

E1.3

ES Chapter 3 - Existing Land Uses and Activities

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THE CROWN
 ESTATE

East Hemel

3. Existing Land Uses and Activities

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This Chapter presents a summary of the predominant existing land uses and activities currently occurring on, and around, the Site. This Chapter also describes the key environmental characteristics of the Site and its adjacent areas, thereby identifying potentially sensitive receptors which may be affected by the Development.

3.1.2 A full description of the baseline conditions relevant to each environmental topic considered within the EIA is provided within each technical Chapter of this ES (**ES Volume 2, Chapters 7 to 17**).

3.2 Location and Overview of the Site

3.2.1 As described in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 1: Introduction**, the Site is mainly located within the administrative boundary of SADC; however, a small area of the proposed highway and infrastructure works is located within administrative boundary of DBC immediately to the west of the Site (approximately 1.3% of the Site area). The administrative area of Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) is located approximately 400m to the south-west of the Site.

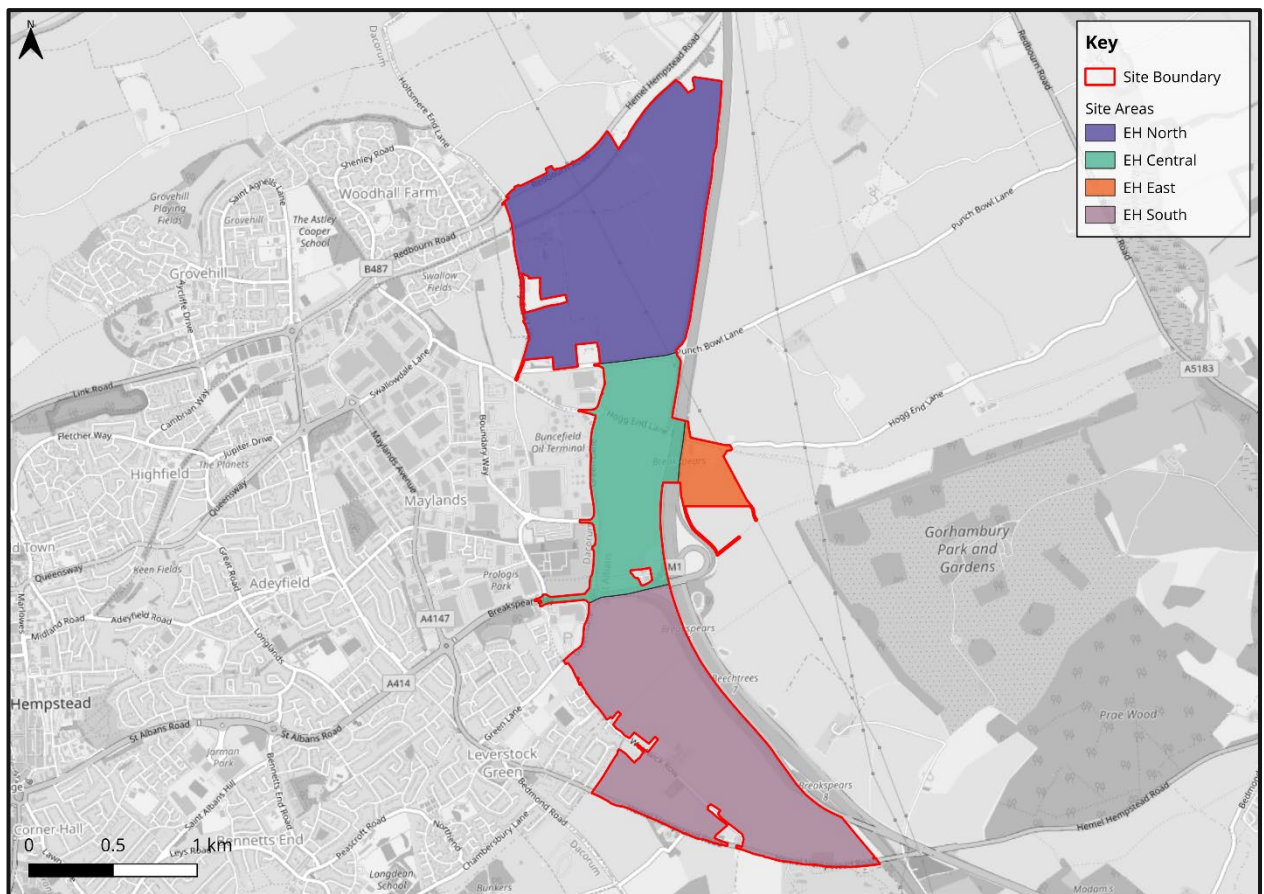
3.2.2 For the purposes of describing the different parts of Site (see **Figure 3.1**), the Site has been sub-divided into four areas:

- 'East Hemel (EH) North', comprising the area of the Site broadly within draft SADC Local Plan allocation H2 East Hemel Hempstead (North). This comprises the part of the Site to the north of Punchbowl Lane and south of the B487 Hemel Hempstead Road (Redbourn Road);
- 'EH Central', comprising the area of the Site broadly within draft SADC Local Plan allocation H3 East Hemel Hempstead (Central). This comprises the part of the Site to the south of Punchbowl Lane and to the north of the A414 Breakspear Way;
- 'EH South', comprising the area of the Site broadly within draft SADC Local Plan allocation H4 East Hemel Hempstead (South). This comprises the part of the Site to the south of the A414 and north of the A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road; and
- 'EH East', comprising the land to the east of the M1 motorway.

3.2.3 The location of the Site is provided at **ES Volume 2, Chapter 1: Introduction, Figure 1.1: Site Boundary Plan**. The Site is largely undeveloped and comprises of several irregular shaped fields in arable cultivation, with some fields used for pasture (including grazing horses). EH North, EH Central and EH East is bordered by the M1 motorway to the east and the urban areas of Hemel Hempstead to the west. Cherry Tree Lane forms the western boundary of EH north part of the Site, Green Lane forms the western boundary of the EH Central part of the Site

and a small part of the EH South part of the Site. The B487 Hemel Hempstead Road (Redbourn Road) borders the north of the Site and the A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road borders the south. The EH North part of the Site is cut (east-west) by the Nickey Line (a disused railway line that now forms a long-distance footpath and cycle way). Punchbowl Lane, Hogg End Lane and the A414 Breakspear Way also cross the Site east-west, and Westwick Row passes southeast – northwest through the EH South part of the Site.

Figure 3.1: Areas of the Site



3.3 Predominant Land Uses and Activities

Land Ownership

3.3.1 The land within the Site is majority owned by TCE.

Historical Land Uses

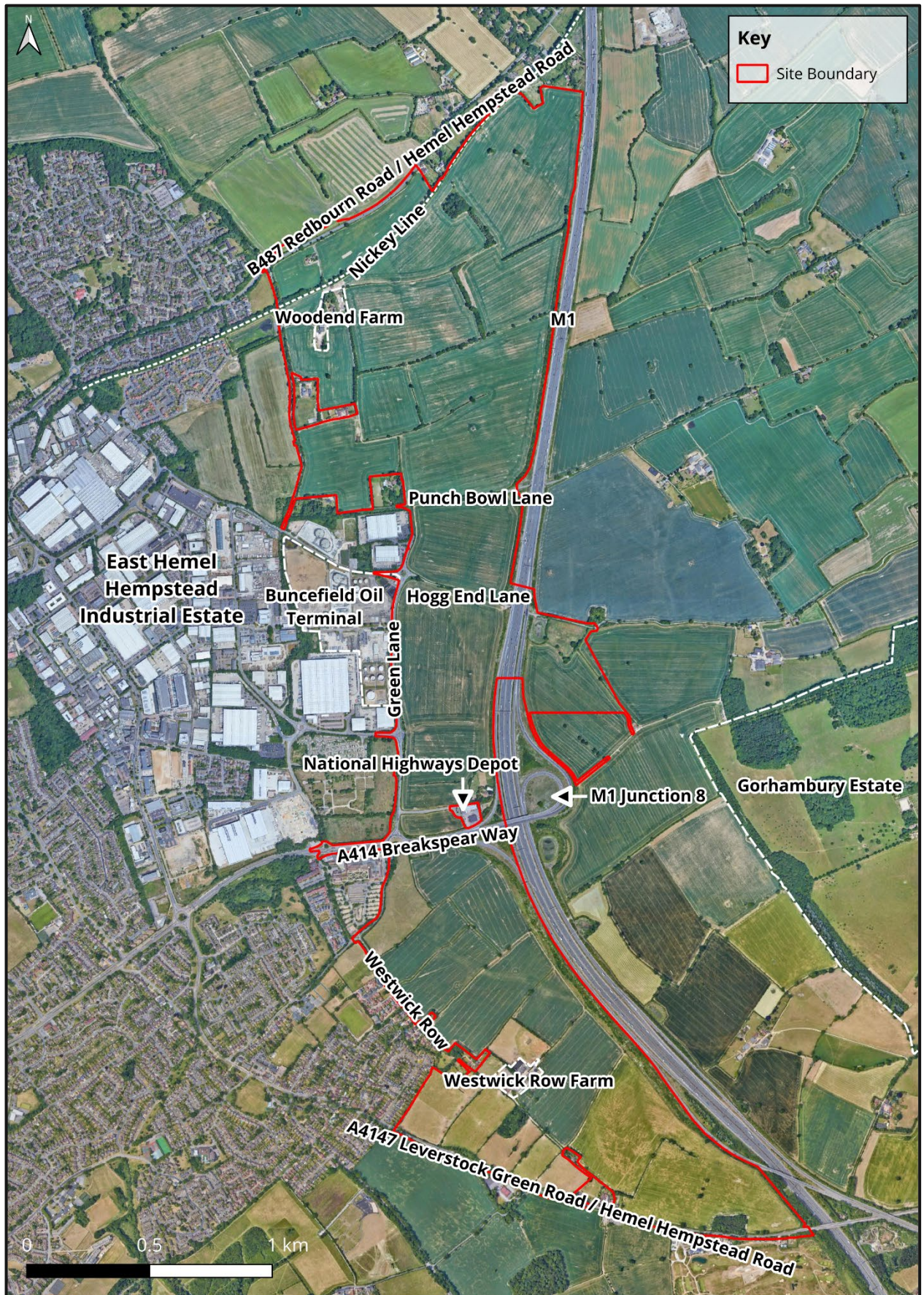
3.3.2 The Site has historically been in agricultural use, comprising fields and associated dwellings. A notable change in land use came with the construction of the Harpenden and Hemel Hempstead Railway line (now the Nickey Line, a footpath and cycleway) within the north of the Site which is visible on the 1883 OS map. The area surrounding the Site has also historically been in agricultural use, with the greatest changes in land use occurring post-WWII when Hemel Hempstead was selected as the site of a New Town. Construction began in 1947 and since then the

town has continued to expand, with modern residential, commercial and industrial uses now abutting the Site's western boundary. By 1956, the M1 motorway (including Junction 8 and the A414) had been constructed in conjunction with the development of the New Town.

Existing Land Uses

- 3.3.3 The Site contains a range of existing land uses as can be seen in **Figure 3.2**. The Site comprises of several irregular shaped fields in arable cultivation, with some fields used for pasture (including for grazing horses). The fields are bound by hedgerows and trees that in places form woodland strips. There are a small number of farm buildings and residential properties situated within the Site, including at Woodend Farm, Woodend Farm Cottages and Westwick Row Farm (which is also an equestrian centre). Junction 8 of the M1 is within the central part of the Site. A National Highways depot (not included within the Site boundary) is located adjacent to Junction 8, to the north of the A414 Breakspear Way, accessed via an access road from Green Lane.
- 3.3.4 The topography of the Site undulates from c. 100m AOD at the northern most tip in the area of the B487 Hemel Hempstead Road (Redbourn Road) to c. 135m AOD adjacent to Cherry Tree Lane, c. 138m AOD adjacent to Junction 8, c. 115m AOD at Westwick Farm and rising to c. 140m AOD at the south-western most area of the Site. The topographic highs are located in the northern and southern parts of the Site and the wider area is typified by rolling chalk hills.

Figure 3.2: Existing Site Uses and Surrounding Land Uses



Surrounding the Site

3.3.5 The land uses surrounding the Site are mixed in character and comprise the following (also shown in **Figure 3.2**):

- The EH North part of the Site is bound by the area of land allocated within the draft SADC Local Plan as H1 North Hemel Hempstead (allocated for a residential led mixed use development but currently comprising irregular shaped agricultural fields), the M1 motorway to the east beyond which is agricultural land, the under-construction Spencer's Park Phase 2 development to the west, and the residential area of Woodhall Farm to the north-west. A small number of residential properties are located to the south of the B487 Hemel Hempstead Road (Redbourn Road) immediately to the north of the Site. There are also residential properties to the east of Cherry Tree Lane which are excluded from within the Site boundary.
- The EH Central part of the Site is bound to the east by the M1 motorway, beyond which are agricultural fields and the Gorhambury House Estate. Green Lane is located on the western boundary of this part of the Site beyond which is Woodwells Cemetery (c. 100m west), Jack & Jill's Day Nursery (c. 350m west), Woodwells Caravan Park (c. 140m west) and the Maylands Industrial Estate, on which is the Hertfordshire Oil Storage Terminal (also known as Buncefield Oil Depot) and a mix of logistics, office and light industrial buildings. Further west is the Hemel Hempstead Industrial Estate which contains a similar mix of land uses.
- The EH South part of the Site is bound by the A414 and the M1 motorway to the east, beyond which is agricultural land. The A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road and Centurian Club golf club are located to the south and Westwick Row, the residential areas of Leverstock Green and Cupid Green to the west along with the Breakspear Park office complex.

3.4 Key Environmental Characteristics

3.4.1 Details regarding the key environmental characteristics of the Site and its surrounds are provided in **ES Volume 2, Chapters 7 to 17**. However, a summary of key characteristics is set out below.

3.4.2 The Chilterns National Landscape (formerly referred to as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB) is located c. 2.1km to the north-west of the Site.

3.4.3 The Site does not contain any statutory National or European / International sites designated for ecological importance. There are three locally designated sites for ecological importance located wholly or partly within the Site boundary. These include:

- 'Westwick Row Wood' Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Located wholly within the Site boundary, in the south-east of the Site;
- 'Nickey Way Dismantled Railway' LWS. Located along the Nickey Line within the northern extent of the Site and extending eastwards from the Site; and

- 'Disused Railway Line, Hemel Hempstead' LWS. Also located along the Nickey Line, within the northern extent of the Site, extending westwards.
- 3.4.4 The Site is dominated by arable farmland, with associated farm buildings, horse paddocks, and small residential areas. The arable fields are surrounded by hedgerows which likely qualify as habitats of principal importance (HPI).
- 3.4.5 A range of surveys have been undertaken to identify the presence of protected species on Site. Breeding bird surveys identified a wide assemblage present on Site including Schedule 1 list species red kite, peregrine and fieldfare. Raptor surveys also identified potential red kite and buzzard nests present on-Site. Bat surveys identified potential for bat roosts present across Site within trees and on-Site buildings. Night-time bat surveys identified a range of bat species across the Site as well as foraging activity across the Site. There were at least seven species of bat recorded during dusk emergence surveys. Badgers were recorded across the Site with a total of 42 active, four partially active and two disused setts recorded within the study area. Eight of these setts recorded as being main setts.
- 3.4.6 The Site contains six Listed Buildings all of which are Grade II listed. An additional 42 Listed Buildings are located within the vicinity (<1km) of the Site.
- 3.4.7 There are three Public Rights of Way within the Site:
- Footpath St Michael Rural 003. Located in the centre of the Site, starting at Green Lane, past the M1 Junction 7 and finishes at Hogg End Lane;
 - Footpath Redbourn 013. Located in the north of the Site and starts at Lilly Lane (off Cherry Tree Lane), past Wood End Farm and finishes at the B487 Hemel Hempstead Road; and
 - Footpath Redbourn 044. Located in the north of the Site and starts at Cherry Tree Lane, past Cherrytree Farm and joins onto Footpath Redbourn 013.
- 3.4.8 The Nickey Line crosses the northern part of the Site and serves as a long-distance footpath and cycleway. A number of bus routes run across the Site, along B487 Hemel Hempstead Road (Redbourn Road) and A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road, going between Hemel Hempstead and Luton and Welwyn Garden City. The nearest train station is Apsley station, located approximately 3km west of the Site. Hemel Hempstead Station is c. 5km to the west of the Site. Both stations provide regular services between London Euston and Milton Keynes Central and on to stations to the north.
- 3.4.9 There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within, or in proximity to, the Site. The nearest AQMA is 'AQMA No 1 Hemel Hempstead' which is located c. 3.3km west of the Site and incorporates part of Lawn Lane between the junctions of Durrants Hill Road and Deaconsfield Road. The AQMA was declared on 1st June 2012 for annual mean levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).
- 3.4.10 The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The lower parts of the Site and valleys are subject to surface water flooding associated with overland flows during intense rainfalls. The Site does not contain any Main Rivers, with

the nearest Main River, the River Ver, located approximately 3km east of the Site. The Site does contain seven small ponds and drainage ditches. The Site is underlain by a principal aquifer (White Chalk Sub-group) and is located within a Zone 3 groundwater Source Protection Zone.

3.4.11 The Buncefield Terminal and the Hemel Hempstead BP Terminal are located immediately to the west of the Site and are both classified as Upper Tier establishments under the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 2015 due to the potential for possible major accident hazards relating to the accidental release of dangerous substances (petroleum products), explosions and fires. A 10" United Kingdom Oil Pipeline (UKOP) routes from Buncefield Terminal northwards through EH North before exiting the Site at the B487 Hemel Hempstead Road (Redbourn Road). Three additional 6", 8" and 13" UKOPs route from Buncefield Terminal southwards through EH Central and EH South before exiting the Site at A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road.