

2 Site and Surroundings

Introduction

- 2.1 This chapter of the PEIR provides a description of the site of the proposed OMSSD project placed within the context of the existing Oikos Facility and its surroundings. The information within this chapter, should be read in combination with the detailed topic specific environmental information which is provided in chapters 7 to 21 of this PEIR.
- 2.2 The description of the site and its surroundings which follows is based on local knowledge, site visits, surveys commissioned for the purpose of this OMSSD project, previous Oikos projects, Ordnance Survey Maps, statutory development plans and other documents which describe the site and surrounding area.

General location

- 2.3 The Oikos harbour facility covers an area of approximately 27.5 hectares (ha). It is located in the south-west corner of Canvey Island, on the River Thames, in the administrative area of Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) and in the county of Essex (see Figure 1.1).
- 2.4 The facility fronts directly onto the River Thames and forms part of the busy port and industrial coastal vista of the area. Other similar installations in the vicinity of the facility include the immediately adjacent Calor Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) import terminal to the east, and the Thames Oilport, the Shell Haven Terminal and the DP World London Gateway Port, all to the west.

The Oikos Facility

- 2.5 The Oikos Facility was first commissioned in the 1930s and has developed over the years. It is held on a long lease from the freehold owners, the Port of London Authority (PLA). The site constitutes port operational land as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)⁸.
- 2.6 The harbour facility handles imports of fuel, oil and petroleum bulk liquid products. Its operations are controlled and regulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Environment Agency (EA) under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (as amended)⁹ (the COMAH Regulations). The Oikos Facility is designated as an upper tier COMAH site.

⁸ Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

⁹ Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (as amended)

- 2.7 The site is fully compliant with the relevant requirements of the COMAH Regulations. Operations carried out at the site are regularly inspected by the HSE and EA to ensure that Oikos complies fully with the prescribed prevention standards imposed in respect of both safety and environmental impact.
- 2.8 In addition to regulation and control by the HSE and the EA, the Oikos Facility also holds a Hazardous Substances Consent (HSC) which is issued by the relevant local authority - Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC). The HSC permits the storage of 292,237m³ of various petroleum and related products across the site – although the facility’s current storage capacity is only 271,737m³. The tank locations covered by the HSC are those located in the northern, central and eastern parts of the Oikos Facility, within four compound areas (Compounds 2, 4, 5 and 10) (see Figure 2.1).
- 2.9 The Oikos Facility has three existing jetties. Only two of these jetties, namely Jetty 1 and Jetty 2, are currently operational. Jetty 1 is able to accommodate tanker vessels of up to 55,000 Dead Weight Tonnes (DWT) and is subject to regular maintenance dredging under an existing ten-year maintenance licence from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and an annual maintenance licence from the PLA. These licences allow up to a total of 200,000m³ of material to be removed from the Jetty 1 area per year using water injection dredging (WID).
- 2.10 Jetty 2 was extended during 2017 / 2018 as an integral part of the previous Deep Water Jetty development at the Oikos Facility¹⁰ and became fully operational in early 2019. This jetty is able to accommodate tanker vessels of up to 120,000 DWT.
- 2.11 Bulk liquid products are brought to the Oikos Facility by ship, pumped ashore along one of the jetties and stored in one or more of the storage tanks before onward distribution. The onward distribution currently takes place by either underground pipeline or by road tanker. The Oikos Facility is connected to both the Exolum Pipeline System (formerly known as the CLH Pipeline Storage System) which is used for the export of jet fuel from the facility and the independent UK Oil Pipelines (UKOP) national fuel distribution pipeline network which is used for the export of jet fuel, gasoline and diesel from the facility. The facility is understood to be unique in that it is independently owned with such pipeline connections.
- 2.12 In addition, three road loading bays for the onward distribution of product are currently in operation at the Oikos Facility. Each road loading bay is assigned to either jet fuel or diesel products.
- 2.13 Destinations for exported jet fuel product include Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, Southend and Jersey (via the Port of Poole) airports. The facility also exports road fuels to local filling stations. Details as to existing traffic movements from the site are provided in Chapter 11 ‘Traffic and Transport’.
- 2.14 The Oikos Facility is managed and administered from the main office building. This comprises a single storey building located in the south-west corner of the facility, adjacent to

¹⁰ CPBC planning permission ref: 16/0106/FUL and MMO marine licence reference L/2016/00263/1

the residential properties at Haven Quays. This office building is accessed, via a site road (known as West Road) which runs inside and along the western boundary of the facility to the main access point into the site from Haven Road. To enter the operational areas of the facility at the main access point it is necessary to pass through a manned security-controlled entrance gate. A secondary/emergency access into the facility is located further to the north along the western boundary of the facility, also from Haven Road, and via an existing connection into the adjacent Calor LPG import terminal on the eastern boundary of the facility. Various internal roads and access tracks run through the facility.

- 2.15 Although it has historically contained storage tanks and related infrastructure, the southern part of the Oikos Facility included in the OMSSD project area is today largely clear of such infrastructure, the previous storage tanks having been relatively recently removed. Some storage tanks in the central part of the OMSSD project area, however, still remain. They are redundant and will be removed, as detailed in chapter 3 of this PEIR.
- 2.16 There are currently two fire lagoons at the Oikos Facility. These are linked to the storage compounds via pumps and pipework so as to be able instantly to provide water in case of a fire. This firewater deployment system is tested weekly and is subject to regular maintenance.
- 2.17 Existing ecological features at the Oikos Facility consist of two ecological mitigation areas (known as Mitigation Area 1 and 2 or MA1 and MA2) located to the east of the existing Compound 4 and to the east of the existing Compound 5 in the south east corner of the Oikos Facility respectively. These mitigation areas were created as a result of the previous Deep Water Jetty development at the Oikos Facility and further detail is provided in Chapter 7.
- 2.18 The Oikos Facility has excellent links with the strategic road network via Haven Road, Roscommon Way and the A130. These roads, which run around the western edge of the built-up areas of Canvey Island and South Benfleet, provide direct access to the A13 north and west at the Sadlers Farm junction. The A13, in turn, provides access to the M25 at junction 30 approximately 20km to the west - see Figures 11.1 and 11.2.

The area surrounding the Oikos Facility

- 2.19 A summary description of the area surrounding the Oikos Facility is provided in the following paragraphs.
- 2.20 **IAA Vehicle Services** - To the immediate north and east of the Oikos Facility is a vehicle salvage and sales operation run by IAA Vehicle Services, which is shown on Figures 2.1 and 2.2. This operation consists of a large open-air site, which stores damaged vehicles prior to their sale through online auctions. Access to the IAA site is from a point on Haven Road to the north of the Oikos Facility.
- 2.21 **Calor LPG terminal access** - Immediately to the north of the IAA site is Howards Way, which provides the primary – and private - vehicle access for road tankers to and from the Calor LPG terminal. Access onto this private road is from a point on Haven Road to the

north of the Oikos and IAA sites. This access road was granted planning permission in 2012¹¹ and this area is subsequently referred to as the Calor Road site.

- 2.22 **Brick House Farm** - Beyond this private access road is an open area of farmland – which is held by a farmer through an agreement with Oikos, who hold a lease of the area. This land is used for grazing and contains a small collection of farm buildings which form Brick House Farm. Part of this open farmland area is currently designated as Brick House Farm Marsh Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and this designation is proposed to be extended in the Castle Point New Local Plan, which was submitted to Government for examination in October 2020. This open farmland lies between Haven Road in the west and Thames Road in the east and provides a buffer (extending in some places to 500m) between the Oikos Facility, the Calor LPG terminal, the IAA vehicle services site, and the edge of the built-up residential area of Canvey Island (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).
- 2.23 The land occupied by IAA Vehicle Services, the private vehicle access to the Calor LPG terminal and Brick House Farm is in the freehold ownership of the PLA.
- 2.24 **Calor LPG Terminal** - The Calor LPG terminal, located to the east of the Oikos Facility and the IAA vehicle services site, is owned and operated by Calor Gas Ltd. The Calor site adjoins the south-east corner of the Oikos Facility (as shown on Figure 2.2). The terminal contains LPG storage tanks and benefits from a jetty that extends out into the River Thames.
- 2.25 Beyond the Calor LPG terminal and further to the east lies an existing waste-water treatment works, the Concord Rangers Football Club and Thorney Bay Caravan Park, which contains static caravans and mobile homes for both holiday use and permanent residential occupation.
- 2.26 **Public Footpath / Flood Defence Wall** - There is an existing public footpath (Reference: CANV_8) immediately to the south of the landside element of the Oikos Facility which forms part of a circular route that runs around the perimeter of Canvey Island. This footpath, by reason of its raised location adjacent to the flood wall, provides limited views into the landside elements of the Oikos Facility. Immediately adjacent to this footpath is the flood defence wall, which extends some 1.5 to 2m above the adjacent ground level, beyond which lies the River Thames. The flood wall forms part of the flood defences which encircle Canvey Island, although it does restrict views of the River Thames from the adjacent footpath and large parts of the Island.
- 2.27 The pipelines and infrastructure which serve the Oikos jetties are taken over the footpath and sea wall.
- 2.28 **Haven Quays** - The closest residential properties to the Oikos Facility are at Haven Quays, located adjacent to the south-western corner of the Oikos Facility. This residential area contains former Coast Guard cottages (Grade II listed) a modern housing development, some static mobile homes and the Lobster Smack Public House (Grade II listed).

¹¹ CPBC planning permission ref: CPT/613/12/FUL

- 2.29 **Road Access** - Access to Haven Quays is via Haven Road, which runs from Haven Quays in a roughly north easterly direction to its junction with Canvey Road within the main residential built up area of Canvey Island. Approximately half-way along Haven Road is a junction with Roscommon Way, which was constructed in 2011 and which runs roughly westwards and then in a northern direction around the edge of the built-up area of Canvey Island. It provides access to the Charfleets Industrial Estate, a retail park and two new business parks (currently under construction).
- 2.30 **Business Parks** - A new business park, to be known as Thamesview 130, will provide a range of units for B1(c), B2 and B8 use and is located to the south of Roscommon Way. Another business park is proposed west of Roscommon Way and south of Northwick Road.
- 2.31 **Nature conservation sites** - The remaining area of land to the west of Haven Road but south of Roscommon Way consists predominantly of open marshland and grazing land. Part of this area forms the Canvey Village Marsh Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Part of the area of land to the west of Haven Road and south of Roscommon Way also comprises Green Belt. The south western boundary of this area of land is formed by a continuation of the flood wall that is constructed around Canvey Island.
- 2.32 Beyond the flood wall in this location lies Holehaven Creek. This water body originates at Pitsea in the north and runs through, and drains, an area of marshland before running into the River Thames. A large proportion of Holehaven Creek is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Land beyond Roscommon Way at Canvey Wick, approximately 1km north west of the Oikos Facility, is also designated as a SSSI (Canvey Wick SSSI).
- 2.33 To the south of the Oikos Facility is the River Thames, the southern bank of which forms part of the Thames Estuary and Marshes SSSI, Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR site. These designated areas are in the order of 1 to 2km from the Oikos Facility. Generally, the designations are shown on Figure 2.3 and are further detailed in Chapter 7 Terrestrial Ecology.