Environmental Permit ERP/XP3093NK

Cowen Road Waste Reception and Recycling Centre

Site Condition Report

September 2025

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Document Details

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Document Review History

Date	Description	Summary of Changes
September 2025	Version 1	Original document

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Recycling and recovery UK

Introduction

The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 (as amended) require the production of a Site Condition Report (SCR) for any facility that may cause a significant risk to land or groundwater.

Gateshead Council ("the Council") holds an Environmental Permit (permit) with the reference ERP/XP3093NK for Cowen Road Waste Reception & Recycling Centre (known as Cowen Road HWRC, "the Site"). SUEZ operates the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) on behalf of the Council. Gateshead Council also utilises the bays in their adjacent depot for the storage and transfer of highways waste that are within the HWRC permit boundary.

This document constitutes the SCR provided to support the expansion of the permitted site Cowen Road Waste Reception and Recycling Centre ("the Site"). It is written in line with the requirements of the Environment Agency SCR template.

This report comprises a number of sections; different sections are required to be completed during the lifetime of the facility as detailed below:

Permit Application:	*Sections 1, 2 and 3 must be completed and submitted with the application.*
Permit Life:	*Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 must be maintained.*
Permit Surrender:	*Add a new document reference in Section 1, Complete sections 8, 9 and 10 and submit with the surrender application.*

1 Site Details

Name of Applicant:	Gateshead Council
Activity Address:	Cowen Road Waste Reception & Recycling Centre Cowen Road Blaydon Gateshead NE21 5TW
National Grid Reference:	NZ 19156 63335
Document reference and dates for Site Condition Report at Permit Application and Surrender:	No Site Condition Report or intrusive investigations were required or submitted for the original permit application. This report is prepared and submitted in support of the permit variation application, including a permit boundary expansion.
Document references for site plans (including location and boundaries):	Figure 1 – Site Permit Boundary

Note:
The permit application process requires the submission of a site plan to the Environment Agency. Plans must be submitted with the application that shows:

- Site location, the area covered by the site condition report, and the location and nature of the activities and/or waste facilities on the site.
- Locations of receptors, sources of emissions/releases, and monitoring points.
- Site drainage.
- Site surfacing.

If the above information is not shown in the figures accompanying the Site Management Plan, then additional plans must be provided in this SCR.

2 Condition of the Land at Permit Issue

2.1 Environmental Setting

Environmental Setting:

- Geology;
- Hydrogeology, and;
- Hydrology.

The site is located on industrial land in the Blaydon Industrial Estate to the south of Blaydon Haugh, located on the western margins of the city of Newcastle. The site lies to the south of a main railway line and to the west of the A1 dual carriageway before the A1 crosses the River Tyne.

The permit boundary is shown on Figure 1.

2.1.1 Geology

The site location and current permit boundary are shown in Figure 1. The regional geology is taken from British Geological Survey's online site (http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/mapViewers/msdviewers.html).

The Superficial Geology beneath the site comprises alluvium deposits associated with the proximity of the River Tyne dating from the Quaternary period. The underlying solid geology comprises rocks of the Pennine Coal Measures Group, which comprises interbedded grey mudstones, siltstones and pale grey sandstones dating back to the Carboniferous era.

Four BGS boreholes are available in close proximity to the site. These confirm the geology within the proximity of the site to be clays/silts underlain by sand and gravel which in turn overlie mixed sandstone, mudstone and siltstone.

It is noted that Made Ground is likely to be present beneath the majority of the current site surfacing and the upper surface of the alluvium as detailed in the site history / chronology presented in Section 2.2.2 below.

2.1.2 Hydrogeology

The hydrogeological setting of the site is taken from the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside's (MAGIC) website (https://magic.defra.gov.uk/).

The Superficial Deposits below the Site are classified as a Secondary (Undifferentiated) Aquifer, while the Coal Measures are classified as having Secondary A Aquifer status. Net groundwater flow (where present) beneath the site would be expected to be towards the River Tyne (that is in a northerly direction).

The site does not lie within a Source Protection Zone Site.

2.1.3 Hydrology

The River Tyne is located approximately 450m to the north of the site; however with industrial development of Blaydon Haugh, there are no streams or ditches that link the site directly to the River Tyne.

The site is located in a designated Flood Zone 3 area, indicating the site is at a high risk of flooding from the Tyne.

2.2 Pollution History

Pollution History:

- Pollution Incidents, that may have affected land;
- Historical Land Use, and associated contaminants;
- Any visual/olfactory evidence of existing contamination, and;
- Evidence of damage to pollution prevention measures.

2.2.1 Pollution Incidents

SUEZ do not have any records of any pollution incidents that may have directly affected the site or its residual risk to the land and water environment going forwards from 2025.

2.2.2 Historical Land Use and Present Site Use

Historical Ordnance Survey maps of the site area have been obtained via Envirocheck. Pertinent information determined from review of these maps is summarised below and the report is presented in full in Appendix A.

1862 – 1921

The site is denoted on all historical maps as being flat lying and undeveloped through this period although railway lines and wagonway tracks are evident to the north and south of the site.

1921 – 1957

The site formed part of local allotments for the Blaydon area, with local land raising occurring in this period to form the allotment area on and beyond the site boundary.

Local infilling of land in the area south of the site commenced after 1952 with land raising / infilling of ground also occurring to the east of the site.

1957 – 1970

Infilling of ground (landfill) that had been ongoing to the east of the site had now progressed onto the site itself with the past use of the site for allotments having ended. The infilling is denoted as being a "refuse tip".

1970 – 1993

Despite the infilling, the site is recorded as being open ground through the 1980s and 1990s up to its development of an HWRC in 1998. Land immediately to the north of Cowen Road changed from being sidings (up to 1982) through to being a "depot" by 1993 that now exists as a recycling facility.

1998 – present day

The site has existed in its current form (as an HWRC) since 1998 with the site surfaced with impermeable surfacing to support the range of waste management activities undertaken at the site. Operation of the J+J Stanley Recycling facility immediately to the north of the site is evident and beyond this lies the east – west traversing railway lines (present since 1862).

Summary

The mapping provided by the Envirocheck report details that the Site has been largely undeveloped for anything other than allotments use prior to the mid-1960s. The site was then part of a landfill / land raise project in the area suggesting that a shallow depth of aged waste may be present beneath the current site surfacing that was placed in 1998 when the current facility was developed.

2.2.3 Visual/Olfactory Evidence of Existing Contamination

In line with any contemporary recycling site, short term waste storage is located in designated areas, skips and containers around the HWRC as part of its current operation.

The Site is found to be generally tidy and free of litter, spills and other signs of contamination across all areas of operation at the Site.

2.2.4 Evidence of Damage to Pollution Prevention Measures

The primary pollution prevention measures at the Site are the impermeable surfacing and waste being stored in containers. The impermeable surfacing continues to provide a barrier to potential contaminants moving downwards into the underlying environment since its installation.

The SUEZ ISO14001 accredited Environmental Management System and the site specific Management System require regular inspections of the surfacing and drainage system to be undertaken, with any remedial works required to be instigated without delay.

The Environment Agency site inspection records for the site have been reviewed and there have been no CCS scores in relation to the condition of the concrete hardstanding.

2.3 Previous Assessments

Evidence of Historic Contamination:

- Historical Site Investigation;
- Historical Assessments, and;
- Remediation and Verification Reports.

2.3.1 Historical Site Investigations, Assessments, Remediation and Verification Reports

Section 3.1 of the H5 Guidance states the following:

“If your proposed activity involves the use, production or release of Relevant Hazardous Substance you must submit baseline data as part of your application SCR.”

An application Site Condition Report was not produced, as this was not required when the original permit was issued, or for subsequent modifications. As such, no baseline data was provided as part of the original permit (licence) application.

3 Permitted Activities

Permitted Activities:	**HWRC** The following D+R Codes that are carried out at the site are listed as follows: *D9 Physico-chemical treatment not specified elsewhere in Annex IIA which results in final compounds or mixtures which are discarded by means of any of the operations numbered D1 to D8 and D10 to D12* *D14 Repackaging prior to submission to any of the operations numbered D1 to 13* *D15 Storage pending any of the operations numbered D1 to D14 (excluding temporary storage, pending collection, on the site where it is produced)* *R3 Recycling/reclamation of organic substances which are not used as solvents* *R4 Recycling/reclamation of metals and metal compounds* *R5 Recycling/reclamation of other inorganic materials* *R13 Storage of wastes pending any of the operations numbered R1 to R12 (excluding temporary storage, pending collection, on the site where it is produced)* The maximum permitted annual tonnage of waste accepted at the site will not exceed 71,350 tonnes.
Non-permitted Activities Undertaken:	There have not been any non-permitted activities undertaken at this site.
References: Plan showing activity layout; Env Risk Assessment.	Figure 1 and Document 1.3 Environmental Risk Assessment

4 Changes to the Activity

Have there been any changes to the activity boundary?	There has been minor revision of the permit boundary to include activities on the north eastern boundary of the site.

Have there been any changes to the permitted activities?	No
Have any 'dangerous substances' not identified in the Application Site Condition Report been used or produced as a result of the permitted activities?	No Application Site Condition Report was required or produced at the time of site development. No "dangerous substances" have been used or produced as a result of the permitted activities.
Checklist of supporting information:	*Plan showing any changes to the boundary (where relevant)* *Description of the changes to the permitted activities (where relevant)* *List of 'dangerous substances' used/produced by the permitted activities that were not identified in the Application Site Condition Report (where relevant)*

4.1 Changes to the Activity

This report has been produced at the request of the Environment Agency as part of a permit variation that includes for the minor revision of the site's permit boundary as a result of changes in site activities in recent years.

5 Measures Taken to Protect Land

Use records that you collected during the life of the permit to summarise whether pollution prevention measures worked. If you can't, you need to collect land and/or groundwater data to assess whether the land has deteriorated.	
Supporting Information:	Inspection records and summary of findings of inspections for all pollution prevention measures, and; Records of maintenance, repair and replacement of pollution prevention measures.

5.1 Site Surfacing, Drainage and Monitoring

The waste storage areas are constructed with reinforced concrete of a sufficiently durable construction to withstand the weight of the waste and containers stored at the facility, and the operational vehicles using the facility.

The concrete surface provides an impermeable barrier to protect the underlying ground/groundwater from the transmission of any potential contamination by the site activities.

In addition, a sealed drainage system is present to ensure that no liquid will run off the surface other than via the system; except where those discharges may otherwise be permitted.

There are two drainage systems for the site as described below.

- The foul drainage discharges to combined sewer.
- The surface water system serves all site roadways. The surface water system comprises a number of gullies which lead to the combined sewer.

All waste on the HWRC with the potential to cause contaminated surface water run-off are stored in skips and containers to prevent rainfall infiltration.

Bays in the highways depot are linked to the depot's separate drainage system, passing through an interceptor before discharging to combined sewer. The Council depot has a trade effluent consent for the vehicle wash bay on that site. Northumbrian Water confirmed in February 2025 that the water leaving the bays is not classed as trade effluent.

5.2 Inspection Records

Environment Agency Compliance Assessment Reports (CARs) for the Site have been reviewed and do not record any incidents/non-compliances likely to have had any permanent impact on ground, groundwater or surface water receptors.

The site is concrete based with areas of grass landscaping around it's perimeter. No unmade surfaces exist on which waste activities take place. There are no records or visual evidence that there has ever been a major spillage at the site.

6 Pollution Incidents That May Have Had an Impact on Land, and Their Remediation

Summarise any pollution incidents that may have damaged the land. Describe how you investigated and remedied each one. If you can't, you need to collect land and /or groundwater reference data to assess whether the land has deteriorated while you've been there.	
Supporting Information:	Records of pollution incidents that may have impacted on land, and; Records of their investigation and remediation.

6.1 Pollution Incidents

Available Environment Agency Compliance Assessment Reports for the Site and internal site inspection records do not indicate that there have been any pollution incidents at the site, or other compliance issues, that are likely to have any ongoing impact on the underlying ground, groundwater or surface water. There was a small fire at the site in 2024.

6.2 Investigation and Remediation Records

No further information is available.

7 Soil, Gas and Water Quality Monitoring (Where Undertaken)

Provide details of any soil gas and/or water monitoring you did. Include a summary of the findings. Say whether it shows that the land deteriorated as a result of the permitted activities. If it did, outline how you investigated and remedied this.	
Supporting Information:	Description of soil gas and/or water monitoring undertaken, and; Monitoring results (including graphs)

7.1 Description of Monitoring

No quantitative monitoring of the environment is undertaken at the site, and there is no quantitative monitoring required by the permit conditions. All environmental monitoring is undertaken in qualitative manner, with site records of visual inspections being retained on site regarding the condition of yard drainage, accumulation of any standing water etc.

Daily inspections of the site infrastructure are undertaken in line with SUEZ IMS Procedure - Site Inspection, Audit & Reporting. Site inspections are recorded on the Vision App.

Figures

Figure 1. Site Permit Boundary

N

GAS BOTTLES

Track

ENTRANCE

EXIT

CHEMICALS

REUSE

TEXTILES

PAPER

MIXED RECYCLING

WEEE (SDA)

FL. TUBES

BATTERIES

OIL

TYRES

GIVE WAY

TV/ MONITORS

UNLOADING

FRIDGES

WEEE (LDA)

SOILS

SCRAP METAL

SITE OFFICE

WELFARE CABIN

UNLOADING

1 GANTRY 2 HARDCORE & RUBBLE PLASTERBOARD

3 GANTRY 4 GARDEN WASTE WOOD

5 GANTRY 6 CARDBOARD GENERAL WASTE

7 GANTRY 8 MATTRESSES HARD PLASTICS

9 GANTRY 10 GENERAL WASTE POPs WASTE

11 GANTRY 12 WOOD GARDEN WASTE

13 GANTRY 14

1 2 3 4 5 6

STREET SCENE RESIDUAL

UNLOADING

COWEN ROAD

HGV ONLY

6 14 7 23 17

e

0 5 10 15 20m 30 40 50

Metres
1:500

Notes

1. Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Crown Copyright, Licence Number 100004910.

Permit Boundary

Rev	subject	date
A	Permit Boundary Adjusted	August 2025

suez

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Site: Cowen Road HWRC

Title: Indicative Site Layout

Scale: 1:500 @ A3

Date: August 2025

Drawing Ref: Cwn-LAY-1124-01a

Drawn by: JA

Checked by: SW

Appendix A

Appendix A. Envirocheck Report (See separate electronic files)