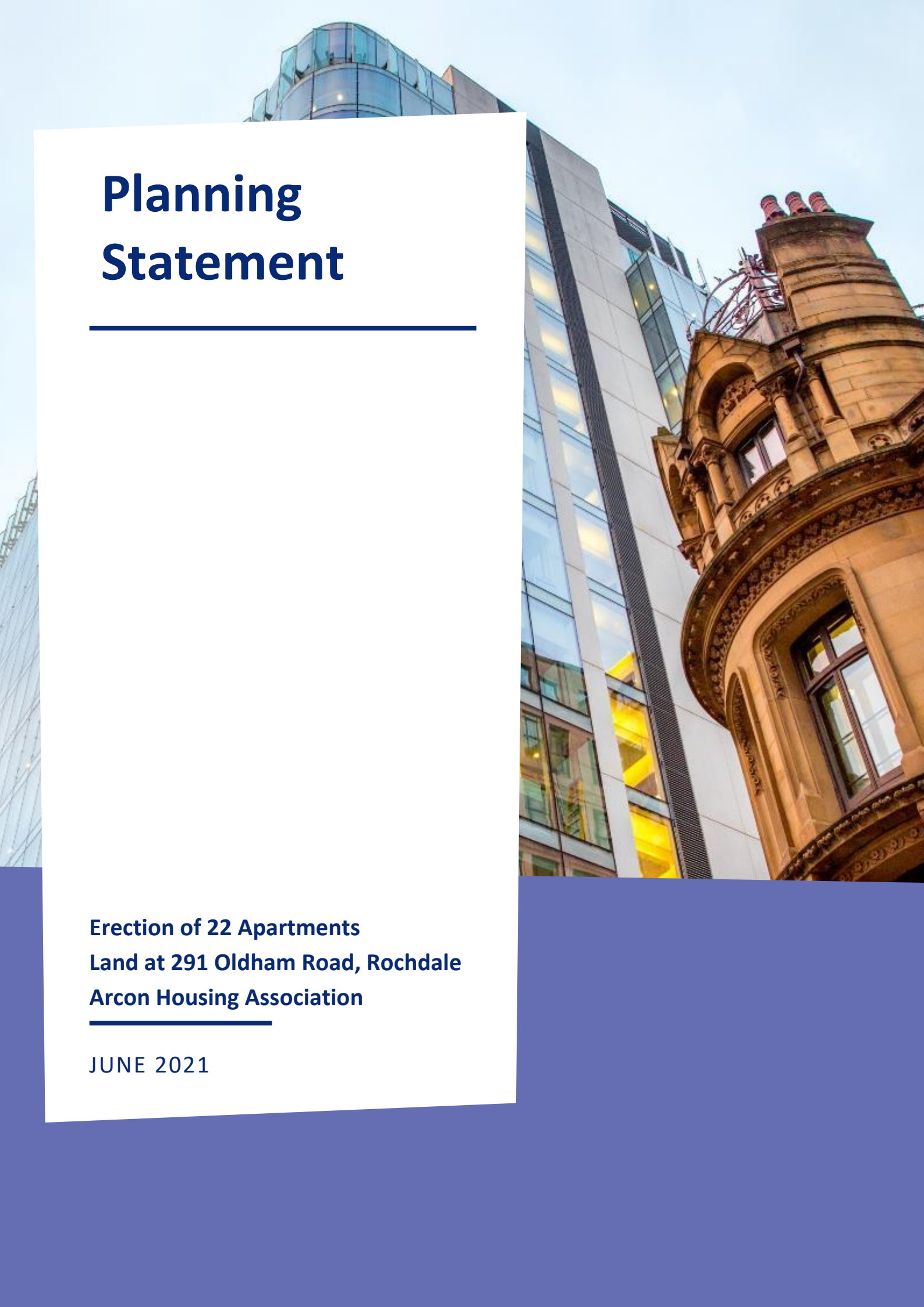




Planning Statement

**Erection of 22 Apartments
Land at 291 Oldham Road, Rochdale
Arcon Housing Association**

JUNE 2021

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application for the erection of an apartment block comprising 22 apartments.
- 1.2 The proposed development includes associated landscaping, car parking and access off Woodbine Street to the south.
- 1.3 The site consists of 0.1ha of land at vacant land at the junction of Oldham Road and Woodbine Road, also known as land at 291 Oldham Road.
- 1.4 The application is submitted on behalf of Arcon Housing Association, who are a reputable registered provider managing over 1,300 homes in the region.
- 1.5 The Statement considers the site and its surroundings and goes on to summarise the planning policies which are material to the proposal, together with other guidance and evidence which has been taken into account. The analysis addresses all material considerations which we consider to be relevant to the determination of the planning application. It concludes that planning permission should be granted, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations.
- 1.6 This document should be read alongside the Design and Access Statement, which sets out how the proposals have evolved based on the assessment of the context and have informed the design principles and concepts used in the submission.
- 1.7 The application is also supported by the following documents:
 - Crime Impact Statement
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment
 - Phase I Site Investigations
 - Tree Survey
- 1.8 The plans submitted to support the application include:
 - Location Plan (Ref: WS-BTP-00-LP-DR-A-3576_100)
 - Existing Site Plan (Ref: WS-BTP-00-SP-DR-A-3576_101)
 - Demolition / Site Clearance Plan (Ref: WS-BTP-00-SP-DR-A-3576_102)
 - Proposed Site Plan (Ref: WS-BTP-00-SP-DR-A-3576_105)



- Proposed Floor Plans (Ref: WS-BTP-10-ZZ-DR-A-3576_107)
- Proposed Elevations (Ref: WS-BTP-10-E-DR-A-3576_108)
- Proposed Street Elevations (Ref: WS-BTP-00-ZZ-DR-A-3576_110)
- Landscape Plan
- Topographical Plan

2 The Proposals

- 2.1 This section provides additional information about the development proposals. It should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement, which describes the physical characteristics of the development in more detail.
- 2.2 The application description is as follows:
- “Planning application for the erection of an apartment block comprising 22 one-bedroom apartments with associated access, car parking and open space on land at 291 Oldham Road, Rochdale.”***
- 2.3 The proposal site features a four-storey apartment block fronting Oldham Road with access and parking to the rear and side. Landscaping is situated to the front, along the Oldham Road elevation and wraps around to the canalside elevation with a verge to the rear on the eastern elevation.
- 2.4 The lower floors of the building are to be faced with brick and comprise large glazed elements for windows and stairwells. The upper floor of the block is stepped back in parts and is proposed to be clad in standing seam zinc, both of which will reduce the massing of the building from a street view perspective.
- 2.5 The internal layout of the block comprises 1 and 2-bedroom apartments. All floors consist of 6 apartments, aside from the third floor which accommodates 4 units. The building is served by pedestrian entrances on the Oldham Road and Woodbine Street elevations. A bin store and cycle store is also available on the ground floor Woodbine Street elevation.
- 2.6 An accompanying Landscape Plan has been provided by the applicant. The verge fronting Oldham Road will be retained to comprise a mix of turf, trees and native planting. Hedge planting is also provided along this elevation, Woodbine Street and the rear. The planting scheme on the northern boundary provides an attractive living environment along the canal.
- 2.7 All of the dwellings are to be let on an affordable rent basis. The properties are to be owned and managed by Arcon Housing Association.
- 2.8 Access to the properties is taken via Woodbine Street to the south. There are separate accesses for pedestrians, with a footpath leading to the apartments and road serving 18 parking bays to the rear of the block.

3 Site and Surroundings

- 3.1 The 0.1ha site consists of vacant land at the junction of Oldham Road and Woodbine Street, approximately 1km to the south of Rochdale Town Centre.
- 3.2 This consists of a small parcel of grassland surrounded by wooden knee rail fencing and footways. The land appears to be used regularly with a desire line running diagonally across the site.
- 3.3 There are no trees or shrubs on the site, however there is some overlapping vegetation from planting on adjacent land.
- 3.4 Rochdale Canal runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. This includes a tow path along the northern edge of the canal, a lock¹ and bridge where the canal flows under Oldham Road.
- 3.5 The most recent use of the land comprised a single-storey doctor's surgery with access, car parking, with landscape planting and trees surrounding. Wellfield Old Mill was also partially located on the site in the early 1900s.
- 3.6 Housing is largely situated to the east of Oldham Road, employment uses including offices and workshops are located to the north of the canal and a mix of community and retail uses are situated along Oldham Road. Former mills are also scattered throughout the local area.
- 3.7 Oldham Road (A671) fronts the site and connects the area to Oldham in the south and East Lancashire to the north via Rochdale Town Centre. This links to the A664 to the south, which provides access to the A627(M) nearby and the wider motorway network via junction 20 of the M62.
- 3.8 Oldham Road is a busy bus corridor with regular services stopping nearby, linking Rochdale with the wider Greater Manchester/East Lancashire area. Rochdale Station is approximately 600m to the north-west on the Calder Valley line. Services to Manchester Victoria and Leeds stop here regularly.
- 3.9 The site is sustainably located with several local shops and services available nearby including a GP, pharmacy, convenience store, café, takeaways and gym located off Oldham Road, within a short 150m walk. There are a greater number of facilities available in Rochdale Town Centre to the north.

¹ Lock Number 50 (Moss Lower Lock) Grade II Listed (Ref: 1084248)

Local Plan Designation

- 3.10 The site is designated as an Area of Opportunity (Policy R/4 F) and within a Local Centre (Policy S/6) in the Rochdale UDP Proposals Map (2006). A small proportion of the site is also situated in a Mixed Employment Zones (Policy EC/3 and Core Strategy Policies E2 and E3). Figure 1 below illustrates this and is discussed in more detail in the Policy section of this report.



Figure 1. UDP Proposals Map Extract

4 Planning Policy and Evidence Base

- 4.1 This section will identify the relevant national and local planning policies associated with the proposal. Reference will also be made to other related planning guidance that may act as material considerations in determining the application.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2 The **National Planning Policy Framework** (2019) is relevant to the determination of this application.
- 4.3 The Framework advises LPAs to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development are described in paragraph 8.
- 4.4 Paragraph 58 refers to the Government's objective of ***"significantly boosting the supply of homes"***.
- 4.5 Paragraph 61 expects the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups to be assessed and reflected in planning policies, including those who require affordable housing.
- 4.6 Paragraph 69 notes that ***"small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly"***. Local planning authorities should ***"support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes."***
- 4.7 Paragraph 118 c) advises LPAs to ***"give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land"***.
- 4.8 Paragraph 118 d) encourages Councils to ***"promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively"***.
- 4.9 Paragraph 122 states that ***"Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account...promoting regeneration and change."***

Local Policy

- 4.10 The development plan for the area comprises the Rochdale Unitary Development (UDP) adopted in 2006 and the Rochdale Core Strategy adopted in 2016.

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006)

- 4.11 The UDP provides the site-specific designations in the accompanying proposals map and associated saved policies.
- 4.12 The site is located within the defined urban area (Policy G/D/1), designated as an Area of Opportunity (Policy R/4 F), within a Local Centre (Policy S/6) and partially located in a Mixed Employment Zones (Policy EC/3) in the UDP Proposals Map.
- 4.13** Saved Policy R/4(f) concerns the Canal Basin Area of Opportunity, which includes the subject site. It is stated that: ***“The area is allocated for comprehensive regeneration, including the conversion and redevelopment of existing buildings, and environmental works. The following mixed uses will be permitted....d) Canalside housing and apartments...***

The principles for development are:-

- i. Development should create visual interest along the road and canal corridors and incorporate where appropriate works of public art;***
- ii. Opportunities should be taken to enhance the Rochdale Canal corridor and access to it for recreation;***
- iii. Opportunities should be taken to encourage the active use of the canal and towpath;***
- iv. Listed buildings and buildings of character and their settings should be protected and enhanced where possible through re-use and sympathetic design;***
- v. Developers will be expected to contribute to road and public transport infrastructure improvements;***
- vi. Safe, attractive public areas should be created and developments should make provision for the establishment of cycle and pedestrian links through the area and to surrounding areas;***
- vii. The mix of uses and density of development should reflect local demand, provide benefits to the local community, minimise vehicle /pedestrian conflict, and ensure compatibility with adjoining uses; and***

viii. *Proposals must protect the nature conservation value of the Rochdale Canal.*

4.14 Saved Policy S/6 relates to District, Local and Linear Commercial Areas, which includes the Local Centre at Oldham Road (set out in Policy G/S/1 and Appendix B). It is stated that: ***“...in local centres...the development of, or change of use to, shops, financial and professional services, food and drink outlets, offices, community and cultural facilities and other uses appropriate to a district or local centre will be permitted provided that:***

- a. It will be of a scale and character appropriate to the size, role and function of the centre or area; and***
- b. It will be compatible with surrounding land uses and will not harm local residential amenity.”***

4.15 A small proportion of the site to the north, alongside the Rochdale Canal, is designated within the Mixed Employment Zone. Saved Policy EC/3 of the UDP states that: ***“Within Mixed Employment Zones development and change of use will be permitted for the following employment generating uses (Use Classes Order in brackets):***

- a. Business uses (B1);***
- b. General industry (B2);***
- c. Warehousing and distribution (B8), builders’ and plumbers merchants, timber suppliers, plant hire depots and other outlets providing a service to the trade, subject to conditions regulating the goods sold and the hours of opening;***
- d. ‘Sui generis’ uses such as the motor trade, including car and caravan showrooms, petrol filling stations, tyres and exhaust centres and car washes;***
- e) Entertainment, leisure and tourism uses, that if they are major will also have to comply with policy LT/4 “Major Built Leisure and Tourism Developments”.***
- e. Retail uses that comply with policy S/9 “Shops in Industrial Premises”.***

“Other uses will not be permitted unless it can be shown that they are:

- i. Ancillary and complementary (both in terms of size and function) to the industrial and business nature of the employment area; or***
- ii. The development forms part of a wider regeneration proposal supported by the Council, within the regeneration priority areas defined by policy G/R/1, and a use***

other than those permitted above would be more appropriate to achieving the local and strategic objectives of the regeneration programme.”

4.16 Elsewhere in the UDP, saved Policy G/D/1 – Defined Urban Area provides a site-specific settlement boundary.

Rochdale Core Strategy (2016)

4.17 The Core Strategy provides the over-arching strategic policies for the Borough. The following policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy SO2 – Successful, Healthy Communities
- Policy SO3 – Design, Image and Quality of Place
- Policy SP2 – Spatial Strategy
- Policy SP3/R – The Strategy for Rochdale (Newbold Key Regeneration Area)
- Policy EM10 – Derelict Land
- Policy E2 – Increasing Jobs and Prosperity
- Policy E3(1) – Economic Growth Corridors (Town Centre and Kingsway Corridor)
- Policy C1 – Housing Delivery
- Policy C2(5) – Regeneration Areas (Newbold)
- Policy C3 – Housing Type
- Policy C4 – Affordable Housing
- Policy P1 – Improving Image
- Policy P2 – Heritage
- Policy P3 – Design of New Development
- Policy G2 – Energy and New Development
- Policy G3 – Renewables and Low Carbon Energy
- Policy DM1 – General Development Requirements
- Policy DM2 – Planning Contributions and Infrastructure

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.18 The Council have adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which provide additional guidance for applicants and decision makers. The following SPDs are relevant:
- Affordable Housing SPD (2008)
 - Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development (2016)
 - Open Space in New Housing Developments (2008)
 - Residential Design Guide (2007)

Evidence Base and Emerging Plan

- 4.19 The **Strategic Housing Market Assessment** (2015) confirms that whilst Rochdale is relatively affordable compared to the majority of the region (4.3 income to house price ratio, compared to the region average of 5 times), there is a strategic need for new affordable housing and to diversify the local affordable housing stock.
- 4.20 The Assessment confirms there are 2,192 households in affordable housing need in the Rochdale Township, with over a quarter of single adults over 60 considering an apartment. Whilst the net annual affordable housing required in the Township is negative, owing to a stock surplus, it is anticipated that the Township would need to accommodate net shortfalls elsewhere such as the Pennines Township.
- 4.21 In terms of tenure requirements, the Assessment identifies a significant preference for affordable / social rent tenure, with a total (existing households in need and newly forming households) of 79.4% requiring this tenure.
- 4.22 The site is not identified in **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment** (2019). The Assessment projects a deliverable supply of 653 dwellings per annum, which equates to a circa 7 year housing land supply set against the Core Strategy requirement with a requisite 5% buffer.
- 4.23 The **Brownfield Land Register** (2018) does not identify the site, nor is there a part 2 of the Register, which would grant Permission in Principle (PiP) to selected sites.
- 4.24 The **Employment Land Study** for Rochdale was last completed in 2008 and is out-of-date. However, this does identify the Oldham Road / Canalside area as part of a Primary Employment Zone (Ref: MEZ20) of 33.8ha. The area performs relatively well in terms of qualitative supply.

4.25 The Council have consulted on a draft **Site Allocations Development Plan Document** to sit alongside the Core Strategy. The Regulation 18 consultation consisted of a series of proposed allocations. Part of the subject site is included with an employment area shown in the extract below:

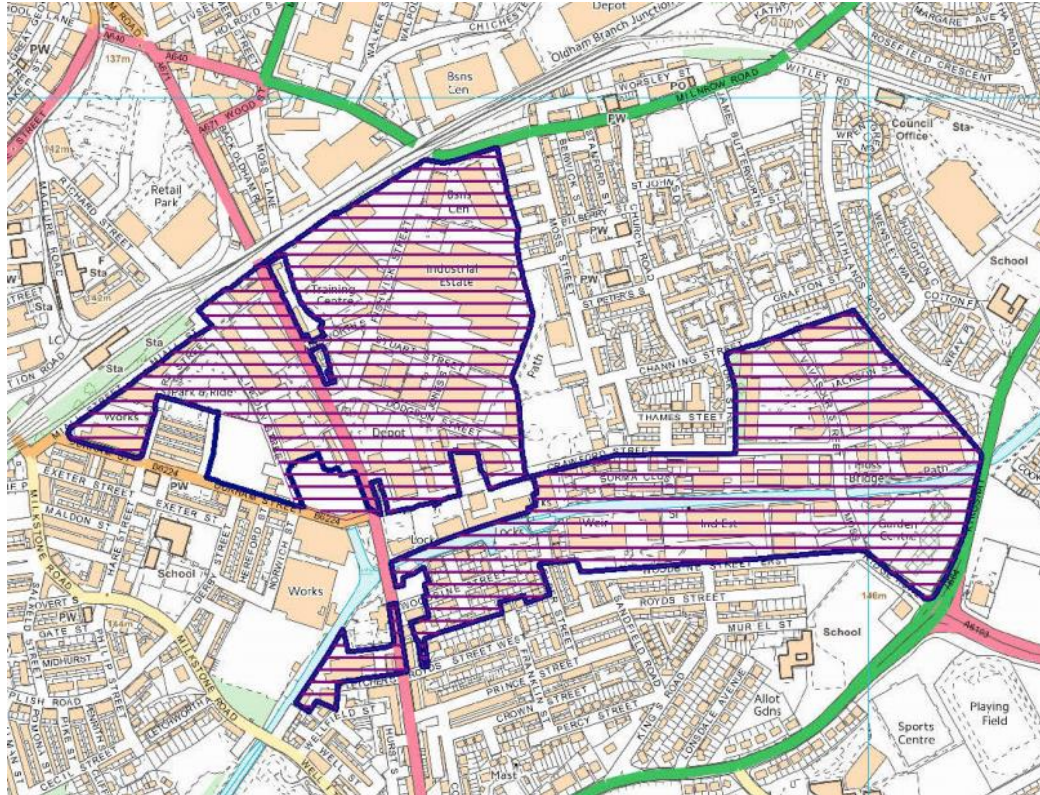


Figure 2. Draft Site Allocation Extract – Oldham Road and Canal Basin Employment Zone

4.26 Further work and consultation has not been progressed on the Site Allocations DPD due to delays to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. Draft policies therefore currently carry very limited weight in accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF.

5 Analysis

Principle

- 5.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications must be considered against prevailing development plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for Rochdale consists of saved policies of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006) and the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016).
- 5.2 The site is situated within several policy designations including in a Regeneration Area (strategic), an Economic Growth Corridor (strategic), a Local Centre (site-specific), an Opportunity Area (site-specific) and marginally within a Mixed Employment Zone designation (site-specific).
- 5.3 Given the central location of the site within the urban area of Rochdale, the proposed development complies with strategic policies relating to the Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2 and SP3) for the Borough and Townships by prioritising previously developed land within a key regeneration area in Rochdale.
- 5.4 Specifically, Policy SP3/R seeks to promote physical, social and economic regeneration in key regeneration areas such as Newbold. This includes the delivery of new quality homes to widen housing choice and broaden the appeal of the area. Whereas Policy E3(1) of the Core Strategy promotes the regeneration of employment zones east of Oldham Road.
- 5.5 The Local Centre designation in the UDP is a throwback to its previous use as a GP, which relocated in 2012. The site was cleared in 2013 and has been vacant since. Saved Policy S/6 of the UDP confirms that non-retail uses will be acceptable where they are compatible with surrounding land uses and do not harm residential amenity. The policy text (10.32) confirms residential uses may be beneficial to the regeneration of centres. The proposal complies with these policy criteria and would complement the centre by contributing towards regeneration.
- 5.6 The Council do not have an up-to-date retail study and the most recent assessment (Rochdale Retail Study Update 2010) does not assess the health of local centres. On the ground, the centre at Oldham Road appears to be reasonably healthy with a mix of uses. The introduction of new residents would provide additional custom for these businesses and help residents meet their day-to-day needs without the use of a private motor vehicle. Finally, there is no demand for new retail development at the site, evidenced by its vacancy since 2013.

- 5.7 The site also forms part of an Opportunity Area in the UDP, which includes the wider canal basin. Criteria (d) of Policy R/4(f) explicitly permits ***“canalside housing and apartments”*** in this location amongst other uses. For the reasons raised throughout this Statement, it is established that the proposals will complement the regeneration of this area and meet the policy objectives of Policy R/4(f).
- 5.8 A marginal area to the north of the site is included as part of a Mixed Employment Zone in the UDP Proposals Map. Policy EC/3 of the UDP states that ***“Other uses will not be permitted unless it can be shown that...The development forms part of a wider regeneration proposal supported by the Council, within the regeneration priority areas defined by policy G/R/1, and a use other than those permitted above would be more appropriate to achieving the local and strategic objectives of the regeneration programme.”***
- 5.9 Whilst the employment designation make little sense on the ground or when set against the Opportunity Area, the policy explicitly provides an exception for non-employment uses where they would contribute towards regeneration objectives for the area. The provision of 22 affordable homes on sustainably located, previously developed land in a prominent location in a regeneration area defined in Policy SP3/R of the Core Strategy clearly accords with this policy.
- 5.10 Elsewhere in the Core Strategy, policies C1, C2, C3 and C4 of the Core Strategy variously seek to prioritise housing on vacant, under-used land (80% target), focussing on regeneration and economic growth areas including the redevelopment of incompatible employment uses in residential areas in Newbold, diversifying the stock, enhancing the quality of supply, meeting local needs and providing affordable housing. The proposals comprehensively accord with these aims and should be supported in principle by the Council.
- 5.11 The proposal will help to meet the government’s objective to significantly boost the supply of housing. The proposal will also help to make efficient use of land, promote regeneration and meet local needs, as supported in paragraphs 59, 118 and 122 of the NPPF. Substantial weight should therefore be applied to this proposal in accordance with the Framework.
- 5.12 The proposals will complement the regeneration of Rochdale in the Core Strategy. The inherent benefits of the proposals including the efficient re-use of previously developed land in a sustainable location in close proximity to shops, services and public transport, which is supported by local and national policy guidance and entirely appropriate for housing.
- 5.13 For the above reasons, we believe that the principle of development is acceptable on this site.

Affordable Housing

- 5.14 The Core Strategy confirms that a suitable mix of high quality housing is required to meet identified needs in the Borough. This includes affordable housing.
- 5.15 Core Strategy Policy C4 states that the Council will seek 7.5% of housing in new residential developments of 15 dwellings or more to be affordable. The provision of 100% affordable housing in this location goes significantly beyond this requirement and is a powerful material consideration in the determination of this application.
- 5.16 In terms of need, the 2015 SHMA Update confirms that there are 2,192 households in affordable need in the Rochdale Township. Whilst the total gross and net shortfalls shown in Table A4 of the SHMA indicate an oversupply of one-bedroom dwellings locally, it is anticipated that the Township will need to accommodate the undersupply elsewhere in the Borough. Furthermore, the SHMA shows a strong demand for this accommodation from older residents.
- 5.17 There is a strategic need for new affordable housing and to diversify the local affordable housing stock. This is echoed throughout the development plan. The provision of modern, fit-for-purpose affordable homes will not only meet a Boroughwide need, but this will diversify the housing stock and enhance the quality of supply.
- 5.18 Whilst the Core Strategy and Affordable Housing SPD are silent in terms of the proposed tenure mix, the 2015 SHMA confirms that there is a significant need (almost 80% of overall need) for affordable rented housing, which the proposal will help to meet.
- 5.19 The proposal is also in accordance with national guidance, particularly paragraph 61 of NPPF, which requires LPAs to provide a sufficient size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups, including those who require affordable housing.
- 5.20 In terms of the delivery of the affordable housing, it is noted that the SPD requires applicants to enter into a Section 106 Agreement with a Registered Provider to secure the homes in perpetuity. However, in this case the applicant is the Registered Provider and it is kindly requested that this is addressed by a suitably worded planning condition.
- 5.21 Finally, it should be noted that the Arcon Housing Association are a reputable provider of affordable housing and have properties across the region. This experience and reputation should give the Council confidence that the homes will be managed and maintained to the highest standards.

Development Management Considerations

- 5.22 A **Design and Access Statement** has been submitted alongside the application. This explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development and demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the scheme. It also describes how the development takes that context into account in accordance with the National Design Guide (2019). The resultant scheme is considered to respond to its surroundings and provides a high quality living environment.
- 5.23 The **layout** of the proposals seeks to utilise the previous access off Woodbine Street providing parking for residents and access for service vehicles to the rear. The design, scale and massing of the apartment block seeks to complement the mix of industrial, domestic, modern and traditional buildings in the vicinity. The elevations comprise large glazed elements, facing brick and standing seam zinc cladding. The appearance of the block is considered to be sympathetic to the architectural vernacular of the local area, which includes nearby office and mill buildings.
- 5.24 An assessment of the **Heritage** impact of the proposals has been incorporated into the Design and Access Statement. This describes the significance and setting of the adjacent listed lock and describes the effect of the proposals of this structure. It is concluded that the proposals do not have an overbearing impact, the boundary treatments are appropriate, no harm is caused to the heritage asset and that the proposed development would enhance its urban setting.
- 5.25 In terms of **Ecology**, the site has been visited by an ecologist and considered to be species poor amenity grassland with no on-site habitats or species constraints that require further assessment.
- 5.26 A **Drainage Strategy** has been carried out by Sutcliffe to accompany the submission. It confirms that the site is in Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of flooding from rivers and/or sea. Due to the limited scale of the site, no soakways can be accommodated within the development; however permeable paving may be possible subject to further ground investigations. Discharge of surface water to a combined sewer network is the only available drainage solution. It is proposed to drain surface water from the proposed development to a 300mm diameter combined sewer in Woodbine Street with a discharge rate of 5 l/s max. Hydraulic calculations in the strategy have been provided which demonstrate that the drainage design will withstand significant storm events up to 100 year + 40% climate change. No dwellings on, or off site would be affected in this worse case scenario according to the calculations. The strategy is therefore acceptable

- 5.27 The proposals will have no material impact on the **local highway network** and ensures a safe living environment. Vehicular accesses are taken off Woodbine Street East to the south with a pedestrian access available from both this elevation and Oldham Road to the west. A total of 18 parking spaces are proposed with secure cycle parking also be available for residents.
- 5.28 **Phase I Site Investigations** have been prepared by Sutcliffe to accompany the application. This concludes that there are no identifiable significant environment issues regarding the development of the site. However, further information is recommended including the provision of a Phase II study and a Coal Mining Risk Assessment. This can be provided by way of a suitably worded planning condition to ensure that the land is adequately prepared for its development and that below ground risks are mitigated.
- 5.29 A **Crime Impact Statement** has been produced by Greater Manchester Police to support the scheme. The proposals have been found to be acceptable in principle, however further detailed considerations are required to achieve Secured by Design accreditation. These measures include parking court access control, boundaries with adjacent premises and the canal and access control. These are detailed considerations that can be discussed during the determination period.
- 5.30 An accompanying **Landscape Plan** has been provided by the applicant. The verge fronting Oldham Road will be retained to comprise a mix of turf, trees and native planting. Hedge planting is also provided along this elevation, Woodbine Street and the rear. The planting scheme on the northern boundary provides an attractive living environment along the canal. The open nature of the northern boundary includes native planting and turfed areas will compliment the adjacent canal, increase biodiversity and complies with Policy R/4(f) of the UDP.
- 5.31 In terms of **off-site contributions**, it is noted that the proposal is for affordable housing in a regeneration area of Rochdale. The margins for a developer to make a reasonable profit on a site such as this are therefore narrow. Regardless, should the Council seek off-site contributions then they would need to meet the legal tests set out in the CIL Regulations (necessary, directly related, fairly related in scale and kind). The applicant reserves the right to review the viability impact of such financial obligations alongside the above tests.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 5.32 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out how there are three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. It states that these are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.
- 5.33 With regards to economic objectives, housebuilding plays a significant role in creating and supporting employment. This includes people directly employed by developers and their contractors, as well as employees supported in the wider supply chain and in the wider economy through the spending power of contractor and supply chain firm employees.
- 5.34 The development of the affordable homes is subsidised by grant funding from Homes England which would be lost to the area if permission is not forthcoming. Housebuilding also delivers economic benefits for local authorities through financial receipts generated in the form of New Homes Bonus payments and ongoing Council Tax. The new homes if approved would result in the further support of local services and facilities by new residents. This increased trade is of particular importance to the nearby local centre on Oldham Road.
- 5.35 In terms of the social objectives, the local evidence base confirms there is a significant local need, which the proposal will go some way to address. The provision of 1-bedroom properties will help to meet a need from single over 60s in the Borough. The provision of apartments also helps to diversify the local housing stock and offer choice to local people. Significant weight should therefore be given to the social benefits of the scheme.
- 5.36 For the environmental objectives, the development will reuse vacant land for beneficial use. This will remove the potential for anti-social behaviour and promote regeneration. Its proximity to shops, services and the availability of public transport will limit dependence on the private motor vehicle. The 'fabric first' mode of construction proposed will limit energy usage and avoid fuel poverty for residents.
- 5.37 The proposals seek to respect the proximity of the Rochdale Canal as an ecological corridor and steps away from this elevation. The layout provides amenity space for residents surrounding the block and a full landscaping scheme has been provided which prioritises native planting and enhancing biodiversity.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This statement, in conjunction with the supporting documents, has clearly demonstrated that the proposals should be approved having regard to local and national planning policies as well as other material considerations.
- 6.2 The site is designated and covered by a number of land use and strategic policies in the Rochdale UDP and Core Strategy respectively, however these policies are not conflicting and the overwhelming objective is to promote regeneration in this area, including housing.
- 6.3 The proposals comply with the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy by prioritising previously developed land in a key regeneration area in Rochdale. Policy SP3/E specifically seeks to promote physical, social and economic regeneration in Newbold, including the delivery of new homes. The proposals will redevelop a vacant, prominent site and promote regeneration in the area, which is complementary to the wider strategic vision for Rochdale.
- 6.4 The designation of the site within an Area of Opportunity in the UDP (Policy R/4(f)) highlights the need for high quality regeneration comprising *“canalside housing and apartments”*. The scheme clearly accords with this allocation and provides an attractive, active use, which will undoubtedly improve the image of the area.
- 6.5 The land has been vacant since the relocation of the Wellfield GP around 2013 and is disconnected from the Local Centre on Oldham Road. Regardless, its proposed development would be complementary to its vitality and viability by introducing new residents to meet their day-to-day needs locally without using a private motor vehicle. Furthermore, saved UDP Policy S/6 confirms that non-retail uses can be acceptable in Local Centres where they are compatible with surrounding land uses and do not harm residential amenity; which has been demonstrated.
- 6.6 A small portion of the site is designated as a Mixed Employment Zone in the UDP. However, the policy explicitly provides an exception for non-employment uses where they would contribute towards regeneration objectives for the area. The provision of 22 affordable homes on sustainably located, previously developed land in a prominent location in a regeneration area defined in Policy SP3/R of the Core Strategy clearly accords with this policy.
- 6.7 The proposals comply with Paragraph 118 (d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which encourages Councils to promote and support the development of under-utilised land. The scheme is also supported by paragraph 122 in making efficient use of land and supporting regeneration.

- 6.8 NPPF also encourages LPAs to support the development of windfall sites and small to medium sized sites that can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, noting that these are built relatively quickly. The Framework gives *“great weight”* to the benefits of using such sites in paragraph 68.
- 6.9 The provision of a 100% affordable housing scheme is a significant material consideration. The evidence base confirms that sites in the Rochdale Township can help to meet a Boroughwide need. The delivery of modern, fit-for-purpose homes for affordable rent by a respected affordable housing provider is a significant benefit.
- 6.10 The application is accompanied by a suite of documents which detail the extent of the proposals and their effect on the surrounding built and natural environment. They demonstrate that there are no technical reasons to prevent the delivery of the scheme, subject to appropriate conditions. The resultant design and layout of the scheme will provide an attractive addition to the local street-scene and a high quality place to live.
- 6.11 We have shown that the development would be sustainable and meets the three dimensions of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) set out in paragraph 7 of NPPF. The proposals also accord with the development plan and as such, a presumption in favour should be applied and approved without delay in line with paragraph 11 of the Framework.
- 6.12 For the reasons above and those discussed in the accompanying documents submitted alongside the application, we believe there is an overwhelming case to grant permission.



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