



Water for the North West

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**Date:** 29/10/2025

**Email:** [EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk)

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

**Your request:**

I saw a published article by Tamsyn Taylor entitled Construction of United Utilities first innovative MOBTM treatment process, to improve the water quality in the River Bollin by December 2024 dated November 2024 regarding construction of the new Macclesfield water treatment works. <https://waterprojectsonline.com/case-studies/macclesfield-wwtw-2024/> In that article there is a section entitled Tightening consents: "Under the new consents Macclesfield WwTW is required to serve a 2035 population equivalent of 82,679".

I was interested to know what is the current 2025 population equivalent and therefore by default how much growth space there is to take on increasing developments in the area served by this treatment works.

The article goes on to state: The works has a discharge permit with a flow to full treatment limit of 61,430 m<sup>3</sup>/day and a dry weather flow limit of 28,500 m<sup>3</sup>/day. Again, I would be interested to know how much spare capacity was built into this new facility.

**Our response:**

The 2025 population equivalent at Macclesfield WwTW is 77,222, with a recorded flow to full treatment level of 32,367 m<sup>3</sup>/d. Please note that flow and load levels vary, due to weather conditions, load from traders within the catchment etc, therefore capacity cannot be fully assessed.

For awareness, the appropriate measure of "capacity" varies for the different stages of each treatment process. Capacities are expressed in different formats, for example volume, flow or load. Not all relate to population. Even in the case of "load" which is related to population, it is calculated from concentration multiplied by volume. In practice, this means two identically "sized" works can have different population assessments depending on other variables.

Therefore, the effective capacity of each works will, in practice, be based upon a series of different measures for the different process stages. The combined capability of each works must be sufficient to treat the flow and load they receive, particularly dry weather flow, in line with their environmental permits and regulatory requirements to meet final effluent quality parameters.

As such, we do not routinely update “spare capacity” data for our WwTW’s and do not hold the information you have requested in relation to spare capacity in the format you require, therefore in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR we are unable to supply it.

Whilst we do not routinely update capacity data in this format, we do, analyse the ability of our WwTWs to accommodate future population growth. This process is contained within our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) for the region, which is a 25-year, holistic plan that covers all elements across drainage and wastewater. The latest version of the DWMP was published in May 2023 ([Drainage and wastewater management plan](#)) and the outputs can be viewed on the DWMP customer portal ([DWMP Customer Portal Environment](#)).

The portal holds information across different aspects of drainage and wastewater, for example flooding, pollution and WwTW capacity.

For WwTW capacity, we assess the risk that our WwTW will not have the capacity to meet our permitted volumes as a result of forecast population and business use growth in the area. Within the portal, you can navigate across the North West and click areas of interest. For each drainage area, the data presents risk/opportunities at the following design horizons:

- Current view for the drainage area (2020)
- Developing view for the drainage area
- Future view for the drainage area (2050)

For each design horizon, the drainage area is considered to be;

- No concern
- Minimal risk
- Potential area of focus

**Note:** this data is from 2020 to support the publication of the DWMP in May 2023. It is not a present day (2025) forecast. We are currently developing the next DWMP which is due to be published in November 2027. These assessments inform our future business plan submissions for growth related expenditure which must then be approved by Ofwat.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you’re not satisfied with how we’ve handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at [EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk), addressing your request to [REDACTED], and explaining why you’re unhappy with our response. We’ll be very happy to review your request and ensure we’ve done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

We’d love to hear your feedback on how we handled your request! If you have a moment, please complete our short survey [here](#) – your input helps us improve our service.