



National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 25-01) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Bruce Parker (Head of Planning & Development)
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North-West Region
National Highways
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To: Rochdale Council (FAO Ryan Grant)
development.management@rochdale.gov.uk

CC: transportplanning@dft.gov.uk
spatialplanning@nationalhighways.co.uk

Council's Reference: 25/00418/OUT

Location: Land Bound To The North By Brightley Brook, Pilsworth Fisheries, Pilsworth Road & Heywood Distribution Park; The West By Whittle Brook; The East By Birch Industrial Park & Agricultural Fields; And The South By The M62 Corridor.

Proposal: Application for outline planning permission (all matters reserved) for a national-scale employment development, comprising Storage & Distribution (Use Class B8) and Industrial (Use Classes B2, E(g)(ii) and E (g)(iii)) uses (including, but not limited to, Logistics, Manufacturing Processes and Data Centres), with supporting ancillary uses including Hotel (Use Class C1), Commercial, Business & Service (Uses Class E (a-g)), Education (Use Class F1(a)), Local Community (Use Class F2(a-c) uses, Sui Generis uses (in accordance with the Uses Schedule), and associated demolition works, landscaping, drainage, ecological enhancements, highway works, cycleway and footpath linkages and other ancillary infrastructure.

National Highways Ref: NH/25/11021

Referring to the consultation on a planning application dated 20 May 2025 referenced above, in the vicinity of the M62 and M66 motorways that form part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

~~a) offer no objection (see reasons at Annex A);~~

- ~~b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – National Highways recommended Planning Conditions & reasons);~~
- c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);
- ~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see reasons at Annex A)~~

Highways Act 1980 Section 175B is not relevant to this application.¹

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority propose not to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Affecting Trunk Roads\) Direction 2018](#), via transportplanning@dft.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to PlanningNW@nationalhighways.co.uk.

This response and all comments outlined herein are made in respect of planning matters only in National Highways' position as a statutory planning consultee, and does not confer any proprietary rights nor amount to the giving or refusal of consent, assent, approval, or awareness of or by National Highways in or of any other aspects or matters (including, but not limited to, the use of property belonging to National Highways). If anyone wishes for National Highways to consider any aspects which do not relate to planning submissions, they should call our contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Signature:



Date: 25 July 2025

Name: Adam Johnson

Position: Spatial Planner

National Highways
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M1 2WD

¹ Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

Annex A **National Highways' assessment of the proposed development**

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

National Highways has been consulted by Rochdale Council on an outline planning application (Ref. 25/00418/OUT) (all matters reserved) for a national-scale employment development on part of the Northern Gateway (NG) site allocation JPA1.1, comprising:

- Up to 600,000sqm of employment floorspace, comprising:
 - B2, E(g)ii and E(g)(iii) totalling 180,000sqm
 - B8 (including Data Centres) totalling 420,000sqm
- Potential supporting uses of up to 5,000sqm

As part of the suite of planning application documents, a Transport Assessment (TA) has been produced by Tetra Tech. The TA and supporting information have been reviewed by WSP on behalf of National Highways, with substantive comments provided to the Planning Authorities. Additionally, the transport modelling outputs from the applicant have been reviewed independently by consultants at AECOM.

Within our review, a number of key themes have been highlighted where further information will be required of the applicant. These themes include:

- The vision for the site;
- Highway safety;
- Place for Everyone recommendations;
- Development access;
- Transport model;
- Policy on/off matters;
- Approach to assessment;
- Operational assessment;
- Infrastructure, mitigation and planning; and
- Travel Plan.

In addition, National Highways awaits the model input files to allow for full scrutiny of the parameters which have informed the TA. It is anticipated this will be provided by the applicant imminently, which will allow National Highways to provide an updated response to the Local Planning Authority.

Given the outstanding matters which are to be addressed by the applicant, National Highways recommends that the application is placed on hold until such a time as all issues have been resolved.

To support timely decision making, National Highways will continue to work with the applicant, Transport for Greater Manchester and the Planning Authorities of both Bury and Rochdale Councils to ensure that development in this location can be facilitated whilst ensuring that the highway impacts of this site are sufficiently mitigated to maintain the safe operation of the SRN.

Recommended Non-Approval

It is recommended that the application should not be approved until 31 October 2025. If further information is provided by the applicant and their consultants to address the themes identified to the satisfaction of National Highways the Holding Recommendation will be reviewed in advance.

Reason:

To ensure the continued safe operation of the Strategic Road Network.

Standing advice to the local planning authority

The Climate Change Committee's [2022 Report to Parliament](#) notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 77 and 110 prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 109 and 115 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up as part of a vision-led approach.

Moreover, the carbon reduction hierarchy (avoid-switch-improve) as set out in clause 4.3 of PAS2080:2023 promotes approaches and measures to minimise resource consumption and thereby reduce carbon emissions.

These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.