

FAO Rochdale City Council - Kate Fletcher
Ref: 25/00713/FUL

1st September 2025

Dear Kate

Planning Statement

Introduction

This Planning Statement supports a full planning application for a proposed extension to the warehouse at Fothergill Coated Fabrics Ltd (FCF), located on Riverside Drive, Rochdale. The proposal aims to enhance operational capacity and storage efficiency at the company's advanced manufacturing facility.

FCF is a globally recognised manufacturer of fluoropolymer-coated performance fabrics, with a history spanning over 150 years. The company combines cutting-edge coating technologies with deep market and production expertise to deliver high-performance PTFE-coated fabrics for a wide range of demanding applications. From its purpose-designed site in Rochdale, FCF serves customers across the world, and the business continues to expand in response to growing demand.

Description of the Proposal

The development proposes a rear extension to the existing warehouse. The scheme has been carefully designed to meet operational requirements while respecting the context of the site and surrounding area. Key elements of the proposal include:

- A rear extension to the existing warehouse to increase internal storage and processing capacity.
- The use of a multi-span portal frame structure to enable wide, column-free spans for greater internal flexibility.
- Retention of the main building entrance on the south-western corner.
- Inclusion of four new level access doors to improve logistics and access to the extended space.
- No changes to existing vehicular or pedestrian access points.

Planning Policy Compliance

The proposal aligns with several key objectives and policies within the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016):

- SO1 – Supports a prosperous economy by enabling expansion of a major local employer.
- SO2 / E2 – Contributes to sustainable communities and increased employment opportunities.
- SO3 / P3 – Ensures good-quality design and continuity with the host building.
- SD1 – Promotes sustainable development through intensification of an existing employment site.
- E1 / E3 – Supports economic growth within designated employment areas and growth corridors.
- P2 / P3 – Protects local character and maintains high design standards.
- G2 / G6 / G7 / G9 – Complies with environmental objectives regarding sustainability, biodiversity, and pollution.
- G8 – No increase in flood risk as the development does not alter existing surface water arrangements.
- T2 – Maintains existing access and supports sustainable transport principles.
- DM1 – Meets all general development criteria including scale, access, materials, and impact.

Access and Parking

All access arrangements will remain as existing. Vehicles (including HGVs and staff cars) will continue to enter the site via the existing access from Riverside Drive. The on-site staff and visitor car park to the south-east of the site provides 32 parking bays and is unaffected by this proposal. The proposed extension will not result in any alterations to traffic movements or site circulation patterns. The development has been carefully designed to ensure continuity of operations during and after construction.

Materials and Appearance and Massing

The building will be predominantly clad in horizontally-laid, metal-faced composite panels, carefully selected to match the appearance of the existing building and respond to the industrial character of the surrounding area.

The use of coherent materials and colour tones ensures that the extension integrates visually with the host structure, maintaining a consistent and professional industrial appearance throughout the site. The key aspects dictating the building's massing are the required clear internal height and the necessary building footprint to accommodate storage needs. Based on the client's operational forecasts, the volume of the proposed storage extension is critical to the future growth and viability of operations at the Rochdale site.

While the site is within a designated employment area and is surrounded by similar industrial uses, it is also visually well-contained. In particular, the northern boundary of the site is screened by large, mature trees, helping to visually buffer the extension from any adjacent land uses or distant viewpoints.

Visual Impact

Due to its rearward position, the proposed extension will have minimal visibility from public vantage points, and therefore will not alter the perceived mass or character of the site from the street. Mature tree cover to the north further reduces the visual prominence of the building. The extension is designed to align with the existing roofline and materials, ensuring that the building's profile and identity are maintained.

Biodiversity and Environmental Impact

An assessment for Biodiversity Net Gain has been produced by a qualified ecologist in support of this application.

The recommendations and mitigation measures outlined in the ecological report will be implemented in full, ensuring compliance with relevant environmental legislation and planning policy.

Conclusion

The proposed extension to the warehouse at Fothergill Coated Fabrics is a well-considered development that:

- Supports business growth and economic development in Rochdale.
- Respects the existing built form, materials, and context.
- Maintains existing access, circulation, and parking arrangements.
- Has negligible visual or environmental impact due to its location and design.
- Complies fully with the Rochdale Core Strategy.

This modest but important extension will help secure the long-term viability of a world-renowned manufacturer, and it is respectfully submitted that planning permission be granted.