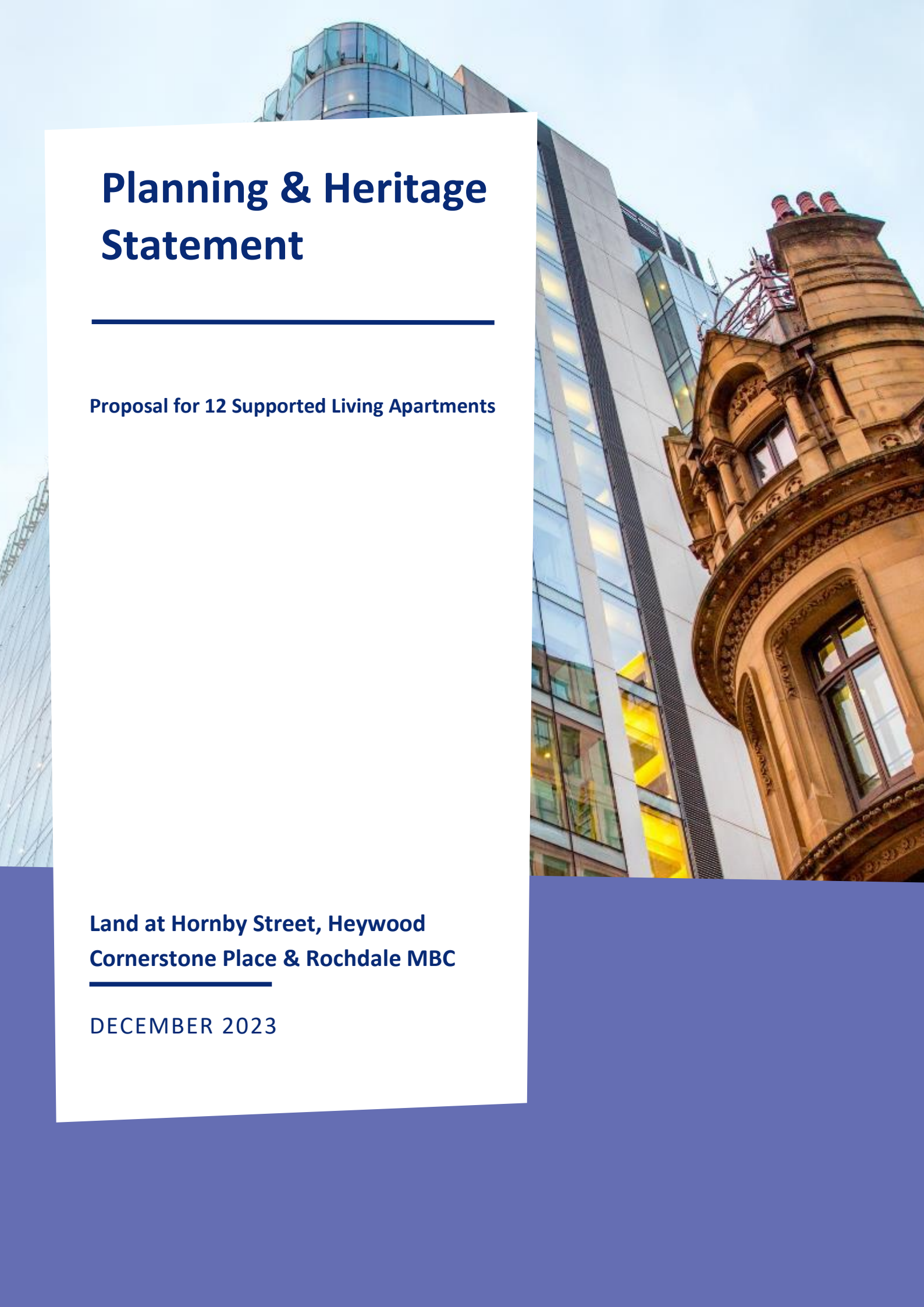




Planning & Heritage Statement

Proposal for 12 Supported Living Apartments

**Land at Hornby Street, Heywood
Cornerstone Place & Rochdale MBC**

DECEMBER 2023

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Version:	Submission
Date of Issue:	December 2023

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement accompanies a full planning application for the erection of an two-storey block comprising 12 supported living apartments for young people in need.
- 1.2 The proposed development includes associated landscaping, car parking and access off Hornby Street in Heywood.
- 1.3 The site consists of 0.1ha of vacant grassed verge opposite Harwood Park Primary School, to the southeast of Heywood Town Centre.
- 1.4 The application is submitted on behalf of Cornerstone Place, a reputable social enterprise working with Rochdale Council to provide residential accommodation across the borough.
- 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. Given the proximity of the scheme to a non-designated heritage asset, this Statement also covers heritage matters. 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 Assessment
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Drainage Strategy & Flood Risk Assessment
 - Energy and Climate Change Adaptation Statement
 - Phase 1 Habitat Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
 - Site Investigations
 - Transport Statement
- 1.8 The plans submitted to support the application include:
 - Location Plan (Rev P01) (Ref: 23-031-3000)

- Site Plan (Rev P03) (Ref: 23-031-02)
- Proposed Floor Plans (Rev P05) (Ref: 23-031-11)
- Proposed Elevations (Rev P05) (Ref: 23-031-21)

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 a two-storey apartment block comprising 12 one-bedroom supported living apartments with ancillary staff room, access, and open space.”***
- 2.3 The proposal comprises a two-storey block fronting Hornby Street with pedestrian access to the front and rear. Ground floor apartments have a front door leading on to the street, whereas the first floor apartments are reached via a shared stairwell behind a communal front door.
- 2.4 Ground floor apartments have a yard to the rear of the property with access to an alley behind Hornby Street. Cycle stores and bin stores will be kept here, allowing for curbside drop-off when required.
- 2.5 Internally, each of the apartments comprise between 37.5 and 40 sqm GIFA including a living room, kitchen-diner, WC with shower, bedroom and store facilities. Ground floor ancillary space for staff is proposed on the southern elevation of the block.
- 2.6 The layout of the block comprises the filling in of a void of built development along Hornby Street. This will have a terraced appearance, in keeping with the surrounding built form.
- 2.7 The proposed materials offer a three-tone colour scheme: red, buff and grey brick with green and blue wooden doors and white uPVC windows. The block will be roofed in traditional slate effect tiles and PV arrays.
- 2.8 Landscaping and ecological enhancement for the site includes new planters on the front of the dwellings for flowers and shrubs, with new secure ‘yard’ areas to the rear and bat & bird boxes integrated on the external walls of the new buildings.
- 2.9 The proposed boundary treatments include a timber fence with a timber gate (2100mm) around the perimeter, timber panel fencing (1800mm) between rear yards and half height metal railings along the frontage (1200mm).
- 2.10 All the apartments will provide designated supported accommodation for young people aged between 18-25 with a housing need, at risk of homelessness, and / or other specialist needs. The properties are to be owned by Rochdale MBC and managed by Centrepoint Place.

- 2.11 Occupancy of the apartments will be restricted. Referrals will be led by the Local Authority and will be based on meeting specialist criteria for those with a defined need. Those who have no other available accommodation options will be prioritised.
- 2.12 The facility will have trained staff visiting and on-site management with two full-time equivalent employees and a part-time manager covering the facility. A multi-agency team would also provide support to residents with specialist needs along with night support assistants.

3 Site and Surroundings

- 3.1 The 0.1 ha site consists of vacant land off Hornby Street in Heywood, approximately 250m to the south of the Town Centre.
- 3.2 This consists of a small parcel of grass verge enclosed by a mix of concrete slab fencing and closed board wooden fencing. There are no trees or shrubs on the site and it gently slopes to the west.
- 3.3 From historical records, the land appears to have not been previously developed. This is despite a number of industries and associated uses (reservoirs) being located nearby during the turn of the 18th Century.
- 3.4 The immediate surroundings of the site include residential development to the west and north (rear of Stanley Street) and south (rear of King Street). Open space and Harwood Park Primary School are situated opposite the site to the east.
- 3.5 Rochdale MBC has confirmed in discussions with the applicant that the adjacent school is a non-designated heritage asset. This will be discussed in the Analysis section.
- 3.6 Heywood Town Centre is located a short walk from the site, including a mix of community and retail uses off Church Street and York Street. This includes medical facilities and dental practice at the Phoenix Centre within a 250m walk.
- 3.7 Hornby Street is accessible off Rochdale Road (A58) approximately 300m to the north. This connects the area to Bury in the west and Rochdale to the northeast. Manchester Road (A6046) is located approximately 500m to the east, which connects to Junction 19 of the M62 nearby.
- 3.8 In terms of public transport connectivity, bus stops are located nearby on Church Street and Manchester Street. Regular services stopping here connect the area to Bury, Bolton, Manchester and Middleton.

Local Plan Designation

- 3.9 The site is unallocated land within the urban area in the adopted UDP Proposals Map. Figure 1 below illustrates this and is discussed in more detail in the Policy section of this report.

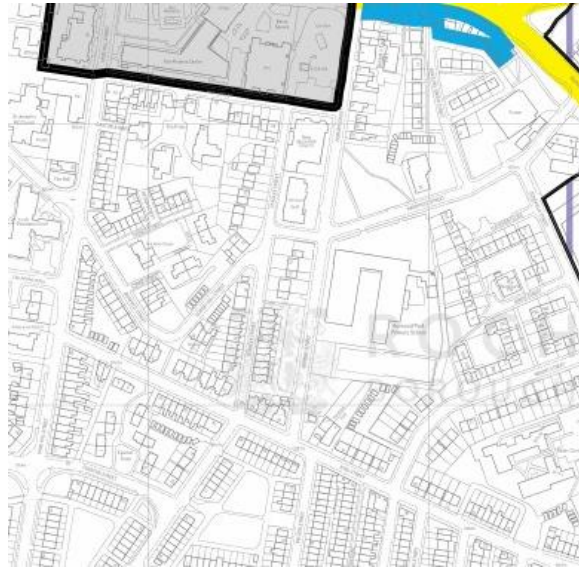


Figure 1. UDP Proposals Map Extract

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** (2023) 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 60 refers to the Government's objective of ***"significantly boosting the supply of homes"***.
- 4.5 Paragraph 62 expects the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups to be assessed and reflected in planning policies.
- 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 120 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"*.
- 4.8 Paragraph 124 states that *"Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account...promoting regeneration and change."*
- 4.9 Whilst Chapter 16 of the NPPF discusses heritage assets in detail, paragraph 203 specifically refers to non-designated heritage assets. It states that *"the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*

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 As stated in the previous section of this Statement, the site is unallocated land within the defined urban area (Policy G/D/1) in the associated Proposals Map.
- 4.12 This saved policy seeks to ensure that new development is concentrated within the urban area in order to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside.

Rochdale Core Strategy (2016)

- 4.13 The Core Strategy provides the over-arching strategic policies for the Borough. Policy SP2 provides the spatial strategy, identifying that development will be focussed in the urban areas including Regeneration Areas.
- 4.14 Policy SP3 designates the Regeneration Areas within the Borough. It confirms that the site is situated in Inner Heywood, a Regeneration Area. This is illustrated in Figure 6 of the Core Strategy, an extract of which is shown below:



Figure 2. Spatial Strategy Key Diagram Extract

- 4.15 Given the site's location within the Heywood Regeneration Area, Policy SP3/H specifically applies. This states that the key to transforming Heywood is *"delivering new homes in and around the town centre to widen housing choice (Policies C1, C2)"*.
- 4.16 Policy C2 also relates to Regeneration Areas. It states that *"We will focus regeneration and the delivery of new homes in the following areas: 1. Central Heywood (includes the town centre), where we will: a. Deliver additional dwellings for sale and rent to widen housing choice in the area; and b. Redevelop vacant sites and incompatible employment uses, particularly in Back o'th' Moss and south of the town centre."*
- 4.17 As the homes will provide supported living accommodation for homeless young people, Policy C6 applies. This confirms that the Council will provide a mix of housing tenures to meet every category of need.
- 4.18 Given the proximity of a non-designated heritage asset, Policy P2 (2a) applies to this proposal. This confirms that the Council will protect heritage assets by *"Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings"*.
- 4.19 The following policies are also relevant to the proposal:
- Policy SO2 – Successful, Healthy Communities
 - Policy SO3 – Design, Image and Quality of Place
 - Policy SP2 – Spatial Strategy
 - Policy EM10 – Derelict Land
 - Policy C1 – Housing Delivery
 - Policy C3 – Housing Type
 - Policy P1 – Improving Image
 - 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

- 4.20 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)
 - Heywood Town Centre Masterplan (2019)

Evidence Base and Emerging Local Plan

Evidence Base

- 4.21 The 2019 **Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment** (SHMA) explains in paragraph 4.77 that *“all forms of homelessness have increased over the last five years. Homelessness is a complex issue and there are a variety of personal reasons why an individual or households might experience homelessness, including relationship breakdown, mental health issues, offending issues and substance misuse issues, but these are inter-related with wider housing and economic issues.”*
- 4.22 It states in paragraph 4.82 that *“From April 2018, local authorities have a statutory duty to prevent those who are threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless, by increasing prevention and relief activity and offering support for longer; those who are likely to become homeless within 56 days will be considered to be at threat of homelessness and so will be afforded a statutory prevention duty. This should lead to significantly higher levels of homelessness prevention and relief in Greater Manchester.”*
- 4.23 In terms of future supported housing need, paragraph 6.41 states that *“there will be a 4.2% increase in need for supported housing for single homeless people and a 4.3% increase in need for supported housing for other working age clients between 2015 and 2030”.*
- 4.24 The housing needs of particular groups is discussed in Chapter 6 of the SHMA. This states that there is no single agreed definition of ‘supported housing’, as it is an umbrella term that covers a great variety of provision. It clarifies that supported housing may be provided for a number of different client groups.

- 4.25 The SHMA estimates that there are 2,594 units of supported housing and housing for older people owned by Registered Providers in Rochdale.
- 4.26 The SHMA cross references government research which indicates that there will be a 4.2% increased need for supported housing for single homeless people and a 4.3% increase in need for supported housing for other working age clients between 2015 and 2030.
- 4.27 **The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)** released data in October 2023 confirming that homelessness has increased by 10.5% since 2021/22. Manchester had the highest level of homelessness in England (5.6 householders per 1,000).
- 4.28 Shelter has recently published research in December on **Homelessness in England 2023**. This confirms that on any given night there are 309,000 people who are homeless, or 1 in 182 people.
- 4.29 There are 18,030 people who are homeless and living in temporary accommodation arranged by the Council in the North West, 535 living in temporary accommodation arranged by them or homeless at home and a further 247 living on the street on a given night.
- 4.30 On a local level, there are 499 people living in temporary accommodation arranged by Rochdale Council, five individuals are estimated to be sleeping on the streets on a given night, and 247 children are living in temporary accommodation arranged by the Council. There is a total of 504 homeless people in Rochdale, or 1 in 444.

Emerging Local Plan

- 4.31 The Council have consulted on a draft **Site Allocations Development Plan Document** to sit alongside the Core Strategy. 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.
- 5.2 The development plan for Heywood consists of saved policies of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006) and the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016).
- 5.3 The site is undesignated land within the Urban Area in the UDP and also within Inner Heywood, a Regeneration Area in the Core Strategy.
- 5.4 The UDP confirms that new development should be directed to the existing urban areas to encourage regeneration and to protect the countryside.
- 5.5 The proposal complies with Core Strategy policies relating to the Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2 and SP3) by prioritising previously developed land within key regeneration areas including Heywood. These priorities comprise the delivery of new homes to widen housing choice and broaden the appeal of the area.
- 5.6 Elsewhere in the Core Strategy, policies C1, C2, C3 and C4 of the Core Strategy variously seek to prioritise housing on under-used land (80% target), focussing on regeneration areas. The proposals comprehensively complies with these aims and should be supported in principle by the Council.
- 5.7 It will be demonstrated in the next section of this report that the homes will meet a defined specialist need for supported accommodation for vulnerable young people, in accordance with Policy C6 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.8 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 60, 120 and 124 of the NPPF. Substantial weight should therefore be applied to this proposal in accordance with the Framework.
- 5.9 The proposals will complement the regeneration of Heywood in the Core Strategy. The inherent benefits of the proposals including the efficient re-use of previously developed land in a sustainable location near to shops, services and public transport. This is in accordance with the Heywood Town Centre SPD, the development plan and national policy guidance.

- 5.10 For the above reasons, we believe that the principle of development is acceptable on this site.

Specialist Housing Need

- 5.11 The Core Strategy confirms that a suitable mix of high-quality housing to meet a variety of tenure and needs across the Borough.
- 5.12 The supported living apartments will be let below social rent levels, to young people with urgent accommodation needs. This includes individuals with a range of historical experiences.
- 5.13 Core Strategy Policy C6 (c) states that the Council will endeavour to provide *“an appropriate number of good quality and affordable homes with a mix of tenures in areas of greatest need.”*
- 5.14 Whilst the proposed development falls under the 15-dwelling threshold for the 7.5% affordable housing requirement to apply, as set out in Core Strategy Policy C4, it will nonetheless make a significant contribution towards affordability in the Borough.
- 5.15 We have established that the local and national evidence base points towards record numbers of homeless. This equates to a 10.5% increase in the last 2 years and there are 499 people living in temporary accommodation arranged by Rochdale Council. This figure is 15 times higher in Manchester.
- 5.16 Further supported accommodation is required to help the growing number of people who have found themselves homeless over the past 2 years.
- 5.17 The level of this need is set out in the Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2019). This states that *“there will be a 4.2% increase in need for supported housing for single homeless people and a 4.3% increase in need for supported housing for other working age clients between 2015 and 2030”*.
- 5.18 The SHMA also estimates that there are 2,594 units of supported housing and housing for older people owned by Registered Providers in Rochdale. If the need for supporting housing is going to be met, then over 100 additional units will be required before 2030 in the Borough.
- 5.19 The proposed apartments will ensure that Rochdale MBC meet their statutory duty to prevent those who are threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. The proposals are therefore one of the key tools to increase prevention and offer relief, as advised in the sub-regional evidence base. This is a significant material consideration in favour of the application.
- 5.20 The proposal is also in accordance with national guidance, particularly paragraph 62 of NPPF, which requires LPAs to provide a sufficient size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups, including those who require supported living.

- 5.21 Occupancy of the apartments will be restricted. Referrals will be led by the Local Authority and will be based on meeting specialist criteria for those with a defined need. Those who have no other available accommodation options will be prioritised.
- 5.22 The facility will have trained staff visiting and on-site management with two full-time equivalent employees and a part-time manager covering the facility. A multi-agency team would also provide support to residents with specialist needs along with night support assistants.
- 5.23 In terms of the delivery, occupation and management of the supported living apartments, it is kindly requested that this is secured by a suitably worded planning condition.
- 5.24 Finally, it should be noted that Cornerstone Place are a reputable provider of supported living accommodation and have properties across the region for vulnerable people. This experience and reputation should give the Council confidence that the apartments will be managed and maintained to the highest standards.

Heritage Statement

- 5.25 It has been established through pre-application discussions that Rochdale MBC considers Harwood Park Primary School to be a non-designated heritage asset, or locally listed.
- 5.26 This is confirmed on the Council's website¹ which also states that these assets will be designated based on set criteria, including their architectural and historical significance. This criterion is stated to be in accordance with national policies and guidance.
- 5.27 Although the Council's website doesn't confirm the reasons for local listing, the response to the applicant during discussions stated that the reason for the local listing of the school is due to its *"architectural and communal interest"*.
- 5.28 Whilst the latter is not listed as criteria worth of local listing on the Council's website, it is accepted that the school may possess some civic interest which renders it worthy of being a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.29 The application and its proximity to the school must therefore be considered against paragraph 203 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy P2 (2).

¹ <https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/heritage-conservation/non-designated-heritage-assets/4>

- 5.30 The NPPF confirms that a “*a balanced judgement*” will be required, having regard to the harm of such assets. The Core Strategy states the aim to conserve and enhance heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings. This is clearly a less stringent test compared to the statutory protections afforded to listed buildings and offers decision makers a more balanced approach.



Figure 3. OS Map of Heywood Circa 1910

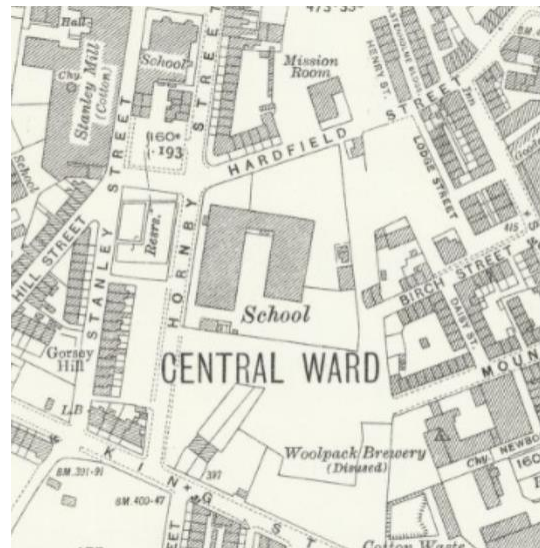


Figure 4. OS Map of Heywood Circa 1929

- 5.31 In terms of the history and significance of the school, this was built in 1914 according to a local historian² at www.heywoodhistory.com. The above OS plan excerpts appear to support this. This illustrates that the land was vacant in 1910 and was shown as developed later around 1929.
- 5.32 The development of ‘Council Schools’ in Heywood appears to have grown at the start of the 20th Century. The first Council School erected on Bamford Road in 1906. Others followed on Magdala Street, Regent Street and Heap Bridge.
- 5.33 Harwood Park was originally called ‘Central Council School’ when it opened. This is inscribed in sandstone to the front elevation of the building.
- 5.34 The building itself is a fair example of early 20th Century civic architecture, constructed with Accrington red brick and decorative sandstone headers, cills, keystones, soldier course, gibbs surrounds and small ionic columns. The addition of inappropriate white uPVC window glazing detracts from its appearance.

² <https://www.heywoodhistory.com/2016/06/schools.html>

- 5.35 The main elevation of the building is the two-storey frontage on to Hardfield Street. The frontage is broken up with the above decorative features and gable ended pediments with sandstone inscriptions.
- 5.36 Two single-storey wings run off this block, one along Hornby Street to the west and the other along the eastern boundary. Each wing consists of classrooms with two pitched roofs and a valley between, terminating with a single-storey gable ended building at either end. The Hornby Street elevation, which is slightly longer, is broken up by three gable ended pediments. These two wings have been filled in with an inappropriate modern extension with white cladding.
- 5.37 The wider grounds of the school comprises parking to the front, and playgrounds to the east and south. The original red-brick wall with sandstone detail and metal railings remains intact. There are inscriptions in the sandstone pillar for the previously separate boys entrance at the junction of Hardfield Street and Hornby Street. A further pillar for the girls and infants' entrances was removed in the early 2010s.
- 5.38 Whilst many of the original features remain of the 1910's Central Council School, there have been several examples of inappropriate additions and alterations which have removed some of its historic context. However, the building tells a story of Heywood's growth at the start of the 20th Century, including its civic buildings. It therefore is of some significance as a non-designated heritage asset, falling below the required architectural and historical importance for listing.
- 5.39 In terms of the setting, given the school was built in 1914 it would have been seen against a backdrop of new growth of housing and civic buildings expanding south from the Town Centre. Due to the adhoc layout of the industries that it replaced, the street layout is not coherent, although Hornby Street and Hardfield Street formed a legible vista to and from the school.
- 5.40 Over the remainder of the 20th Century many of the nearby plots alongside have been filled in, although voids remain with open space. Notably, there is a heavily treed area of open space opposite the main frontage of the school on Hardfield Street. However, the setting of the school has always been seen against a backdrop of built development on Hornby Street, and the construction of 1990s suburban housing opposite reinforces this view.
- 5.41 Ultimately, the development of a two-storey apartment block on land opposite the school will not harm the setting of the locally listed building. It would preserve its urban setting. The school was built in the 1910s to cater for growing needs, this was allied with urban growth to the south of the Town Centre. As such, the filling of this void on Hornby Street with a two-storey residential block is consistent with the underlying existence of the school.

- 5.42 We have demonstrated through this statement and the associated reports that the proposed development of the site would enhance the local area by removing a small, under-used parcel of open space and replacing it with a high-quality apartment block to meet specialist needs.
- 5.43 Should the Council disagree, the NPPF invites decision makers to apply a balanced view on the potential harm caused according to the significance of the asset. The school is a fair example of early 20th Century civic architecture, with some attractive features retained and some inappropriate alterations made. It does not meet the threshold of statutory listing.
- 5.44 The public benefits of the proposed development include meeting specialist housing needs for vulnerable people and the regeneration of a designated area. These benefits significantly outweigh any *perceived* harm to the setting of a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.45 As such, we believe that the proposals comply with paragraph 203 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy P2 (2) and can be supported on heritage grounds.

Development Management Considerations

- 5.46 A **Crime Impact Statement** has been produced by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to support this application. This confirms that security measures such as general boundary treatments, retained alleygates and defined defensible spaces to frontage are recommended. The single-storey roof should be designed to discourage scaling and access into and around the scheme should be controlled, including secure postal delivery arrangements. On the basis of addressing these concerns GMP would be happy to support the development.
- 5.47 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. Residential amenity is ensured with all spacing standards maintained to surrounding properties. The proposals therefore comply with Core Strategy Policy SO3, C3 and DM1.
- 5.48 A **Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment** has been carried out by QED Structures. This confirms that the site is located with Flood Zone 1 and has less than a 0.1% annual probability of flooding from rivers and seas. The area is at low to medium risk of surface water flooding. Mitigation shall include a hydrobrake, reducing runoff rates to a maximum of 1.1 L/S. Permeable

paving and oversized pipe system is also recommended by the Drainage Strategy. The proposals therefore comply with Core Strategy Policy G8, subject to appropriate planning conditions.

- 5.49 An **Energy and Climate Change Adaptation Statement** has been prepared by the Energy Counsel to support the application. This states that low and zero carbon emission technologies have been considered and it was deemed feasible to include passive improvements, a hot water heat pump and PV panels on the roof of the building. This would result in an overall improvement of 109% and 86% primary energy improvement over Building Regulations. The proposals therefore comply with Core Strategy Policies G1, G2 and G3 in relation to climate change, energy and renewables.
- 5.50 In terms of **Ecology**, a Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme has been carried out by Rachel Hacking Ecology. This confirms that the site is currently a small parcel of amenity grassland. A proportionate approach to enhancement has been agreed with Rochdale MBC due to the size of the site. Landscaping and ecological enhancement for the site includes new planters on the front of the dwellings for flowers and shrubs, with new secure 'yard' areas to the rear and bat & bird boxes integrated on the external walls of the new buildings. This is deemed to increase the botanical diversity of the site and is compliant with Core Strategy Policy G7.
- 5.51 **Site Investigations** in the form of a Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment and Coal Mining Risk Assessment have been prepared by Soiltechnics. This document confirms that the site has remained undeveloped and is comprised of shall made ground; natural superficial glaciofluvial deposits and Devensian till approximately 8-10m beneath the site, underlain by bedrock deposits of the Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation. Potential low/moderate risks from contamination have been identified with a moderate risk from ground gas migration associated with an off-site area of infilled ground. Further ground investigations are recommended to assess potential pollutant linkages from adjacent along with a geotechnical investigation, preliminary UXO Risk Assessment and Coal Mining Risk Assessment
- 5.52 A **Transport Statement** has been provided by SK Transport Planning. The proposals will have no material impact on the local highway network and ensures a safe living environment. Due to the specialist nature of the proposals, car parking and motor vehicle access is not required. However, 12 cycle parking spaces (100%) will be available to the rear of the apartments.
- 5.53 The accompanying documentation has successfully demonstrated that there are no technical reasons to prevent the delivery of the scheme, subject to appropriate conditions.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 5.54 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.
- 5.55 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. The operation of the facility will require the employment of two full-time equivalent employees and a part-time manager.
- 5.56 Housebuilding also delivers economic benefits for local authorities through financial receipts generated in the form of New Homes Bonus payments. The occupation of these apartments will allow residents to meet day-to-day needs locally, supporting local services and facilities. This increased trade is beneficial to ensuring the viability of Heywood Town Centre nearby.
- 5.57 In terms of the social objectives, we have demonstrated that there is an increased need for specialist housing for homeless people. AGMA evidence points to a 4.3% increase in need for supported housing for working age adults between 2015 and 2030. A step change in delivery is needed and significant weight should be given to the social benefits of the scheme. This will have innumerable and significant personal benefits to those living in the apartments.
- 5.58 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. The proposal will also avoid harm and enhance the setting of a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.59 Landscaping and ecological enhancement for the site includes new planters on the front of the dwellings for flowers and shrubs, with new secure 'yard' areas to the rear and bat & bird boxes integrated on the external walls of the new buildings.

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 undesignated land within the Urban Area in the UDP and also within Inner Heywood, a Regeneration Area in the Core Strategy. The proposals comply with the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy by prioritising land in a sustainable location within the key regeneration area of Inner Heywood.
- 6.3 The proposals are supported by the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 62 seeks to provide a mix of housing to meet different needs. Paragraph 120 (d) encourages Councils to promote and support the development of under-utilised land. The scheme is also supported by paragraph 124 in making efficient use of land and promoting regeneration.
- 6.4 Additionally, NPPF 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 69.
- 6.5 We have demonstrated that the national and local evidence base confirms that homelessness is at a record level. There has been a 10.5% increase in homelessness in the past 2 years with only 499 people provided with temporary living accommodation by Rochdale Council.
- 6.6 These apartments will provide modern, fit-for-purpose homes for below social rent levels by a specialist housing provider for vulnerable, homeless people with specialist needs. The provision of this complies with Policy C6 is a powerful material consideration in favour of this application.
- 6.7 The Heritage Statement incorporated within this report identifies that Harwood Park Primary School is a non-designated heritage asset. This was originally built as ‘Central Council School’ around 1914. The school possesses some architectural and historical significance, falling below the required threshold for statutory listing. The setting of the school has always been seen against a backdrop of built development on Hornby Street.
- 6.8 In summary, the proposals will not harm the setting of the school; it will enhance it. Regardless, NPPF encourages a balanced and proportionate view for decision makers, whereby substantial public benefits arising may outweigh any perceived harm to non-designated heritage assets.

- 6.9 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.
- 6.10 We have shown that the development would be sustainable and meets the three dimensions of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) set out in paragraph 8 of NPPF. Significant weight should be given to the social benefits of the scheme, particularly. This will have innumerable and significant personal benefits to those living in the apartments.
- 6.11 The proposals 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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