

16th September 2026

NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Site: Land to the Rear of Newbold Tyres, Milnrow Road, Rochdale, OL16 5AS

Proposal: Erection of a single storey building to form a car valet and MOT testing station (Sui Generis) with associated car parking and boundary treatments

Planning Application: 25/00339/FUL

1. Introduction

This Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared in support of the planning application for the erection of a single-storey building to provide a vehicle valet/car wash and MOT testing facility at land to the rear of Newbold Tyres, Milnrow Road, Rochdale.

The proposal is substantially consistent with the scheme previously granted planning permission under reference 21/01219/FUL, which provided for the erection of a building to accommodate a motor vehicle testing station and valeting service with associated parking. The previous permission was not implemented and subsequently lapsed. Details relating to materials, doors/shutter doors and drainage had, however, been approved under application 24/01252/DOC prior to the expiry of the original permission.

The purpose of this assessment is to consider whether the proposed use is likely to result in unacceptable noise or disturbance to nearby residential properties, with particular regard to the proximity of residential properties immediately beyond the northern boundary of the site. The assessment considers:

- The existing acoustic character of the area;
- The relationship between the proposed building and nearby residential properties;
- Noise generated by vehicle movements;
- Noise from MOT testing;
- Noise associated with vehicle valeting and washing;
- Noise breakout from the proposed building;
- External plant and equipment;
- Use of doors and access points;
- The proposed acoustic boundary treatment;
- Operating hours;
- Construction noise; and
- Measures available to prevent unacceptable noise disturbance.

The assessment has been prepared on a proportionate basis having regard to the scale and nature of the proposed use and its relationship with the existing Newbold Tyres premises.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

The application site is located to the rear of the existing Newbold Tyres premises on Milnrow Road, Rochdale. The surrounding area is mixed in character, comprising established residential properties alongside commercial and vehicle-related uses. The existing Newbold Tyres premises already operates as a vehicle-related business, meaning that the immediate environment is not characterised by a quiet or rural acoustic environment.

The proposed building would be positioned towards the northern part of the site and would run broadly parallel with the northern boundary.

The proposal also incorporates a dedicated acoustic boundary treatment. The submitted drawing specifies an acoustic-grade fence approximately 2.1m high along the rear boundary, comprising timber fencing panels supported on timber posts and horizontal rails.

3. Existing Acoustic Environment

The existing acoustic environment is influenced by a combination of road traffic, established residential activity and the operation of the existing Newbold Tyres premises. Milnrow Road is an established urban road and consequently generates a continuous background of vehicle noise. The surrounding streets also generate normal residential activity, including vehicle movements, doors closing, pedestrian activity and domestic noise.

Available modelled environmental noise information for the wider Milnrow Road area indicates relatively elevated road-traffic noise levels. For example, modelled information for the nearby OL16 5BU area identifies an overall daytime road-traffic noise level of approximately **64 dB** and a night-time level of approximately **56 dB**. These figures are long-term modelled values rather than measurements at the application site and are therefore used only to provide contextual information rather than as the baseline for a BS 4142 assessment. It is therefore reasonable to characterise the site as being within an established urban environment with an existing degree of traffic and vehicle-related noise.

Importantly, the proposal does not introduce a vehicle-related use into an otherwise quiet residential setting. Rather, it introduces an additional activity within an existing vehicle-related commercial site.

4. Noise-Sensitive Receptors

The principal noise-sensitive receptors are the residential properties close to the to the application site.

The proposed building has deliberately been positioned away from the closest residential properties to the sides of the proposal site. The proposed acoustic fence would be located along the northern/rear boundary between the proposed building and the residential properties. The fence is shown as approximately 2.1m high. The assessment is therefore concerned solely with the potential impact of the commercial operation upon existing residential amenity.

5. Proposed Use and Potential Noise Sources

The proposed building would accommodate vehicle valeting/car washing and MOT testing with principal potential noise sources are expected to comprise:

- Vehicles entering and leaving the building;
- Low-speed vehicle manoeuvring;
- Vehicle engines operating at normal idle speeds;
- MOT testing equipment;
- Occasional engine testing associated with the MOT process;
- Pressure washing/vehicle washing equipment;
- Vacuuming and valeting equipment;
- Vehicle doors being opened and closed;
- Roller shutter/access doors opening and closing;
- Occasional use of hand tools associated with the MOT process; and
- Any fixed mechanical plant associated with ventilation or heating.

The nature of the proposed operation is important. It is not intended to operate as a general vehicle repair workshop, body shop or industrial engineering premises; In particular, activities such as metal grinding, welding, panel beating, extensive pneumatic tool use and body repair would not form part of the proposed use. This distinction is relevant because such activities can generate substantially higher and more impulsive noise than routine MOT and valeting activities. HSE guidance, for example, identifies air saws and chisels used in motor vehicle repair as potentially generating noise levels of up to approximately 107 dB(A) and grinders/orbital sanders around 97 dB(A). Such activities are not proposed at the application site.

6. Indicative Noise Source Levels

At this stage, equipment has not been finally selected and therefore it would be inappropriate to present individual figures as measured noise levels for the proposed development; however, published information provides a useful indication of the magnitude of noise that could reasonably be expected. For example, a commercial electric pressure washer suitable for vehicle cleaning is specified at approximately 71–72 dB(A) sound pressure level, with a sound power level of approximately 85 dB(A).

Published noise assessments for other MOT facilities provide useful benchmark data. One UK assessment recorded approximately:

Activity	Indicative level at 1m
Vehicle manoeuvring	66 dB(A)
Car lift	71 dB(A)
Pressure/air gun	81 dB(A)

These figures were associated with a separate MOT facility and are therefore benchmark values rather than measurements at Newbold Tyres.

The figures demonstrate that the principal routine activities associated with MOT and valeting operations generally fall within a manageable range when compared with the considerably higher noise levels associated with heavy vehicle repair activities.

7. Indicative Distance Attenuation

Sound reduces with increasing distance from its source. As a simple free-field check, the theoretical reduction in sound pressure level associated with geometric spreading is approximately 6 dB for each doubling of distance. The proposed plan identifies approximately 12m between the proposed building and the residential to the north, 36m to residential dwelling at the east and 28m to the residential dwelling to the west.

Applying simple distance attenuation alone gives the following indicative figures to the closest residential property at 12m from the proposed building:

Source level at 1m	Approx. level at 12m*
66 dB(A)	44 dB(A)
71 dB(A)	49 dB(A)
81 dB(A)	59 dB(A)

The above indicative free-field calculation only; does not account for building attenuation, acoustic screening, ground absorption, source directivity or reflections.

These figures should not be interpreted as predicted receptor levels. They demonstrate, however, that the separation distance provides meaningful attenuation before the additional benefit of the proposed building envelope and acoustic boundary treatment is considered.

8. Building as Acoustic Screening

The proposed building itself provides a significant degree of screening between the operational areas and the neighbouring residential properties. The principal noisy activities will be located within the building rather than being carried out in the open yard. The building envelope should therefore be constructed as a reasonably robust commercial/industrial envelope, with particular attention given to the acoustic performance of the building fabric, personnel and roller shutter doors, ventilation openings and roof construction.

The weakest part of a typical commercial building acoustically is normally the open roller shutter rather than the wall or roof construction. Accordingly, the control of doors is particularly important and it is recommended that MOT testing, pressure washing and other potentially noisy activities shall be undertaken with the main vehicle access doors closed wherever reasonably practicable, and doors shall not be deliberately held open during noisy operations. This can be secured by condition if considered necessary.

9. Acoustic Boundary Fence

The proposed site plan specifically incorporates an acoustic-grade boundary fence along the northern residential boundary. The drawing identifies a 2.1m high timber acoustic fence. The fence will provide screening of direct sound paths between activity within the site and nearby residential gardens.

For the fence to perform effectively, it should be continuous along the identified residential boundary, of close-boarded or proprietary acoustic construction without significant gaps between panels and properly sealed at ground level.

The combination of the 12m separation, enclosed building and 2.1m acoustic boundary treatment represents a substantial degree of noise control for a relatively small vehicle-related operation.

10. Vehicle Movements

Vehicle movements associated with the proposal will be predominantly passenger cars entering and leaving the site at low speed. The proposed layout incorporates a one-way access route, valet waiting spaces and MOT parking spaces. The movement of vehicles will therefore be controlled and relatively slow, rather than involving continuous heavy goods vehicle movements or loading/unloading activity.

The principal sources of noise will be engine noise, tyre movement and occasional door closing. These are ordinary urban vehicle sounds and are not expected to represent a significant change in the character of the existing acoustic environment.

The existing Newbold Tyres operation already generates vehicle movements associated with its established use.

11. MOT Testing

MOT testing is inherently intermittent rather than a continuous noise source. The majority of the MOT procedure involves inspection and testing of the vehicle rather than sustained operation of noisy machinery. Some elements, such as brake testing, engine operation and horn testing, can produce short-duration noise events. These are nevertheless intermittent and would take place inside the proposed building. The building enclosure and acoustic fence will therefore limit the transmission of these sounds towards neighbouring properties.

The proposed use does not include general vehicle repair or bodywork and consequently the particularly high noise levels associated with grinding, cutting, impact tools and panel beating are not expected.

12. Valeting and Vehicle Washing

Vehicle valeting and washing have the potential to generate noise from pressure washers, vacuum cleaners and associated equipment. A typical commercial electric pressure washer can produce approximately 71–72 dB(A) sound pressure level, depending upon the model and operating conditions. The pressure washing equipment should be operated internally wherever possible. No permanent external jet-washing area is proposed. This is an important merit from an open-air jet wash, where the noise source would have a direct line of sight towards surrounding properties.

The proposed arrangement places the activity within an enclosed structure, with the building and acoustic boundary fence providing additional screening.

14. Operating Hours

The timing of operations is an important component of noise control. Given the proximity of residential properties, it is recommended that the MOT and valeting use operates during normal daytime/evening commercial hours and that no routine operation takes place during the night-time period.

The planning application form outlines the proposed opening hours for the valet and MOT building as:

Monday–Friday: 09:00–19:00

Saturday: 10:00–19:00

Sunday and Bank Holidays: 10:00–18:00

Restricting the use to daytime operation would substantially reduce the potential for disturbance because the activity would not coincide with the most noise-sensitive night-time period.

15. Construction Noise

Construction noise will be temporary and would arise principally from site preparation, delivery of materials, construction of the building and associated external works. Construction activities should be undertaken during normal daytime hours and in accordance with reasonable construction noise controls.

A construction noise condition can be imposed by the Local Planning Authority if considered necessary.

16. Vibration

The proposed use is not expected to generate significant ground-borne vibration.

MOT testing and vehicle valeting do not normally involve piling, heavy breaking, metal fabrication or other activities capable of generating significant vibration beyond the immediate working area.

No specific vibration mitigation is therefore considered necessary beyond the normal use and maintenance of appropriate equipment.

17. Cumulative Noise

The existing Newbold Tyres operation is an important consideration. The application site forms part of an established vehicle-related premises and the proposed use will operate in association with an existing tyre business. Consequently, the assessment should not consider the proposed building in isolation from the existing acoustic environment.

The additional noise generated by the proposal is expected to comprise relatively short-duration vehicle movements and intermittent MOT/valeting activities rather than a continuous industrial noise source.

The existing road traffic on Milnrow Road and established vehicle-related activity at the site already contribute to the prevailing acoustic environment.

The proposal therefore does not represent the introduction of a fundamentally incompatible noise-generating use into a quiet residential area.

18. Planning Policy

The current National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) contains specific policies relating to pollution and noise.

Policy P3 – Living conditions and pollution requires development proposals to be appropriate to their location, taking account of the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. It specifically requires development to avoid or mitigate unacceptable levels of noise and to reduce adverse noise impacts where possible.

The Framework also requires consideration of cumulative effects and the sensitivity of surrounding receptors.

Policy P4 – Impact of development on existing activities is also relevant. It establishes the "agent of change" principle and requires existing businesses and activities to be protected from unreasonable restrictions resulting from new development. It also confirms that both lawful existing and permitted levels of operation should be taken into account. This is particularly relevant to the application because the proposal is situated alongside an established vehicle-related business and is itself a vehicle-related use.

At local level, Rochdale UDP Policy EM/3 – Noise and New Development remains a relevant consideration. The policy seeks to prevent development which would result in unacceptable noise nuisance to nearby occupants or users. Rochdale planning decisions have continued to apply EM/3 when considering noise and residential amenity.

The Council has also previously accepted noise mitigation involving acoustic screening/boundary treatments where these provide appropriate protection to residential amenity under EM/3.

The development should therefore be considered against the principle of preventing unacceptable noise effects rather than against an assumption that all audible noise from a commercial use is unacceptable.

19. Noise Policy Statement for England

The Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) establishes the concepts of:

NOEL – No Observed Effect Level

LOAEL – Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level

SOAEL – Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level

The Government's Planning Practice Guidance confirms that noise assessments should consider whether a development is likely to result in a significant adverse effect, an adverse effect, or an acceptable level of amenity, taking account of the acoustic characteristics and context of the site.

There is no single universal numerical noise limit that applies to every planning application. The appropriate assessment depends upon the character of the existing environment, the type of noise, its duration, frequency and timing, and the sensitivity of the receptor.

This is particularly relevant to the current proposal due to the anticipated noise being predominantly daytime, intermittent and associated with an established vehicle-related use.

20. Mitigation Measures

The following measures are proposed as part of the development:

A. Building location

The building is positioned approximately 12m from the identified residential line, providing meaningful separation from the nearest residential properties.

B. Acoustic boundary

A 2.1m high acoustic-grade fence is proposed along the northern residential boundary.

C. Enclosed operation

MOT testing and vehicle valeting activities will be undertaken within the proposed building.

D. Controlled vehicle movements

The proposed layout provides a one-way internal circulation arrangement, reducing unnecessary vehicle manoeuvring.

E. Daytime operation

Routine operation will be restricted to daytime/early evening periods.

21. Recommended Planning Conditions

If the Council considers additional controls necessary, the following conditions would provide an appropriate means of securing the mitigation identified within this assessment:

1. Acoustic fencing

Prior to the first use of the proposed building, the 2.1m high acoustic boundary fence shown on drawing 21.2552.2J shall be installed in accordance with the approved details. The fencing shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the duration of the development.

2. Hours

The MOT and valeting use shall not operate outside the hours approved by the Local Planning Authority.

3. Fixed plant

Any externally mounted plant or machinery associated with the development shall be installed and operated so that the rating level, assessed in accordance with BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, does not result in an unacceptable adverse impact at the nearest noise-sensitive premises.

These conditions would provide the Council with effective control without unnecessarily restricting the legitimate operation of the proposed MOT and valeting business.

22. Conclusion

The proposed development has been designed with specific regard to the relationship between the proposed vehicle-related use and the neighbouring residential properties.

The principal residential receptors are located to the north and north-west of the site. The submitted layout provides approximately 12m separation between the proposed building and the identified residential line, while a 2.1m high acoustic-grade boundary fence is specifically incorporated along the residential boundary.

The proposed activities are relatively modest in scale and will predominantly comprise MOT testing and vehicle valeting. The most significant potentially noisy activities will take place within an enclosed building rather than in the open air.

Indicative published noise data for pressure washers and MOT-related equipment demonstrate that the source noise levels associated with the proposed activities are capable of being effectively controlled through distance, enclosure and acoustic screening.

The proposal does not include heavy vehicle repair, bodywork, grinding, welding or other industrial activities which could generate substantially higher and more impulsive noise levels.

The existing acoustic environment is already influenced by road traffic on Milnrow Road and established vehicle-related commercial activity. The proposed development is therefore compatible in acoustic terms with the general character of the locality, subject to the mitigation measures identified above.

Having regard to the NPPF 2026, the Noise Policy Statement for England, Planning Practice Guidance, Rochdale UDP Policy EM/3 and the physical relationship between the proposed building and neighbouring residential properties, it is considered that the development can operate without giving rise to unacceptable noise or disturbance to neighbouring residential occupiers, provided that the identified acoustic mitigation measures are implemented and retained.

The proposal therefore represents an appropriately controlled form of vehicle-related development in this location and, from a noise perspective, there is no identified reason why planning permission should not be granted.