

3. Site Context

Introduction

- 3.1 This Chapter aims to provide a high-level overview of the existing characteristics of the Assessment Boundary and the surrounding area to avoid the need for repetition within **Technical Chapters 7 – 18**.
- 3.2 The relevant detailed baseline characteristics of the Assessment Boundary and the surrounding area in relation to the technical topics ‘scoped into’ the EIA are presented within **Technical Chapters 7 – 18** and greater clarity is provided on sensitive receptors focusing on those where a significant effect was considered likely and thus assessed through the EIA process and reported in this ES. A summary of these identified sensitive receptors included in **Technical Chapters 7 – 18** is included in **Table 3.1**.
- 3.3 For further context, the technical topics or effects upon specific receptors ‘scoped out’ of the EIA and which are not reported in the ES have not been set out below. Further clarity on these receptors is contained in the EIA Scoping Report (**Appendix 2.1**).

Location and Context

- 3.4 The Assessment Boundary is approximately 570 ha, located in the administrative areas of BC and RBC.
- 3.5 The Assessment Boundary is largely formed of a number of agricultural land parcels in addition to areas of woodland, grassland, ponds and watercourses (including Hollins Brook, Whittle Brook, Castle Brook, Brightly Brook, Pilsworth Clough and an unnamed watercourse). The location of these watercourses are shown on **Figures 12.1 and 12.2**.
- 3.6 Pike Fold Golf Club is located to the west of Whittle Brook and Birch Industrial Park is located centrally. Birch Services straddles the M62 corridor to the South. Farm and residential buildings are scattered throughout the Assessment Boundary.
- 3.7 The Assessment Boundary also includes Hareshill Road and Pilsworth Road, Junction 3 of the M66 and a section of the M62 from Birch Services to Junction 19 (of the M62).
- 3.8 The two major highways corridors, the M62 to the south and the M66 to the west, largely form the Assessment Boundary to west and south (with the exceptions as described above).
- 3.9 The Assessment Boundary is bound to the north by Hollins/Brightley Brook, Kingfisher Park, a limited number of residential properties (Pilsworth Cottages), Pilsworth fishing lake, a sewage works and agricultural fields. To the east the Assessment Boundary is bound by agricultural fields which is part of the consented South Heywood development for which the majority of the highways infrastructure and some housing has already been constructed.
- 3.10 The Assessment Boundary is then bound to the south by the M62 and the village of Birch.

- 3.11 As outlined above, the Assessment Boundary is bound by to the west by the M66.
- 3.12 Within the wider area to the north is the Pilsworth landfill and Heywood Distribution Park. To the east (and north east), beyond the consented South Heywood development is the residential area of Heywood. Beyond the M62 to the south are agricultural fields and the villages/towns of Bowlee, Simister and Middleton. To the west, the wider area comprises of the predominantly residential area of Unsworth.
- 3.13 The area in the vicinity of the Junction 3, M66 are the Pilsworth Industrial Estate, agricultural fields and the Pilsworth Landfill.

Topography

- 3.14 The Assessment Boundary has an undulating topography which is most pronounced around the various water courses. As shown on **Figure 3.1: Existing Topography Plan**, the topography ranges between 85m AOD in the north-west corner to 134m AOD towards the centre of the Assessment Boundary adjacent to Birch Industrial Park. Surrounding the Assessment Boundary, the landform is sculpted by the presence of a number of watercourses, notably sloping into the valley landform associated with the River Irwell to the east and south-east, and the River Irk to the south-west.

Identification of Sensitive Receptors

- 3.15 **Table 3.1** lists the sensitive receptors on which likely significant effects may occur and their relationship to the 'factors' or 'receptor groups' (termed 'receptor categories') outlined in Regulation 4, Paragraph 2 (and expanded on in Schedule 4) of the EIA Regulations. These are assessed within **Technical Chapters 7 – 18** and **Chapter 19: Assessment of Cumulative Effects**, where appropriate, and further detail on the receptors is provided within these Chapters.

Table 3.1: Identified sensitive receptor(s)

Chapter	Sensitive receptor(s) ¹	Receptor Category
Chapter 7: Socio-economics and Human Health	Labour force in the Local, Wider and Regional Impact Areas*	Population and Human Health
Chapter 8: Transport and Access	Communities*	Population and Human Health
	Vehicle drivers*	
	Non-Motorised Vehicles (NMUs)*	
	Public Transport Network and users*	
	Users of Public Right of Way (PRoWs)*	
Chapter 9: Noise and Vibration	Surrounding existing residential receptors	Population and Human Health
	Future residential receptors	

¹ '*' denotes that both existing and future sensitive receptors are considered within the Technical Chapter.

Chapter	Sensitive receptor(s) ¹	Receptor Category
Chapter 10: Air Quality	Existing sensitive receptors, such as residential properties, schools and medical practices within 200m of any roads experiencing changes in traffic flow as a result of the Project for Assessment.	Population and Human Health
Chapter 11: Biodiversity	Non-Statutory nature conservation sites within 2km surrounding Assessment Boundary. Deciduous woodland (loss); Hedgerows (loss); Neutral grassland (loss); Ponds (loss); Scattered trees (loss); and Wet ditches (loss). Degradation (Whittle Brook corridor) Amphibians, badgers, bats, birds [non breeding and breeding], brown hare, hedgehog, otter, water vole and reptiles within the Assessment Boundary and +250m surrounding Assessment Boundary in the case of Great Crested Newt/Amphibians.	Biodiversity
Chapter 12: Hydrology, Flood Risk and Water Quality	Less Vulnerable and More Vulnerable infrastructure*. Main Rivers; and Hollins Vale SBI / LNR and Pilsworth Fisheries SBI. Northern Manchester Carboniferous Aquifers (Secondary A Aquifer) All watercourses and waterbody receptors such as ponds within the Proposed Scheme. Downstream waterbodies within the area of interest (including Hollins Brook and River Roch). Waste Water Treatment Works Aquifer, reservoirs and existing potable water infrastructure	Water

Chapter	Sensitive receptor(s) ¹	Receptor Category
Chapter 13: Ground Conditions and Contamination	Existing and proposed buildings (commercial and residential) and infrastructure*.	Population and human health
	Construction workers	
Chapter 14: Agriculture and Soils	Agricultural land, including that of best and most versatile (BMV) quality.	Land/Soil
	Soil resources	
	Tenanted farm holdings	
Chapter 15: Archaeology	Meadowcroft Fold - Medieval Settlement and Iron Smelting Site.	Cultural Heritage
	Whittle Brook - Medieval Iron Smelting Site	
	Castle Brook - Potential Prehistoric Camp	
	Non-Designated Archaeological Assets Across the Project for Assessment	
Chapter 16: Built Heritage	Birch Village Conservation Area	Cultural Heritage
	Heaton Park (grade II RP&G); Temple to the north east of Heaton Hall (grade II* listed building); Alkrington Hall (grade II* listed building); Brick Farmhouse (grade II listed building); and Lower Whittle Farmhouse (grade II listed building).	
	<i>Bury Council Draft local list:</i> • Moss Side Barn/Farm Griffe Lane; • Meadowcroft Fold Farmhouse and Barns; and • Thurston Fold. <i>Rochdale Borough Council Local List:</i> • Birch Mill. • Lodge View. • Higher Fields Farm. and • Broomhill Farm.	
Chapter 17: Landscape and Visual	The Assessment Boundary itself; LCTs and LCAs of the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Report; and	Landscape

Chapter	Sensitive receptor(s) ¹	Receptor Category
	Public Footpath Users within the Assessment Boundary.	Population and Human health
	Minor Road Users within and beyond (within 5km) of the Assessment Boundary	
	Local Minor Road Users within and beyond (within 5km) of the Assessment Boundary	
	Recreational Users of Unsworth Academy playing fields	
	Visitors to Heaton Park Temple	
	Visitors to Birch Services	
Chapter 18: Climate Change	Global Climatic System*	Climate