational establishment or businesses. There are no proposals to build the incinerator as a 'Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Unit' and the 'Heat Plan' provided by SLR consultants on behalf of Biffa does not give any engineering or financial basis for this. To say that the University 'could take advantage of the waste heat that an incinerator would generate' has no firm foundation and is only a 'red herring'.

It is true that the facility would not have a detrimental impact on the 2012 Olympic Games training camps but Loughborough University's Sports pre-eminence is not linked only to the Games. As noted above LU already has international recognition as one of the best sporting universities and will increasingly attract top athletes from around the world. An incinerator at J23 of the M1 will have a significantly negative impact on the University's aspirations.

Many **tourists** visiting the area exit the M1 at J23. Charnwood Forest contains many popular and exciting tourist attractions within a short distance of J23 including Jubilee Wood, Beacon Hill Country Park, The Outwoods and Hangingstone Hills – all of which include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The Preferred Option in the CBC Core Strategy proposes securing a new Country Park to meet identified green space needs for Loughborough and Shepshed. Based on the historic Garendon Park this could secure the retention and restoration of the historic park and garden and provide public access to a Country Park of the highest quality for the benefit of Leicestershire and other residents. It is hard to see tourists being attracted to a Country Park that lies in the shadow of a huge industrial incinerator with a plume of smoke rising from the flue stacks.

Loughborough is a developing University and Market town that is home to several major national employers, including large pharmaceutical companies, the University itself and businesses ranging from engineering companies to specialist energy and environmental businesses. Loughborough also has many small and medium sized enterprises covering diverse areas of interest. A new science park at the University as well as several industrial and business estates will need to **attract businesses from outside the area** if they are to be successful. An incinerator at J23 of the M1 would not help achieve this objective but would hinder it – it is likely to deter employers from choosing to locate here.

## **1.5 Charnwood Forest Regional Park**

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands includes provision for the creation of a Charnwood Forest Regional Park (CFRP). Not enough attention or recognition has been given by SLR to the impact of the proposed incinerator development on CFRP. The Park

is a very important feature of the vision for Leicestershire's environmental future, with a Vision Statement as follows:

'The Charnwood Forest Regional Park will enhance, protect, manage and promote the natural and cultural heritage features of Charnwood Forest for the benefit of those living within and visiting the Three Cities Sub-region.'

More details and photographs can be found on the following link... [http://www.leics.gov.uk/charnwood\\_forest\\_proceedings\\_2008\\_11.pdf](http://www.leics.gov.uk/charnwood_forest_proceedings_2008_11.pdf) and the Park's beautiful landscape can be seen in Illustration 1.5. This is a view from Beacon Hill Country Park to the north west. Nanpantan Hall is seen near the centre of the view and the incinerator would be seen clearly on the horizon to the north west of the Hall.

Other relevant extracts from the Vision Statement include:

### 3.2 The objectives are

- To retain and enhance landscape character, including biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural heritage features
- To retain and enhance settlement character
- To promote sustainable leisure and tourism
- Where development has a direct relationship with CFRP, it will, in terms of its scale, layout, built design, landscape treatment, access arrangements and provision of Green Infrastructure, reflect local landscape and settlement character and integrate with the wider CFRP. Access by public transport, walking and cycling will be maximised.

The Steering and Stakeholder Group is working towards future Governance of CFRP using 'The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) model' Parts of the Forest are already listed as Areas of Outstanding Beauty on the Pictures of England.com website, including Beacon Hill Country Park. Other areas are designated as Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside. A huge incinerator complex located within the boundary of CFRP would not further any of the above environmental objectives and would seriously compromise efforts to achieve the full status of a recognised Regional Park.

Leicestershire County Council Cabinet is already discussing how to progress with the Charnwood Regional Park Scheme to help manage and promote the unique natural and heritage features of the Forest. County Council Cabinet member for environment and transport Councillor Lesley Pendleton said: "This is a beautiful part of Leicestershire which boasts some wonderful landscape. It is also rich in geology, biodiversity and cultural heritage which is why it is important we work together to enhance and retain it".

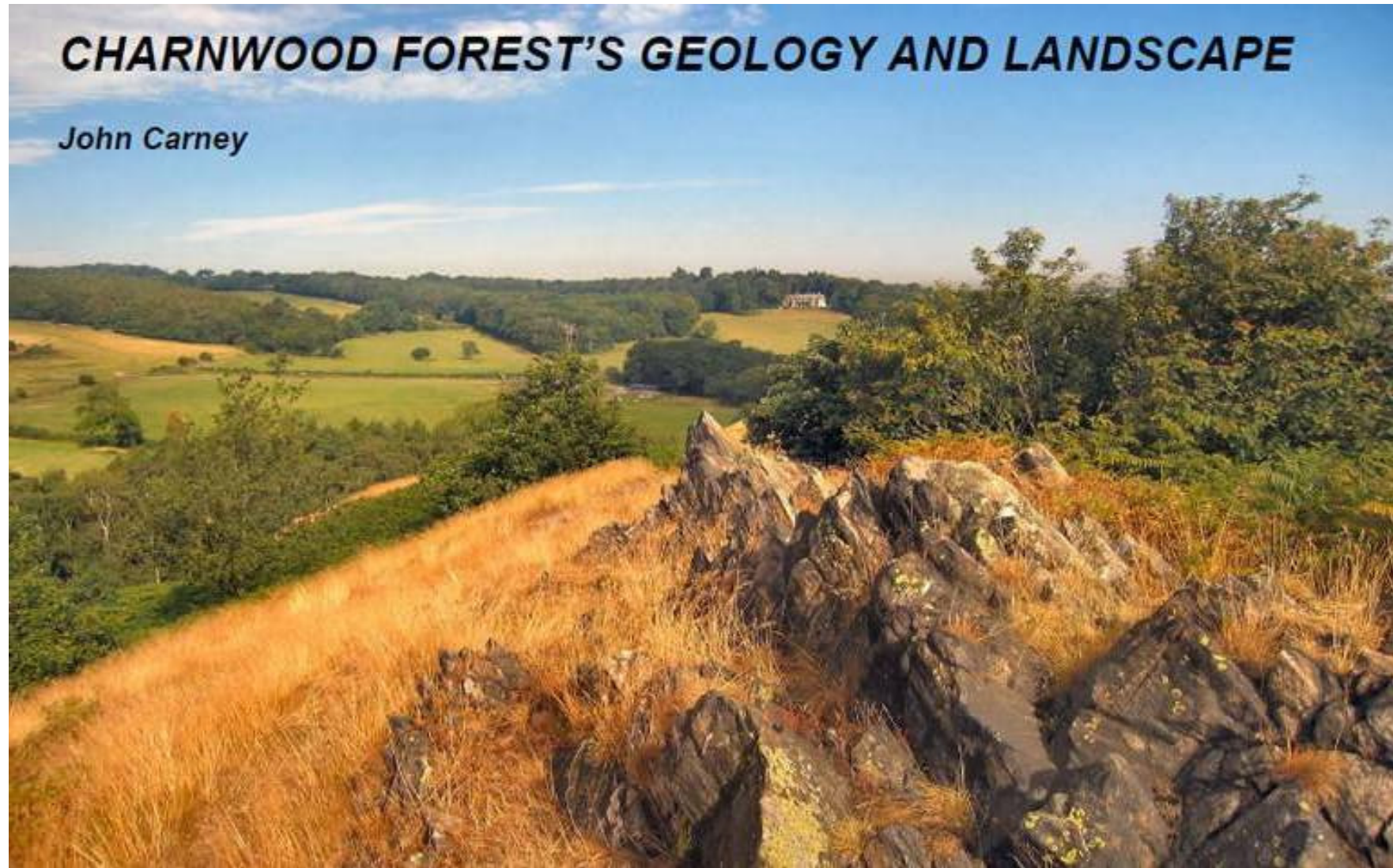
## **1.6 Garendon Estate, Park and Gardens**

English Heritage objected to the development on the grounds that it would be greater than any existing feature visible from the park ..... and contrasts with the overall impression of a rural setting. They also contend that it would introduce a noticeable industrial addition to the skyline and would cause a noticeable difference to the landscape. We fully agree with this assessment. SLR has included few photographs in their ES from Garendon Park or the Estate. Viewpoints 1.13, 1.14, and 1.15 in Appendix 1/2 give a better idea of what the visual impact of the incinerator might be on the Park and the Estate.

Biffa submitted a 34 page report on Garendon Park including many details of the history of the Park and a number of maps and illustrations. In supposed mitigation of the impact of the Incinerator, Biffa have proposed a Restoration Scheme to (i) plant some more trees at strategic locations, (ii) fund internal changes to Park layout to bring it back to its original design and layout, and (iii) pay £60,000 per annum to assist in the maintenance of the listed buildings. None of these proposals would change the visual impact of the incinerator on Garendon Park, which was one of the main grounds for refusal of the Biffa's first Application. Proposal (iii) in particular seems to go beyond the bounds of planning application ethics.

***Illustration 1.5***

View from Beacon Hill Country Park



SLR argue that since Garendon Park is on private land and not open to the general public then few people would in fact see the view from the Park. However, tours of the Park are arranged regularly and visual impact would also be a concern for walkers and cyclists in the Estate area – of which there are many.

An issue of even more importance is the CBC Core Strategy for the area. In their assessment of Cumulative Impact (Chapter 15), SLR includes the following paragraphs:

*15.18 As for future development, planning permission has recently been granted for an extension to the lorry park. Inspection of records held on Charnwood Borough Council's website indicate that other planning permissions granted tend to be for small scale residential developments to existing premises. Given the extent of development in the area, no other new developments in the vicinity of the application site are foreseeable in the immediate future.*

*15.19 In the longer term, the emerging LDF for Charnwood identifies a Strategic Urban Extension to Loughborough and possible extensions to the Science and Technology Park, both located on the western side of Loughborough.*

SLR clearly has little knowledge of the current state of play regarding the LDF. The main part of the LDF is the Core Strategy which identifies how many houses are to be built, and where. This strategy has gone through most of the necessary consultations and planning procedures and the final proposals will be submitted to the Inspector in Autumn 2011. It is not *'in the longer term'* and may well be finalised before the incinerator project.

The Preferred Option in the Core Strategy is for the Sustainable Urban Extension to be west of Loughborough which would involve building 3,500 houses on the Garendon Estate and opening up Garendon Park to the general public as a Country Park. The Core Strategy Preferred Options Report contains the following paragraph:

*4.47 A westward expansion between Loughborough and Shepshed will allow provision for the new Science Park along with general employment and longer term housing requirements to meet the needs of Loughborough and Shepshed. A key element of this preferred option involves securing a new Country Park to meet identified green space needs for the town. Based on the historic Garendon Park this could secure the retention and restoration of the historic park and garden and provide for public access to a Country Park of the highest quality for the benefit of Loughborough and Shepshed residents.*

This has many implications for the incinerator project, including:

1. The incinerator buildings, flue and smoke plume would be seen by the many expected visitors to the new Country Park, not only from the Park itself but also at J23 where most visitors will exit the M1. This would certainly deter tourists and local residents from visiting the Park.
2. Residents of the new small town to be built on the Garendon Estate would also be impacted both by the view and the emissions from the incinerator flue stack. The housing developer is already trying to sell the idea of *'living next to an historic country park'*. This concept would be totally undermined if an incinerator dominated the landscape.
3. A road would be built through Garendon Park joining the A512 near J23. This would result in even more traffic problems in terms of congestion and vehicle emissions at the M1 junction and local roads. Hundreds of HGVs entering and exiting the incinerator site would make traffic and transport problems untenable.

The Borough Council LDF is not a long term project. As noted above, the Core Strategy is likely to be agreed this year with the Preferred Option of a Sustainable Urban Extension to the west of Loughborough still included. The landowner is eager to sell the land and developers have already drawn up plans for building the new town. It is unfortunate that SLR are apparently not aware of this.

## 1.7 Grounds for Refusal

The grounds for refusal of the Biffa Application were as follows:

*The benefits that the proposal would have on meeting the waste management needs of the development plan area are not outweighed by the unacceptable impact that the proposal would have on the countryside, the designated Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside, the Character of the Charnwood Forest, the character and setting of the listed Garendon Park and the setting of the listed structures within the Garendon Park.*

This gives the impression that it is a choice between solving Leicestershire's waste management problems and maintaining particularly attractive countryside. But there are other ways to solve the waste disposal problems including increased recycling rates, making use of anaerobic digesters, and reducing the amount of waste being produced in the first place. We also contend that the forecast levels of waste that will have to be disposed of are overstated. Leicestershire already has an excellent record in decreasing the quantities of waste by improving recycling rates and since Biffa have not secured the contract for the County's domestic waste it is difficult to see how the incinerator can contribute to the waste management needs of Leicestershire. Changes in policy by the Coalition Government will enable Leicestershire County Council to re-examine their waste management strategy and adopt more sustainable and environmentally friendly methods of disposal.

Even if some limited incineration capacity is found to be necessary, then clearly Newhurst Quarry is **not a suitable location**. The permission granted for landfill does not mean the Quarry is suitable for building a huge industrial incinerator. It is too near areas of population including Shepshed, Loughborough and the proposed new town on the Garendon Estate. Loughborough University would also be adversely affected. Most of all, it would be a tragedy to locate such a development in the National Forest; an emerging Charnwood Forest Regional Park; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty such as Beacon Hill Country Park; Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside such as Jubilee Wood, the Outwoods and other SSSI's and; across from the proposed Garendon Country Park. Indeed, if permission were to be granted for an incinerator development at this location, it is difficult to see where an application would be refused.

## 1.8 Sherwood Forest Incinerator

Following a public inquiry, the Secretary of State Eric Pickles has refused planning permission for Veolia's proposed 180,000 tonne waste incinerator in Rainworth, Nottinghamshire. The reasons for the refusal are summarised as follows:

- This development would be seriously damaging to the landscape of this part of Sherwood and to visual amenity;
- It would have substantial adverse impacts on biodiversity and the interests of nature conservation;

- It would subvert the achievement of long-standing and widely shared objectives for the preservation and restoration of the open land between Rainworth and Clipstone;
- In these respects it would be contrary to national and local planning policy.

These considerations are even more relevant to the Newhurst Quarry proposal. At 300,000 tonnes, the Newhurst facility would be much bigger than the Rainworth incinerator thus causing significantly more damage to the landscape and visual amenity. Laying within the boundaries of Charnwood Forest Regional Park and The National Forest the affect on the landscape would be even greater. There are several SSSIs within Charnwood Forest as well as a number of Nature Reserves so there would be adverse impacts on biodiversity and nature conservation. The incinerator would also subvert plans to regenerate the quarry and introduce leisure and other recreational activities.

It is difficult to see how the Development Control and Regulatory Board could grant planning permission for the new application by Biffa for an incinerator at Newhurst Quarry in these circumstances or how LCC Officers could recommend acceptance. We also feel the Inspector should follow the example of Rainworth and refuse the Appeal.

## Appendix 1/1 SLR Photographs

Photographs from 15 viewpoints selected by SLR

Viewpoint 1 – Donington Park Motorway Service Area





Viewpoint 2 – Nottingham Road



Viewpoint 3 – Beacon Hill Country Park



Viewpoint 4 – Snell’s Nook Lane



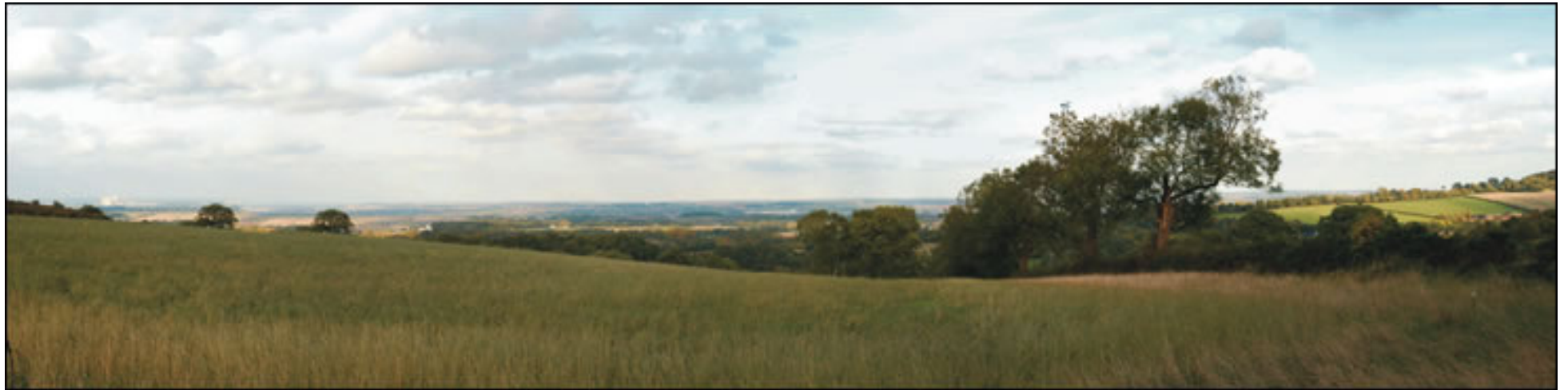
Viewpoint 5 – Junction of 512 with Snell's Nook Lane



Viewpoint 6 – M1 Junction 23 Bridge



Viewpoint 7 – Lubcloud Farm bridleway



Viewpoint 8 – Entrance of application site off A512



Viewpoint 9 – Pedestrian / cycle bridge across M1





Viewpoint 10 – Public Right of Way off B5324



Viewpoint 11 – Public Right of Way off Shepshed Road



Viewpoint 12 – Railway Bridge on Stanford Road



Viewpoint 13 – National Cycle Route 6



Viewpoint 14 – Shepshed



Viewpoint 15 – The White Horse, A512



## Appendix 1/2 Local Residents Photographs

Photographs from 15 viewpoints selected by local residents



2.1 Morley Quarry Nature Reserve footpath



2.2 Near Iveshead Lane and Farm



2.3 Oaks in Charnwood



2.4 Longcliffe Quarry footpath (K61)





2.5 Public right of way, Lubcloud Farm



2.6 Fairway Road, east Shepshed



2.7 Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve



2.8 Warren Hills



2.9 Junction of A512 with Snell's Nook Lane



2.10 Hurst Farm footpath (K62)



2.11 M1 J23 roundabout



2.12 Nanpantan footpath to the Outwoods



2.13 Stapleford Park



2.14 Garendon Park



2.15 Temple of Venus

## Appendix 1/3 Map of Area

Map of area within 7km radius of flue stack showing countryside walks, viewpoints and wildlife and ecological locations.

