



The Milne Trust

LAND NORTH AND EAST OF STAKEHILL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Environmental Statement Volume I

Chapter 2 - The Existing Site

March 2025

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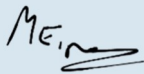
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2 THE EXISTING SITE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1. This chapter provides an overview of both the Site (shown on **Figure 1-1: Proposed Development Location Plan**) and the surrounding area. In terms of key environmental receptors of the Proposed Development; further information is provided within the technical chapters 6 to 12.
- 2.1.2. The Site is approximately 24.86 hectares (ha), located within the Stakehill area of Rochdale, with the town of Rochdale located 5 km north. The Proposed Development is located within the administrative area of Rochdale Borough Council (RBC). The OS Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the Proposed Development is National Grid Reference SD 89230 08450. The Proposed Development location is illustrated in **Figure 1-1: Proposed Development Location Plan**.

2.2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.2.1. The Site comprises 24.86 ha of primarily mixed pastoral and arable land along with a number of farm buildings, ponds and internal roads. The general topography of the site slopes from the A627(M) motorway and its slip road towards Stakehill Lane at variable topographies and the majority of the site has undulating topography within. Fishing ponds are located within the central area of the site.
- 2.2.2. The northern and the eastern boundary are formed by the A627 motorway, and its associated slip road and the western, south western and southern boundary is formed by Stakehill Lane and numerous commercial properties and residential properties. The southeastern boundary is formed by further agricultural fields.
- 2.2.3. There have been no known previously recoded archaeological investigations undertaken within the site boundary. No known features of archaeological interest are situated within the site boundary.
- 2.2.4. There are residential areas close to the Proposed Development, located directly south on Bentley Avenue, through the site on Stakehill Lane and further south on Stakehill Lane.
- 2.2.5. The Rochdale Core Strategy (2012-2028) indicates the Proposed Development to sit within Green Belt.
- 2.2.6. The Place for Everyone Joint Plan (2022-2039) indicates the Proposed Development to sit within an Allocation.
- 2.2.7. Further details on current land use within the Proposed Development and surrounding area are provided in technical chapters 6 to 12.

POPULATION AND SETTLEMENTS

- 2.2.8. The Proposed Development is located adjacent to Stakehill Industrial Estate, within the administrative boundary of RBC. The Proposed Development is approximately 5 km south of the town of Rochdale. It is also located approximately half a kilometre south of Slattocks/Castleton area of Rochdale. It is located half a kilometre north east of the fringes of the Middleton town settlement.

UTILITIES

- 2.2.9. The local electricity distribution network in the Rochdale area is operated by Electricity North West (ENWL).
- 2.2.10. The regulated water and sewage company in the area is United Utilities Water (UU). An existing UU water main is installed on Stakehill Lane joining up to Bentley Avenue and continues south along Stakehill Lane.
- 2.2.11. British Telecommunications (BT) Openreach predominantly operate in the area. It is anticipated that other telecom operators such as Sky, TalkTalk, Now, Plusnet, Virgin Media operate in the Proposed Development area.

ACCESS

- 2.2.12. Access to the residential elements of the Proposed Development are to be taken off Slattocks Roundabout via Bentley Avenue and a new access road to the north of Stakehill Nurseries. Stakehill Lane while access to the industrial units will be provided via a new access point off Finlan Road and Stakehill Lane to the south.
- 2.2.13. The following Public Rights of Way (PROWs) are located within the Proposed Development:
- Footpaths:
 - Rupp no.8, 8a and 131;
 - Footpath no.16
 - Footpath no.20; and
 - Rupp no.130
- 2.2.14. The following PROWs are located in the surrounding area:
- Footpaths:
 - Rights of Way Footpath No. 23;
 - The closest National Cycle Network Route is Route 66, can be accessed to the northwest via Rochdale Road.

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 2.3.1. Key environmental features are summarised below, with further detail available in technical chapters 6 to 12.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS

Ground Conditions

- 2.3.2. Localised layers of thin Made Ground is anticipated to underlie parts of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is underlain by the Glacial Till Formation superficial deposits, predominantly likely to comprise of sand and gravel lenses and large boulders (**Ref. 2.1**).
- 2.3.3. The Proposed Development's bedrock geology comprises of the Diamincton, mudstone, siltstone and sandstone Royley type (**Ref. 2.1**).

- 2.3.4. The Proposed Development is located within a Coal Mining Reporting area however there are no records of underground coal mining within the Proposed Development including mine entries, geology, surface hazards.

Ecology

- 2.3.5. No statutory designated areas for nature conservation are located within the Proposed Development. The Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Hopwood Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) are located between 130m – 400m west of the Proposed Development.
- 2.3.6. A number of non-statutory designated sites are located near the Proposed Development. The Rochdale Canal site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located 150m west of the Proposed Development.
- 2.3.7. The A627(M) by Tandle Hill SBI is located 35m northeast of the Proposed Development and Gerrard Wood SBI is respectively located 225m east of the Proposed Development.
- 2.3.8. Lords Wood SBI is an Ancient Woodland identified within 0.5km of the Proposed Development boundary with Hopwood Clough Ancient Woodland located around 0.8km southwest.

Landscape

- 2.3.9. There are no known landscape designations within the Proposed Development.
- 2.3.10. The Proposed Development is located entirely within National Character Area No 54 Manchester Pennine Fringe, one of the 159 broad landscape character areas identified in the National Character Map (**Ref. 2.2**).

Air Quality

- 2.3.11. The Proposed Development is not located within an Air Quality Management Area. The site lies adjacent to the A627(M) AQMA declared by RBC for exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective.

Noise and Vibration

- 2.3.12. There are no Noise Important Areas (NIA) within the Proposed Development.
- 2.3.13. The nearest is the A627(M) located adjacent to the north and east of the Proposed Development.
- 2.3.14. Closest noise and vibration sensitive receptors identified include the dwellings on Bentley Avenue, Stakehill Lane and Boarshaw Lane.

Water Resources, Flood Risk and Drainage

- 2.3.15. The closest surface water feature is the White Brook (a Main River) located to the west of the Site and flows east to west through the study area. Upstream of the A627(M) Motorway and within the Site itself, the Whit Brook is an ordinary watercourse. It is assumed that this is culverted under the south-eastern extents of the Site, discharging to the west of Stakehill Lane.
- 2.3.16. A tributary of the Whit Brook, also an EA Main River, is located to the south-west of the north-western extents of the Site, south of the A6644/A627(M) roundabout. This tributary flows north to south away from the Site.

- 2.3.17. There is a series of fishery ponds within the centre of the Site, which are fed by an ordinary watercourse. This watercourse issues to the east of the Site and is culverted under the A627(M) Motorway. These ponds are understood to be managed by an angling club and not used by United Utilities.
- 2.3.18. Another minor watercourse is understood to be located within the Site, to the south of the ponds.
- 2.3.19. The Proposed Development lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, meaning that there is a probability of fluvial and tidal flooding of less than 0.1% every year. The closest Flood Zone 3 areas are located 760m west of the Site, associated within the Trub Brook. The nearest EA Flood Zone extents associated with the Whit Brook are located approximately 780m south-west. The Site is not located within an area considered to be at risk of flooding from tidal sources.
- 2.3.20. The Proposed Development is classified as a Greenfield Proposed Development, there is presence of a culverted watercourse within the Site. Public sewerage infrastructure is located within Stakehill Lane and Bentley Avenue.
- 2.3.21. The Proposed Development is not located within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone or area of Groundwater Vulnerability.

2.4 KEY SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

- 2.4.1. There are a number of sensitive receptors that have been identified as relevant to the Proposed Development, and these have been taken into consideration within the assessments presented in technical chapters 6 to 12. The key sensitive receptors are summarised in **Table 2-1** below.

Table 2-1 - Key Sensitive Receptors

Topic	Sensitive Receptor
Air Quality	- Human receptors on the site boundary or within 50 m of the route used by construction vehicles on a public highway, up to 50 m from the site entrance, depending on the nature and scale of the demolition and construction activities, such as: 21 residential receptors; and 5 educational receptors. - For ecological receptors the recommended criteria for an assessment of road traffic emissions to be undertaken is a change in traffic of more than 1,000 vehicles per day or 250 HGVs (development alone or in-combination with other cumulative developments) on a road within 200 m of a designated habitat. For the Site, the following have been identified: - Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Ecology	- Rochdale Canal (SAC and SSSI); - Hopwood Woodlands (LNR) - Alkington Woods (LNR)

Topic	Sensitive Receptor
	■ Hedgerows (Local value) ■ Ponds (Local value) ■ Mature trees (Local value) ■ Bats ■ Badgers ■ Birds (wintering) ■ Birds (breeding) ■ Amphibians (GCN) ■ Amphibians (Toads) ■ Otter ■ Water Vole
Landscape and Visual	■ Landscape receptors: • Topography • Watercourse • Significant vegetation • Settlement Pattern • Land use ■ Visual receptors: • VP1 View from Oozewood Road • VP2 View from MID Rupp 41 • VP3 View from footpath 1 • VP4 View from end of Broadshaw Lane • VP5 View from Stake-hill Lane • VP6 View from end of A627(M) under-pass • VP7 View from Stake-hill Lane/MidRupp 13 • VP8 View from Stake-hill Lane, approx • VP9 View from end of Finaln Road to-wards Stakehill Lane. • VP10 View from Stakehill Lane • VP11 View from Bentley Avenue • VP12 View from Bentley Avenue. • VP13 View from Stakehill Lane • VP14 View from entrance of St John Thornham Church. • VP15 View from Thornham Lane • VP16 View from field between • VP17 View from Tandle Hill War Memorial (Trig Point). • VP18 View from Tandle Hill Trig Point.

Topic	Sensitive Receptor
	• VP19 View from footpath MID FP 16. • VP20 View from foot-path MID 16 • VP21View from corner of footpath Mid Fp16 /Mid Fp17. • VP22 View from adjacent 108 Stake-hill Lane. • VP23 View from adjacent north-west boundary to Stakehill Nurseries.
Noise and Vibration	■ Residential receptors: • 29 Bentley Avenue • 31 Bentley Avenue • 33 Bentley Avenue • 35 Bentley Avenue • 37 Bentley Avenue • 39 Bentley Avenue • 41 Bentley Avenue • 43 Bentley Avenue • 45 Bentley Avenue • 47 Bentley Avenue • 49 Bentley Avenue • 51 Bentley Avenue • 53 Bentley Avenue • 55 Bentley Avenue • 57 Bentley Avenue • 59 Bentley Avenue • 61 Bentley Avenue • 63 Bentley Avenue • 65 Bentley Avenue • 38a Stakehill Lane • 40 Stakehill Lane • 42 Stakehill Lane • 50 Stakehill Lane • 52 Stakehill Lane • 54 Stakehill Lane • 68a Stakehill Lane • 80 Stakehill Lane • 82 Stakehill Lane • 84 Stakehill Lane • 104 Stakehill Lane • 106 Stakehill Lane • 110 Stakehill Lane

Topic	Sensitive Receptor
	• 116 Stakehill Lane • 122 Stakehill Lane • 124 Stakehill Lane • 126 Stakehill Lane • 130 Stakehill Lane • 132 Stakehill Lane • 214 Stakehill Lane • 218 Stakehill Lane • 220 Stakehill Lane • 222 Stakehill Lane • 224 Stakehill Lane • 226 Stakehill Lane • 1 Hough Lane • 3 Hough Lane • 5 Hough Lane
Population and Human Health	■ Construction workforce, in the local and wider impact areas; ■ Economic productivity of the local and wider impact areas; ■ Workforce across all industries, in the local and wider impact areas; ■ Economic productivity of the local and wider impact areas; ■ Businesses operating in the local impact area; ■ Housing stock, neighbourhood and local impact areas; ■ Retail and leisure businesses located in the local impact area and wider impact area; ■ Primary and secondary school aged pupils, residing within the neighbourhood impact area; ■ Local residents, all demographic profiles, residing within the neighbourhood impact area; and ■ Local residents, all demographic profiles, residing within the neighbourhood impact area
Traffic and Transport	■ The following sensitive receptors have been identified for Traffic and Transport: • Severance; • Driver Delay; • Pedestrian and cycle delay, amenity, fear and intimidation; • Accidents and safety; and

Topic	Sensitive Receptor
	Public transport.
Water Resources, Flood Risk and Drainage	- The following sensitive receptors have been identified: - Whit Brook – Very High sensitivity; - Rochdale Canal – Very High sensitivity due to SSSI Status and SAC status; - The flood risk status of downstream land – High sensitivity; and - The underlying groundwater resource – High sensitivity

2.5 FUTURE BASELINE

- 2.5.1. Schedule 4(3) of the EIA Regulations 2017 requires an outline of the likely evolution of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) without implementation of the Proposed Development, as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge. Whilst there are considerable limitations to the predictions that can be made about baseline conditions at a future point in time, some assessments require projections to account for future change, such as traffic growth. This section summarises the future baseline that will be used to inform these elements of the assessment.
- 2.5.2. It is expected that, should the Proposed Development not proceed, the baseline conditions within the Proposed Development would effectively remain the same. This is because the Proposed Development is primarily made up of mixed pastoral and arable land, it can be assumed that the existing management regimes (e.g. grazing and crop rotation) would be continued.
- 2.5.3. Further detail on the future baseline conditions considered in elements of the assessment can be found in technical chapters 6 to 12.

2.6 REFERENCES

- Reference 2.1:** British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer. [Online] accessed via geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk [Accessed February 2025]
- Reference 2.2:** National Character Areas: North West England, published on-line by Natural England: Manchester Pennine Fringe (Area 54)

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