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PLANNING STATEMENT

PLANNING STATEMENT FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM B8 (GENERAL WAREHOUSE AND STORAGE WITH OFFICES) TO CLASS E(A) (DISPLAY OR RETAIL SALE OF GOODS, OTHER THAN HOT FOOD) FOR MEGARETAILER LIMITED AT PRINCESS HOUSE, PRINCESS STREET, ROCHDALE.

1. Introduction

This planning statement is submitted in support of an application for the change of use of the existing B8 general warehouse and storage facility with offices at Princess House, Princess Street, Rochdale, to Class E(a) retail use. The proposed development is intended to support Megaretailer Limited in establishing a bulk retail outlet offering discounted clearance lines, which will provide affordable products to the local community.

2. Proposed Development

The proposal seeks to convert the main warehouse section of the building into a retail unit, allowing members of the public to purchase goods in bulk or through multi-buy deals at cost-effective prices. The business will stock a range of essential household goods, including:

- Toiletries
- Soft drinks and confectionery
- Snacks
- Alcohol (subject to an alcohol licence currently under consideration)

The store will operate seven days a week, with the following opening hours:

- Monday to Saturday: 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM (regulated trading hours)

A small portion of the warehouse will remain inaccessible to the public and will be designated for goods-in and stock holding. All stock replenishment activities, including forklift operations and vehicle deliveries, will take place outside of public opening hours to ensure customer safety and minimize any disruption.

3. Compliance with Rochdale MBC Planning Policies

The proposal complies with relevant planning policies of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, including the adopted Core Strategy (2016) and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The site is located within a designated Mixed Employment Zone, where policies support a range of employment-generating uses subject to appropriate justification.

- **Policy E1 – Establishing Thriving Town, District, and Local Centres (Core Strategy):** While edge-of-centre, the proposal complements the retail hierarchy by serving the local catchment without undermining the vitality or viability of Rochdale Town Centre. A sequential test has demonstrated that no preferable in-centre sites are available or suitable.
- **Policy EC2 – Creating Vibrant Employment Areas:** The change of use will retain employment opportunities while introducing a business model that enhances affordability for local residents.
- **Saved Policy EC/3 – Mixed Employment Zones (UDP):** Within designated Mixed Employment Zones, alternative uses to B1, B2, and B8 can be supported where they do not compromise the primary employment function of the area. The proposed retail use is compatible with surrounding commercial activity, will not undermine the employment character of the zone, and brings a vacant/underused site back into productive use. It is expected to generate equivalent or greater employment density than the previous warehouse use.
- **Policy E2 – Increasing Jobs and Prosperity (Rochdale Core Strategy):** The proposal supports economic diversification by introducing a Class E(a) retail use that maintains employment opportunities while encouraging the reuse of an existing commercial building. This aligns with the policy aim of supporting new forms of economic activity and job creation across the borough, particularly through the reuse of brownfield land.
- **Policy P3 – Improving Design and Image (Core Strategy):** The external refurbishment and internal adaptation of the existing unit will improve the site's visual presence, enhance its usability, and support better integration within the surrounding built environment.
- **Policy T2 – Improving Accessibility (Core Strategy):** The site is well-located in relation to existing pedestrian, cycle and public transport networks, supporting sustainable patterns of movement. The proposal will encourage local trips and help reduce reliance on longer-distance car journeys.

4. Community Benefits and Social Impact

Megaretailer Limited is committed to supporting the local community by working with Rochdale Council to explore potential pricing concessions for vulnerable groups, including:

- Families in need of financial support
- Low-income individuals
- Students
- Local food banks

By offering bulk purchase options and multi-buy deals, the business aims to provide cost-effective shopping solutions, addressing affordability concerns within the community.

5. Transport and Accessibility The site is well-connected via public transport, with bus services operating along Princess Street and linking to Rochdale town centre. The change of use is unlikely to generate significant additional traffic impacts beyond existing warehouse operations. Adequate parking and loading facilities exist to support customer visits and logistical operations.

6. Conclusion

This planning statement demonstrates that the proposed change of use from B8 to Class E(a) is appropriate for Princess House, Princess Street, Rochdale. The proposal aligns with Rochdale MBC's planning policies and will deliver economic and social benefits by providing affordable retail goods to the community. The operational plan ensures safety, efficiency, and minimal disruption, making this an ideal use for the site.