

Permitting decisions - Surrender

We have decided to accept the Surrender of the permit for the Stephenson Way Bakery operated by Rathbones Bakeries Limited located at Stephenson Way, Wakefield, WF2 0XN.

The permit number is EPR/TP3230RP/S006.

The decision was issued on 16 July 2026.

We are satisfied that the necessary measures have been taken to avoid any pollution risk and to return the site to a satisfactory state. We consider in reaching this decision that we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements.

Purpose of this document

This decision document provides a record of the decision-making process. It highlights [key issues](#) in the determination and summarises the decision-making process to show how the main relevant factors have been taken into account.

Read the permitting decisions in conjunction with the environmental permit and the surrender notice.

Key issues of the decision

We consider that this surrender application is low risk. due to:

- Limited on-site operation of 6.5 years.
- The following were stored indoors on hardstanding with secondary containment:
 - Wundrol (vegetable-based oil) 6,000L tank.
 - Liquid bread fat 12,000L tank.
 - Tin grease 6,000L tank.
 - Maintenance oil 220L drums.
 - Excel (cleaning chemical) 1,000L IBCs.
 - Tray clean (cleaning chemical) 1,000L IBCs.

- The following were stored externally on hardstanding with secondary containment:
 - Waste oil - 205L drums.
 - Caustak (cleaning chemical) - 1,000L IBCs
 - Tribac (cleaning chemical) - 1,000L IBCs.
 - Hydrochloric acid - 15,000L tank.
 - Hydrochloric acid – 1,000L IBCs.
- The only tank without secondary containment was the 26,000L yeast tank, this relied on tertiary containment which included on-site interceptors and grease traps.
- Drainage infrastructure was subject to routine inspection and cleaning by subcontractors. Rathbones report that no major defects or improvements were identified during the lifetime of the permit.
- Yeast Spill.

A CAR report for Rathbones Bakeries Limited ref TP3230RP/0379884 dated 04/12/2020 outlined Rathbone's response to the spill:

'On 13 September 2020 the liquid yeast tank suffered a pipe joint seal leak with 8,000 litres lost to the factory yard and the drainage system.

The Operator contacted the Agency on 14th October initially via e-mail (at 15:44hrs) to inform us that they had had a cream yeast spillage which had gone into the surface water drain. The Schedule 5 notification with the e-mail confirmed that the spillage had occurred at 16:15hrs on 13th October.

The Operator submitted Part B of the Schedule 5 on 11th November outlining what actions had been taken.

It was confirmed that although it was initially thought that the yeast may have left the Operator's site and entered the Public Surface Water system it was found that the yeast had remained on site in the interceptors and pumping station on site. The Operator arranged for the tanks to be emptied and cleaned before allowing the pumps to operate'.

Our groundwater contaminated land assessment consider the potential impact to soil and groundwater to be low as the yeast was contained in the tertiary containment system and any yeast that may have entered the soil is likely to have degraded in the five years since the spill.

- All site operational areas are covered by concrete. All internal operational process areas on-site are equipped with an impervious surface area.
- Evidence of regular audits and inspections throughout the lifetime of the permit.
- Decommissioning and removal of ongoing pollution risk:
 - Rathbones manufacturing operations on-site ceased by 22 February 2026. The site was sold in its entirety, including processing equipment and infrastructure, to Warburtons, with the sale completing on 17 April 2026.
 - The majority of leftover unused chemicals and lubricants have been removed from site.
 - Residual stocks of food-grade cleaning chemicals were retained on site and transferred to Warburtons as part of the sale. Rathbones confirmed that these chemicals remained stored under controlled conditions in line with best available techniques and existing permit arrangements.
 - Wastes arising from site closure works were transported off site by waste contractors for reuse, recycling or disposal, as appropriate.
 - Upon cessation of production, all process vessels and interconnecting pipelines were emptied and cleaned.
 - Rathbones provided photographic evidence of a full factory clean-down, including cleaning of water supply tanks, process lines, the liquid yeast system, the clean in place system, the tray wash, the effluent treatment system and grease traps. Key equipment was left on site for use by the new owner.
 - The concrete hardstanding remained in place throughout closure works.

Decision considerations

Confidential information

A claim for commercial or industrial confidentiality has not been made.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

Identifying confidential information

We have not identified information provided as part of the application that we consider to be confidential.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

Pollution risk

We are satisfied that the necessary measures have been taken to avoid ongoing pollution risk from the facility.

Satisfactory state

We are satisfied that the necessary measures have been taken to return the site of the regulated facility to a satisfactory state, having regard to the state of the site before the facility was put into operation.