

SITE OF FORMER WEST STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, WEST STREET, ROCHDALE

DEVELOPMENT OF THREE PAIRS OF SEMI-DETACHED HOUSES

PLANNING STATEMENT

APRIL 2023



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 This statement is provided on behalf of Rochemont Ltd with regard to the planning application submitted in respect of the regeneration of the vacant brownfield land on West Street in Rochdale for a residential development of three pairs of semi-detached houses.
- 1.02 The application is a resubmission of a previous proposal ref 22/00676/FUL which the Council refused in December 2022, and serves to address the reasons for refusal.
- 1.03 This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application documents which are as follows:
- Application Form and Certificates
 - Existing and Proposed Scheme Design including Landscaping
 - Drainage Strategy
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement
 - Desk Study for Contamination, Landfill Gas and Geotechnical Issues
 - CIL Form
 - Crime Impact Statement

2 THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.01 The previously developed site is 0.1 hectares of vacant previously developed land and is edged red in the aerial view on the cover of this statement. The land has become overgrown in recent years with scrub and self-seeded trees, as can be observed in the views of the site looking south east and looking north east which are provided below at Figure 1.

Figure 1: Street Views of the Site



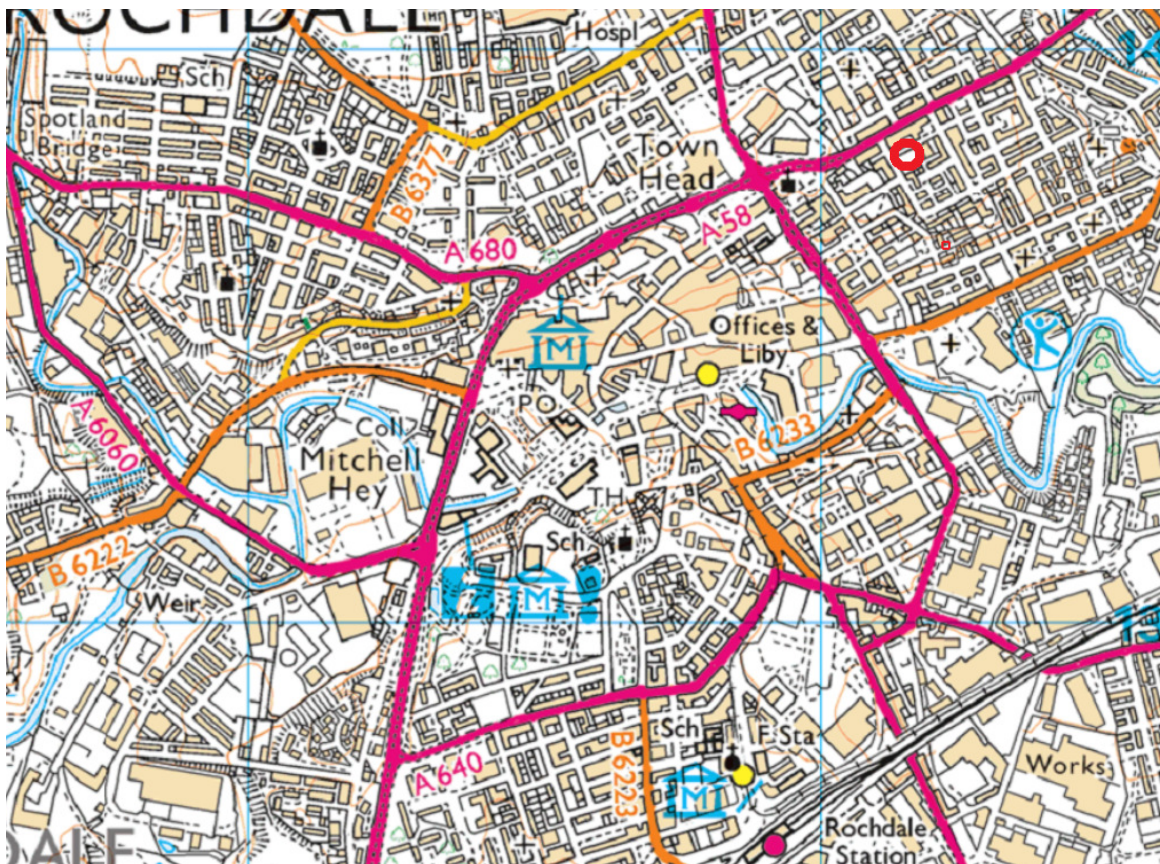
View looking south east



View looking north east

- 2.02 The site is allocated in the Rochdale Core Strategy as being located within the predominantly residential area and stands amidst dense housing comprised primarily of terraced housing interspersed by some semi-detached and detached dwellings. The site has further waste ground to the rear (south) and is abutted by Buckley Street to the north and West Street to the west, with a hardstanding to the east beyond which lies the Baptist Church.
- 2.03 The site is set within a sustainable and accessible location, as it is close by to local amenities and sources of frequent public transport. The position of the site is denoted by a red circle on the plan at Figure 2 below, demonstrating its close proximity to the town centre which is a short walk to the south west.

Figure 2: Position of the Site



3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.01 The site was granted outline planning consent ref 12/D55453 on 14 June 2012 for the development of six dwellings with the permission including the matters of access and siting, with scale, appearance and landscaping reserved.
- 3.02 An extract from the 2012 approved layout plan is provided below at Figure 3.

Figure 3: Extract from the 2012 Consent



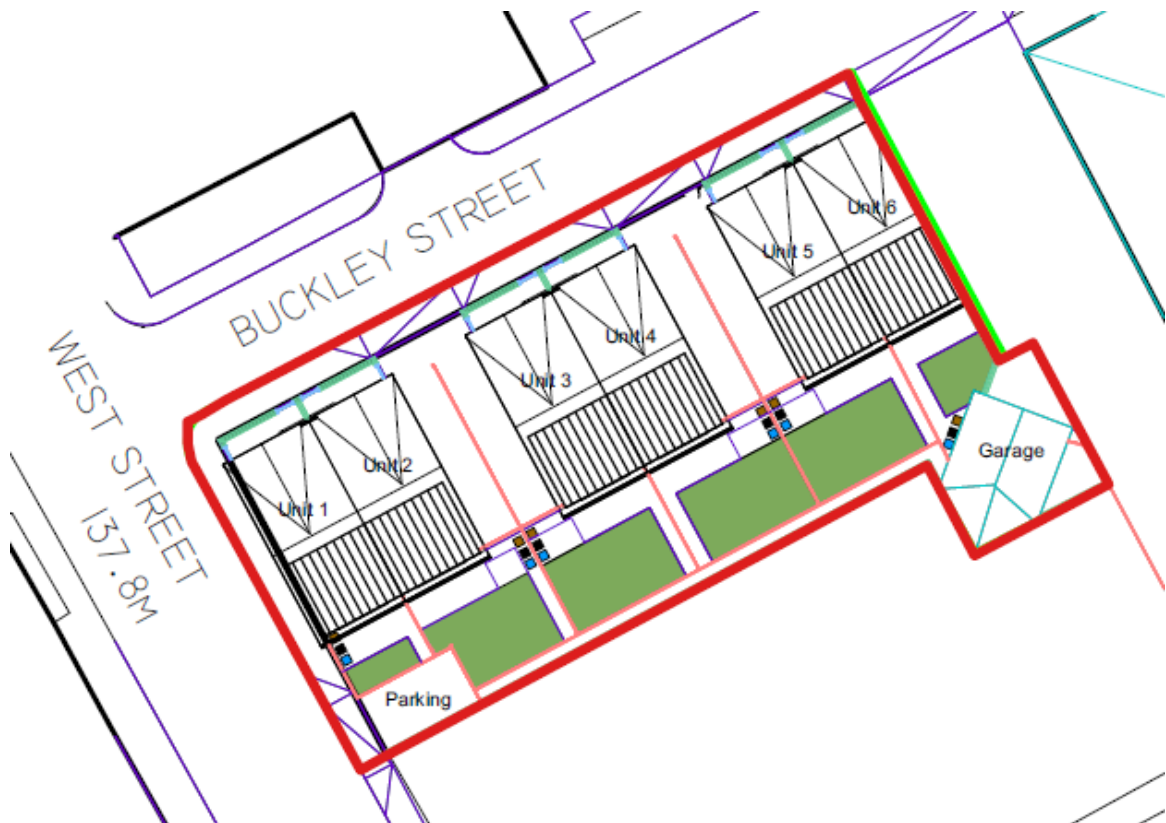
- 3.03 More recently, planning application ref 22/00676/FUL sought consent for the erection of three pairs of four-storey semi-detached dwellings with associated landscaping and boundary treatments. The application was refused on 14 December 2022 for the four reasons set out in italics on the following page of this statement.

1. *By reason of its siting, scale and design, the proposed development would not conform to the typical pattern of the surrounding area, which would not complement the existing streetscene, appearing as incongruous additions and constituting overdevelopment, contrary to the visual amenity aims of policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.*
2. *By reason of its siting, scale and design, the proposed development would unacceptably encroach on the side windows of no. 8 Buckley Street, becoming an unduly overbearing structure and severely restricting light and outlook, and would have an unacceptable impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties to the rear by reason of the proposed roof terraces. Furthermore, the limited outdoor amenity space proposed for Unit 1 and Unit 6 and would result in an unsatisfactory level of occupier amenity. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the residential amenity aims of policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.*
3. *The proposal allows for an inadequate means of access to the parking provision for Unit 6, and would therefore not provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking to this dwellinghouse, in conflict with policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.*
4. *The proposed development would result in the loss of one tree which makes a positive contribution to the street scene, with no replacement tree planting proposed in mitigation. The proposed development would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area, in conflict with policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.*

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.01 The proposal seeks planning approval for the regeneration of the site for three pairs of semi-detached houses, each of which accommodate four bedrooms with parking provided on side driveways (other than Units 1 and 6) and amenity space at the rear.
- 4.02 The resubmitted scheme seeks to address the 2022 refusal reasons by reverting back to follow the principles of the previously approved scheme of 2012 with a very similar layout being proposed as shown below at Figure 4.

Figure 4: Extract from the Proposed Layout



- 4.03 The scale and appearance of the proposed dwellings is provided in the submitted plans, including 3D visuals to depict their high quality of design as included in the extract at Figure 5.

Figure 5: Visual of the Proposed Front Elevations



5 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.01 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.02 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of July 2021 sets out a commitment to achieving sustainable development at Paragraph 7, with Paragraph 8 establishing that there are three overarching objectives, namely:
- Economic – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - Social – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;
and
 - Environmental – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 5.03 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF confirms that the three identified objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the objectives.

- 5.04 Section 5 of the NPPF 'Delivering a sufficient supply of homes' stresses at Paragraph 60 the importance of boosting the supply of homes by ensuring that a sufficient amount and variety of land comes forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed, and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. Paragraph 69 recognises 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.
- 5.05 Section 12 of the NPPF confirms at Paragraph 126 that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 5.06 It is firmly considered by the applicant that the scheme represents exactly the type of redevelopment of a brownfield site within a sustainable location which is encouraged by the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

6 LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

The Adopted Development Plan

6.01 The current planning framework at a local level utilised by Rochdale Borough Council is comprised of the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) of June 2006 alongside the more recent Core Strategy (CS) of October 2016.

6.02 As the site stands within an urban residential area, the following policies are considered to be of most relevance to the scheme:

CS Policy C1 'Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places'

CS Policy P3 'Improving design of new development'

CS Policy T2 'Improving accessibility'

CS Policy DM1 'General development requirements'

CS Policy G6 'Enhancing green infrastructure'

6.03 A brief summary of the aims and objectives of these policies is provided below.

CS Policy C1 'Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places'

6.04 This policy recognises that providing the right amount of homes in the right places will widen housing choice, attract and retain residents, create attractive, safe and successful neighbourhoods and support regeneration and increase prosperity. The policy also seeks to maximise the potential of previously developed land wherever possible.

CS Policy P3 'Improving design of new development'

6.05 Policy P3 requires new developments to adhere to high standards of design, and establishes a number of design principles which should be adhered to wherever relevant.

CS Policy T2 'Improving accessibility'

- 6.06 This general policy aims to locate development to minimise the need to travel by car and the number and the length of car trips made to access local amenities.

CS Policy DM1 'General development requirements'

- 6.07 Policy DM1 expects that all development proposals to adhere to a number of criteria, including that they: are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area; are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents/users; do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy; mitigate against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation or inadequate access, where such mitigation is identified as being necessary; and provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location. The subject scheme has been designed to take account of all these requirements.

CS Policy G6 'Enhancing green infrastructure'

- 6.08 This policy expects development proposals to avoid the loss of existing urban greenspace or features such as trees, unless suitable alternative provision is made, it has limited value, and its development or change of use will help to meet other sustainability or local regeneration objectives. The benefits of the proposed development of the site in a sustainable location are of sufficient merit to address the requirements of Policy G6.
- 6.09 In addition to the above adopted policies, the scheme has been prepared to take account of the relevant supplementary planning documents (SPDs) adopted by the Council, including 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' of June 2016, 'Residential Design Guide' of September 2009 and the 'Urban Design Guide' of September 2007.

7 ANALYSIS

- 7.01 In essence, the brownfield site stands in a sustainable location and seeks to provide an appropriate residential use. As such, the development is encouraged by planning policies at both a national and local level.
- 7.02 The 2012 consent established the principle of the residential redevelopment of the site for six dwellings with the layout indicating three pairs of semi-detached houses, a form of development which is carried through into the current application.
- 7.03 Although planning policies have evolved in the intervening years including the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2016 and the evolving versions of the NPPF which is now in its fourth issue, the aims and objectives remain the same: to make the most efficient use of previously developed land in accessible locations and to boost the housing supply for the benefit of the wider population. Accordingly, the principle of the proposed redevelopment remains firmly acceptable as the development accords with the relevant local and national planning policies.
- 7.04 The resubmission has been prepared to address the Council's previous concerns as set out in their reasons for refusal of December 2022 when determining the previous application ref 22/00676/FUL. The key elements in each of the four reasons can be summarised as:
- 1) non-conforming with the existing pattern/scale and impact on the street scene
 - 2) impact on adjacent occupiers and lack of amenity space
 - 3) inadequate vehicular access for Unit 6
 - 4) loss of one tree and lack of replacement planting
- 7.05 Each of the above reasons is addressed as follows.

1) Non-conforming with the existing pattern and impact on the street scene

- 7.06 The character of the locality is such that there is no prevailing pattern of existing development, as demonstrated by the illustration included on the proposed plans to show the context of the area depicted below at Figure 6:

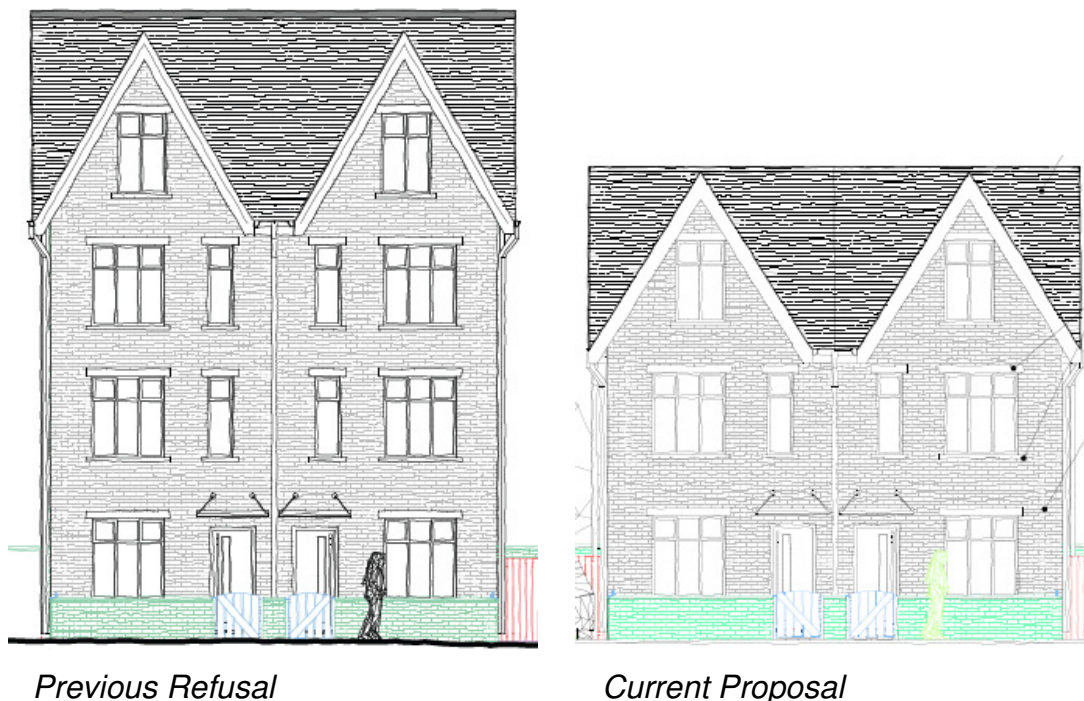
Figure 6: Pattern of Existing Development



- 7.07 As can be readily seen above, the vicinity contains an array of different property forms in regard to siting footprint and layout with traditional terraced houses being in the minority and much larger buildings standing to the east and across the road to the north. The housing development to the south contains semi-detached houses in the main, along with detached units. As such, it is considered that the scheme will be beneficial to the visual amenity of the area via the development of the currently vacant site with a high-quality scheme, which therefore adheres to the requirements of CS Policies DM1 and PS along with the NPPF.

- 7.08 In terms of scale, the proposal has been reduced from the previous refusal to provide houses which are effectively two-storeys in height along with roof space accommodation and will therefore blend with the existing housing in the area. The use of flat roofed dormers to the rear is also in-keeping. A comparison of the front elevations for the previous refusal and the current reduced scheme is shown below at Figure 7 to demonstrate the substantial reduction in scale.

Figure 7: Comparison of the Refused and Proposed Front Elevations



2) Impact on adjacent occupiers and lack of amenity space

- 7.09 The general layout of residential development within the town of Rochdale is that of terraced houses in close-knit patterns with windows distances in close proximity across roads and to the rear of houses. Extensions and alterations, such as rear projections into the already small rear yards and the addition of dormer windows in the rear and front roof slopes, are also commonplace which dictates that in many areas the housing stock does not benefit from substantial separation distances or large areas of amenity space.

- 7.10 Given this context, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to require the subject development to be unrealistically spacious and provide larger amenity areas for the units or have greater separation distances than are current prevalent in the locality. The amenity spaces provided for the new houses are accepted as being modest but are still larger than terraces in the area and are commensurate with semi-detached houses. The nature of the plot with its limited depth serves to further prevent any atypical larger-scale garden depths.
- 7.11 The second reason for refusal also references the previous roof terraces as a factor against that proposal as it would serve to impact on the privacy of adjacent occupiers. Accordingly, these terraces have been removed as illustrated in the comparison of the refused and proposed rear elevations of the houses depicted below at Figure 8 and it is considered that this along with the reduction in height taken in the overall planning balance, ensures that the revised scheme adheres to CS Policy DM1, the Council's SPD and the NPPF.

Figure 8: Comparison of the Refused and Proposed Rear Elevations



3) Inadequate vehicular access for Unit 6

- 7.12 The third reason for refusal used by the Council is somewhat peculiar, as the access to the garage provided for Unit 6 is almost identical to that previously approved in 2012, as shown below at Figure 9 in a comparison of the approved and proposed layouts:

Figure 9: Comparison of Approved and Proposed Layouts



- 7.13 Given the above, it is not considered that any further revisions to the scheme are required, as the proposal satisfies the requirements of CS Policies T2 and DM1, along with the NPPF.

4) Loss of one tree and lack of replacement planting

- 7.14 The current tree at the site is self-seeded and of a low-quality amenity value which is not deemed worthy of protection via a Tree Preservation Order. Accordingly, its loss for the beneficial redevelopment of previously developed land in a sustainable location should take priority in the overall planning considerations, especially as the proposed scheme indicates tree planting along the rear (south) boundary which will be secured via condition. The development therefore satisfies CS Policy G6 and the NPPF.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.15 At a national level, Paragraph 7 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with Paragraph 8 establishing the three key issues comprised of economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 7.16 Economic objective - the proposal will be developed through private investment which will create direct, indirect and catalytic economic benefits in the local area through new jobs in construction, wage spend locally and purchasing of materials. The economic benefits from the proposal are therefore demonstrated in regard to sustainability and should be afforded significant weight.
- 7.17 Social objective - the scheme for new development on the site assists with the well-being of the area, and the social role of sustainable development therefore strongly supports the development. The scheme as proposed is the most contextually appropriate solution for the site, thereby complying with the aims of the NPPF.
- 7.18 Environmental objective - the overall layout, design and appearance of the scheme is to a high quality. The erection of a well-designed scheme at the site therefore constitutes sustainable development which is encouraged by the NPPF.
- 7.19 On the basis of the above, the development of the site would be wholly compliant with the aims and objectives of the NPPF which confirms an acceptance of development within an urban setting which contributes positively, with Paragraphs 60 and 69 recognising and encouraging the contribution that can be made to housing numbers by the redevelopment of small-scale sites, and with Paragraph 124 encouraging the creation of high-quality development.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.01 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework, along with the requirements of the policies of the Rochdale Core Strategy and the Council's SPD.
- 8.02 The granting of permission for the scheme is consequently entirely in accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as the proposal is in line with the development plan.
- 8.03 The changes made to the scheme serve to address the four reasons for refusal utilised by the Council for the previous application, and effectively reverts back largely to the scale and layout of the previous approval at the site for three pairs of appropriately scaled semi-detached houses, which will result in the beneficial regeneration of previously developed land in a sustainable location.
- 8.04 It is therefore trusted that the Council can look favourably on the resubmission, but if any issues are identified or it is considered that further information is required, the Council is requested to contact the agent for the application at an early stage to allow for proactive discussions to take place.

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