

Permission in Principle for the erection of up
to 5 dwellings

Land at Church Avenue, Middleton

Planning Statement

September 2024



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by LJG Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of Mr R Dearden in support of an application for Permission in Principle ('PiP') for the erection of up to 5 dwellings on land at Church Avenue in Middleton.
- 1.2 This Statement describes the application site, the proposed development and assesses its merits against the relevant up-to-date policies of the development plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and all other relevant material considerations.
- 1.3 It demonstrates that the principle of development is in accordance with the relevant general development management policies of the Rochdale Core Strategy, the strategic aims of Places for Everyone and also accords with Government policy and guidance as detailed within the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework').
- 1.4 Consequently, having regard to this and all material considerations, there is a compelling case for Permission in Principle to be granted without delay, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development at Paragraph 11(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises an undeveloped parcel of land located to the south of Church Avenue. To the north are existing dwellings, to the west is a colony of garages and to the east is currently open land, albeit now allocated to deliver mixed use development through the recently adopted Places for Everyone spatial plan.
- 2.2 The land measures circa 0.15 hectares in area and is bound by a combination of timber fencing and hedgerows. There is currently no vehicular access into the plot but the northern boundary immediately abuts Church Avenue and provides for an obvious point of entrance.



Figure 1 – site location

- 2.3 The site benefits from direct and walkable access to a number of local services which can be found a short distance away including shops, restaurants, places of worship, petrol filling stations, sports clubs, public halls, public houses and employment opportunities. The town centre of Middleton is located circa 3km away to the south west and contains a wider range of facilities which allow for local residents to meet their day to day needs in a sustainable manner.
- 2.4 Public transport is also widely available with bus stops located on Rochdale Road (the A664), which provide for daily, regular services to Rochdale, Manchester, the centre of Middleton and numerous destinations between. The A664 is considered to be part of the strategic highway network within the borough and offers good levels of access to the surrounding road network.
- 2.5 In addition to this there are a number of public rights of way in the immediate vicinity which offer outdoor walking and recreational opportunities, with access also directly available to the

Rochdale Canal which in turn offers walking, running and cycling linkages along the towpath, away from vehicular traffic.

- 2.6 The site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk in this regard. The site is not within a conservation area and the nearest heritage assets are located to the east, some 130m away, with the Church of St John and an adjacent war memorial both being Grade II Listed (see Figure 2 below).
- 2.7 There are no other known constraints which would prevent approval of permission in principle.

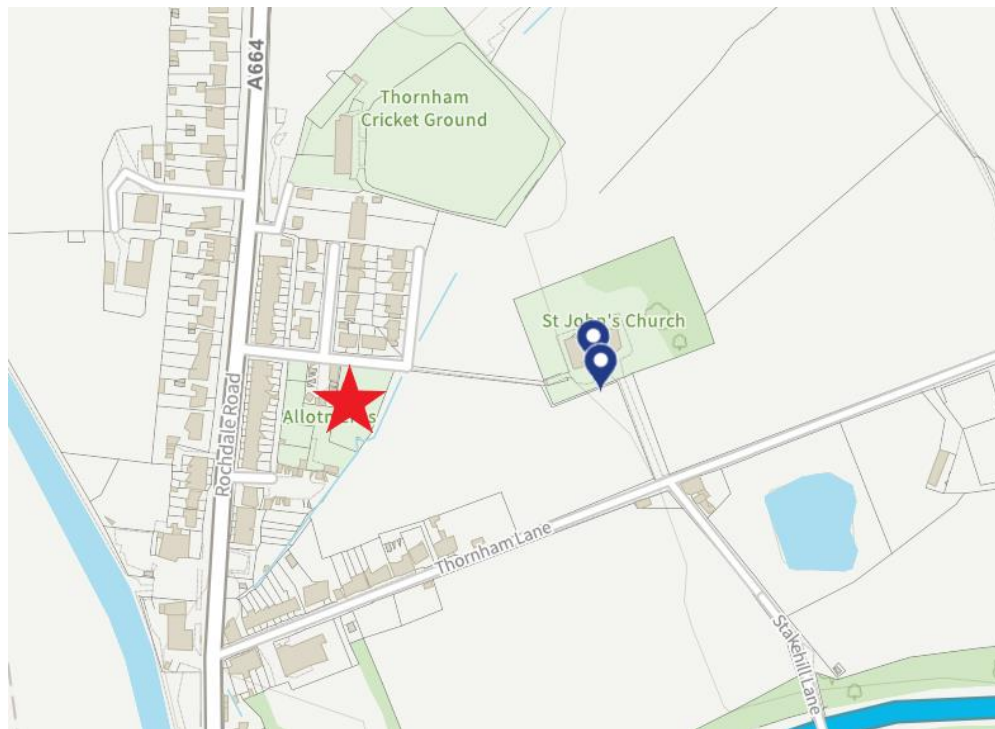


Figure 2 – Listed buildings (shown by the blue markers) in the vicinity of the site (denoted by the red star)

3 Proposed development

- 3.1 Permission in Principle ('PiP') is sought for the erection of up to five dwellings at this site. The ability to make an application for PiP is available under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 via the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017.
- 3.2 The PiP route is a two stage process. The first is to establish whether a site is suitable in principle to accommodate the type and quantum of development proposed. The second, referred to as 'Technical Details Consent' considers detailed matters associated with the proposals.
- 3.3 A decision whether to grant PiP in the first instance must be made in accordance with the relevant policies within the development plan, unless there are material considerations, such as those in the National Planning Policy Framework, which would indicate otherwise.
- 3.4 In accordance with Part 2A of the Order, the PiP process does not extend to 'major' development. Therefore it is limited to:
- The provision of less than 10 dwellings; and
 - Development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectares or less.
- 3.5 Applications must be determined within 5 weeks, beginning on the day immediately following that on which a valid application is received by the Local Planning Authority. As per the Order, this application is supported by the requisite level of information for the Council to consider the PiP:
- The relevant, completed application form;
 - A site location plan identifying the land; and
 - The required fee (to be paid directly by the applicant)
- 3.6 Whilst not a requirement at this stage of the process, the Applicant has provided an indicative site layout to demonstrate how the land could be developed in a sensitive fashion, with due consideration to its setting and surroundings.
- 3.7 The indicative layout also shows the associated infrastructure which would support the development, including curtilages commensurate with the size of the proposed dwellings and dedicated parking/turning to the front and side of each property.
- 3.8 Excerpts from the indicative drawing package are included below for reference.

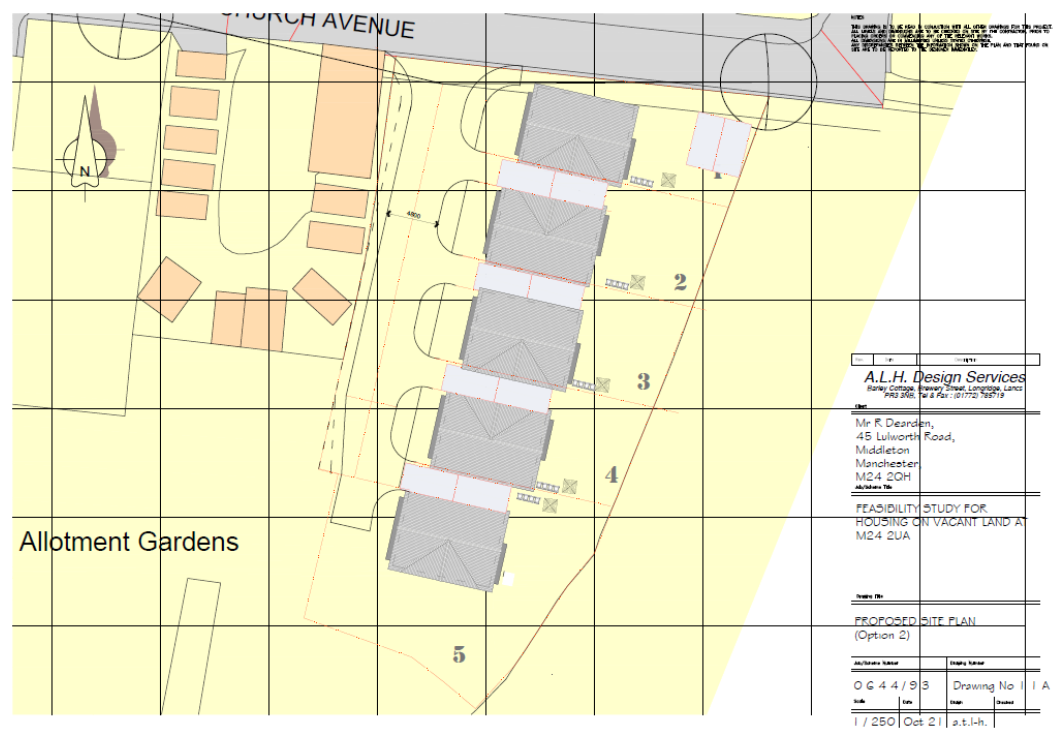


Figure 3 – indicative layout

4 Planning policy

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 refers to the development plan as a whole and requires that application be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 For the purposes of this application, the development plan comprises the Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted October 2016) and as of March 2024 'Places for Everyone' (PfE) a spatial plan for 9 Greater Manchester Authorities, including Rochdale, is also a relevant consideration.
- 4.3 Within Rochdale's original UDP policies maps, the site fell within the Green Belt, as shown below.

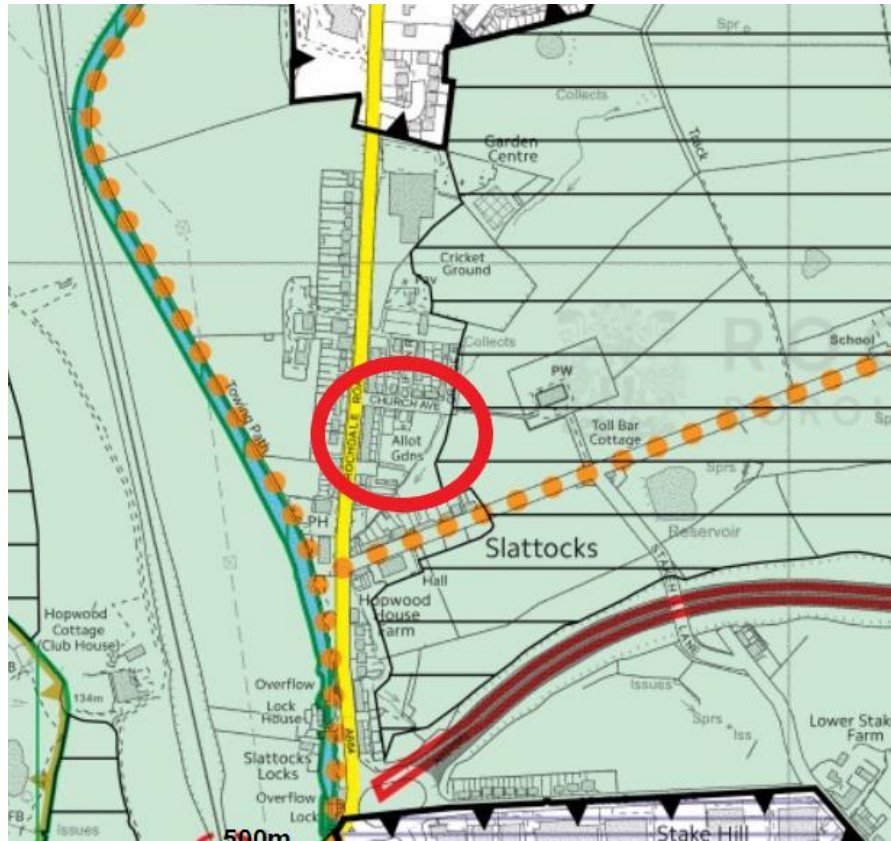


Figure 4 – UDP map excerpt

- 4.4 However, as a result of the Places for Everyone process, Green Belt removal was proposed and subsequently confirmed across the Greater Manchester area, in order to facilitate strategic mixed use allocations. PfE Policy JP Allocation 2: Stakehill, released a significant parcel of Green Belt across the Rochdale and Oldham administrative boundaries to deliver up to 150,00 sqm of industrial floorspace and 1680 new homes.

- 4.5 The release associated with the Stakehill site extends beyond the boundaries of the allocation and as a result, areas of adjacent land are also no longer covered by the Green Belt designation, as shown in the map excerpt below. The area of removal is shown by the black horizontal hatching and the extent of the allocation in red. Whilst this includes the land subject to this application, it is not earmarked for delivery within the wider allocation, as confirmed for the pending hybrid planning application (ref - 23/00650/HYBR) for the site.

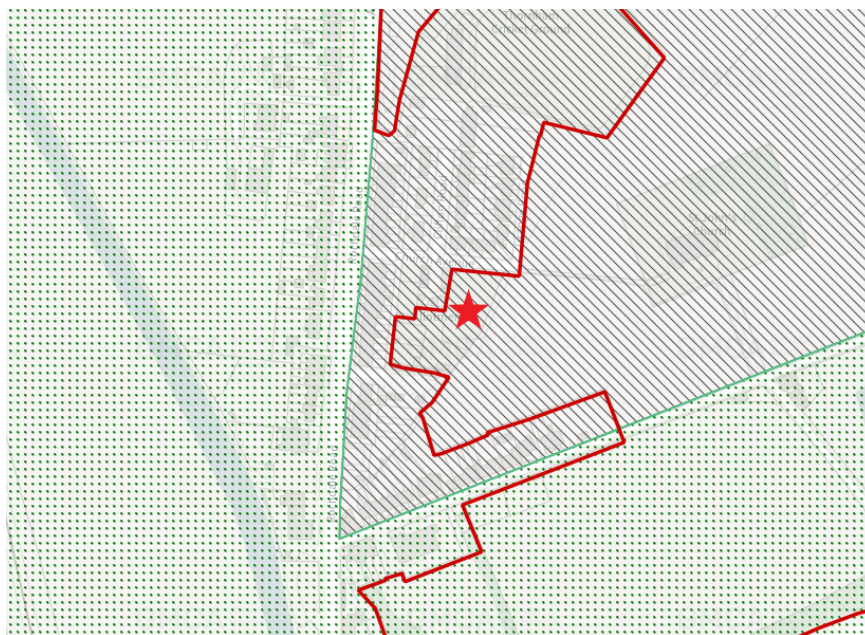


Figure 5 – PFE policies map (site denoted by red star)

- 4.6 Accordingly, without the restrictions of a Green Belt designation and falling within the wider remit of an allocation expected to deliver future housing growth, the following Core Strategy policies are engaged in assessing development at this site:
- **Policy SD1** is reflective of the requirements of the Framework, adopting the presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirming that proposals which are compliant with the relevant policies of the Core Strategy will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
 - **Policy SP2** advises that within in the south of the Borough, within the fringe of Manchester, where there is good access to existing facilities, infrastructure and the highway network, the Council will seek to deliver the majority of new housing, employment and commercial development.
 - **Policy SP3/M** outlines a number of strategic aims for Middleton, including regeneration initiatives relating to transport, shopping, commercial, employment and leisure facilities.
 - **Policy C1** sets out the Borough's housing targets and confirms that the majority of new housing will be delivered in the south due to its accessibility credentials.

- **Policy C3** requires new housing development to be well designed, appropriate in terms of density, increase the availability of larger and higher value properties and secure suitable layouts which provide for attractive places to live.
- **Policy P1** states that new development should help to improve the image of the borough with regard to a number of listed criteria.
- **Policy P2** seeks to protect the landscape character of the borough, with new development having due regard to its setting and any notable natural features within the vicinity.
- **Policy P3** requires new development to include landscaping appropriate to its location enhance the borough's sense of identity through the scale, massing, height and layout of new development.
- **Policy T2** seeks to direct new development towards areas where public transport is available and travel by means other than private car can be promoted.

4.4 The following policies of the Places for Everyone plan are also of relevance:

- **Policy JP-H1** sets out the requirement for Rochdale to deliver 10,472 dwellings over the plan period to 2039, at an average of 616 dwellings per year, increasing periodically, with the delivery target at 568 dwellings over 2022-25. This supersedes the targets previously established within CS Policy C1.
- **Policy JP-S1** advises that to help tackle climate change, new development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits, minimising adverse impacts and promoting the use of sustainable construction techniques.
- **Policies JP-H3 and H4** seek to deliver a range of housing types across the plan area, with consideration to local policies and design guides. The density of new housing should be reflective of its location, with higher densities in the most accessible locations being an important part of the overall strategy.
- **Policy JPA2 (Stakehill)** is a mixed use allocation policy and resulted in the removal of Green Belt in this location. It is expected to deliver a significant amount of industrial floorspace and housing across the plan period.

4.5 With regard to the principle of residential development at this site, the following sections of the Framework are relevant:

- Paragraph 11 confirms that the presumption in favour of sustainable development lies at the heart of the Framework. For decision making this means approving development where it accords with an up-to-date development plan, or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies within the Framework indicate that development should be restricted;

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- Paragraph 38 states that LPA's should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible;
 - Paragraph 60 confirms the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of new homes;
 - Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions; and
 - Paragraph 124 d) confirms that planning decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land.
- 4.6 At the time of writing, changes to the Framework are being consulted on following the change in Government earlier this year. Whilst the final version is still awaited, the Written Ministerial Statement issued by the Deputy Prime Minister on the 30th July 2024 ('Building the homes we need') provides further emphasis on the need for sustainable new housing and for supply to be boosted significantly.

5 Planning assessment

5.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Act and the requirements of the Framework, this application must be considered in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The primary considerations relating to this proposal, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017, are limited to:

- Location
- Land use
- Amount of development

Location (principle of development)

5.2 The Core Strategy confirms that Middleton is one of four 'townships' in the Rochdale, located to the south of the borough, which is more densely populated, with close links to both the M60 and M62 and public transport opportunities.

5.3 Middleton has strong connections to Manchester and is the focus of regeneration initiatives within the Core Strategy with regard to the retail, leisure and employment offer available in the area. The CS confirms that Middleton has a large proportion of terraced housing, as such measures to diversify and broaden the available stock should be welcomed.

5.4 As outlined earlier in this Statement, the site benefits from a range of walkable services, has good links to public transport, including bus services, public footpaths and cycle routes, both on and away from the primary highway network. Furthermore, there are notable employment and outdoor leisure opportunities in the wider area, alongside convenience retail facilities to meet the daily needs of future occupants. This will only be enhanced by the delivery of the PfE Stakehill allocation which will further improve future access to jobs and outdoor amenity space.

5.5 The masterplan for this area, included within the pending hybrid application, indicates that the area adjacent (around the church) is to remain as open space, as shown in the drawing excerpt below. The PiP site, denoted by the red star, would represent a clear rounding off of the adjacent built form and would not result in any incompatibility with regard to land uses or built form.

5.6 The site benefits from more than sufficient separation to avoid any impacts on the setting or significance of the heritage assets to the east and as the indicative layout provided shows, dwellings can be delivered on this plot without undue landscape concerns or adverse impacts for the nearest, existing dwellings.

5.7 The location of the development therefore accords with the provisions of the Core Strategy and Places for Everyone and is acceptable in principle.

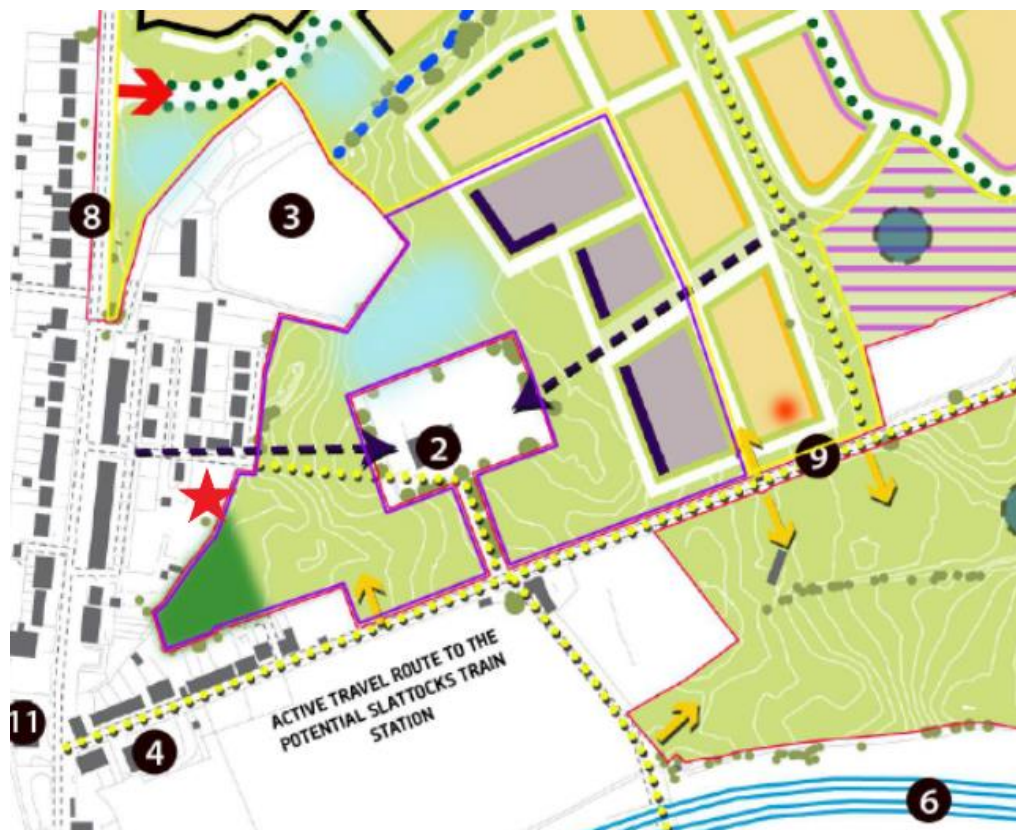


Figure 6 – masterplan supporting application 23/00650/HYBR

Land use

- 5.8 Permission in Principle is sought solely for residential development of up to 5 dwellings. Whilst the PiP legislation allows for “housing led development”, no alternative land uses are sought at this site.

Amount

- 5.9 Permission is sought for up to 5 dwellings in accordance with the relevant legislation, of a density commensurate with the surrounding area and appropriate in this setting.

Summary

- 5.10 In light of the factors above, residential development at this site is acceptable and as such Permission in Principle should be granted. The proposals can make a modest but meaningful contribution to the Council's housing land supply and deliver new, family homes in highly accessible and sustainable location.
- 5.11 All other associated considerations are reserved for the Technical Details Consent stage of this process.

6 Summary and conclusion

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support an application for Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 5 dwellings on land at Church Avenue in Middleton.
- 6.2 It has been demonstrated that the principle of development is wholly compliant with the relevant, up to date policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Rochdale Core Strategy and the Places for Everyone strategic plan.
- 6.3 Accordingly the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied and permission should be granted without delay, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework.