

Planning Statement: Proposed Change of Use – 3rd Floor, Phoenix Centre, Heywood

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement supports an application for a change of use of the 3rd-floor rooms within the Phoenix Centre, Heywood. The rooms are currently designated for use by Community Health Partnerships (CHP) and are proposed to be reassigned to Redwood School and Rochdale Borough Council to support the delivery of specialist educational provision for learners aged 16–19 years.

Redwood School is an established specialist provider of education for young people with a range of additional needs. The proposed change of use represents a natural expansion of our existing successful 6th Form provision already operating on the 1st floor of the building.

2. Description of Proposed Use

2.1 Educational Provision

The 3rd-floor space will be used to deliver Redwood School's 6th Form curriculum, which focuses on preparing learners for adulthood. Key areas include:

Life Skills Development

- *Health and Wellbeing*
- *Independent Living Skills*
- *Community Inclusion*

Vocational Skills Development

- *Employment Preparation*
- *Courses including:*
 - *Hospitality and Retail Skills*
 - *Arts and Media*
 - *Construction and Horticulture*
 - *Sports and Recreation*

This expansion supports continuity and growth of current provision, benefitting learners by offering additional space and improved access to local community facilities.

3. Operational Details

3.1 Learners and Staffing

- Approximately 39 learners will access the provision daily.
- A high staffing ratio will be maintained, typically 2–4 staff members present depending on activities.
- An additional small specialist provision for 8 learners will operate in collaboration with Your Trust in the adjacent civic centre development.

3.2 Hours of Operation

- **Learner Day:** 8:45 AM – 3:00 PM (190 days per year, term time)
- **Staff Access:** 7:30 AM – 6:00 PM
- **Occasional Access:** Weekends or school holidays for staff training or development

3.3 Transport Arrangements

- Some learners will arrive via **local authority transport**.
- Others will take part in **independent travel training** supported by Redwood School travel facilitators.
- No significant increase in traffic is anticipated as learners will be dropped off at the Civic hall carpark loading area.

3.4 Building Use and Coordination

- Staff meetings, training sessions, or collaborative work with Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) employees may occur on-site.
- All visits can be scheduled in advance, with information shared with the Phoenix Centre Reception Team to ensure smooth operations.

4. Community Integration and Benefits

The Phoenix Centre's location offers excellent opportunities for community engagement and skill development. Learners will benefit from proximity to:

- Local small businesses
- Heywood town centre
- The adjoining library
- The redeveloped civic centre operated by **YourTrust**

Learners may access the town centre at lunchtime or as part of guided life-skills sessions, enhancing community participation while maintaining appropriate supervision.

5. Justification for Change of Use

The change of use aligns with the strategic aim of improving local SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) provision and expanding capacity within the borough. Key benefits include:

- Efficient use of underutilised space within a public building
- Strengthening of post-16 specialist education pathways
- Enhanced opportunities for young people with additional needs to develop independence and employability
- Continuity with existing successful operations already proven on the 1st floor

The proposal has no adverse impact on the building, neighbouring uses, or local transport networks.

6. Conclusion

This application seeks to repurpose the 3rd-floor rooms of the Phoenix Centre for educational use by Redwood School and Rochdale Borough Council. The proposed change of use will provide significant benefits to local young people with additional needs, support wider community objectives, and make effective use of available public facilities.

Redwood School is committed to working collaboratively with building management, local partners, and the wider community to ensure positive outcomes for all stakeholders.