

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

25/00185/FUL

CASE OFFICER

Sam Yuen

DETERMINATION DATE 03.05.2025 **EXT OF TIME** 23.01.2026

Address: Bentley Avenue, Stakehill Industrial Estate, Middleton, M24 2GP

Proposal: Proposed new vehicular access junction onto site from Bentley Avenue (retrospective)

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	Y

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	Y

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY:

DATE:

SITE

The application relates to a surface car park within the northern boundary of Stakehill Industrial Estate in Middleton. The site is bounded by green mesh fencing and is surrounded by industrial units to the east, south and west. The original entrance to the car park is via an unadopted access road from Finlan Road to the southeast. A new vehicular access from Bentley Avenue to the north was recently created, which is the subject of the application proposal. A line of two-storey residential dwellings is sited some 60m to the northwest of the site along Bentley Avenue. The land to the north of Bentley Avenue is protected under the Green Belt.

It is understood the previously vacant car park belonged to a former call centre building (Unit 2) and was recently purchased by Rentruck, a car rental company as a storage for their fleet of vehicles.

PROPOSAL

Retrospective planning permission is sought for the formation of a new vehicular access junction to the application site from Bentley Avenue, including the relocation of the existing fencing and the erection of a new 1.8m-high sliding gate.

The car park would be used to accommodate approx. 100 light commercial vehicles and cars and will operate between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 8am-noon on Saturday.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

Policy JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

- P1** Improving image
- P3** Improving design of new development
- G6** Enhancing green infrastructure
- G7** Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
- T2** Improving accessibility
- DM1** General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area
EC/2 Primary Employment Zone

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

22/01193/FUL - Change of use from car park (Use Class: sui generis) to open storage (Use Class: B8) and change of use of Unit 2 from call centre (Use Class E(c)) to general industrial and storage (Use Class B2 and B8). - Grant subject to conditions

04/D43679 - Formation Of Car Park Off Finlan Road To Serve Proposed Call Centre At Unit 2 Stakehill Lane (Amended Scheme) – Grant subject to conditions

04/D42985 - Formation Of Car Park And Service Road Off Finlan Road To Serve Proposed Call Centre At Unit Two. – Grant subject to conditions

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways and Engineering

Highways have no objection to this proposal.

This proposal does not generate any significant volume of traffic and falls below the threshold for further study.

Parking for the site is adequate. The new access meets all required standards.

No new highways and no changes to the existing highways are proposed as a result of this proposal. No new road safety issues as a result of this proposal. No PROW will be obstructed by this proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

Neighbour notifications via letters were sent to surrounding properties and a site notice was posted in the vicinity of the site. 8 supporting letters and 30 objection letters were received with the following comments:

Supporting Letters

- Supportive of local business to grow and thrive.
- The proposal would be an improvement if it reduces traffic on Finlan Road.

Objection Letters

- Bentley Avenue is a quiet residential road already congested with HGVs and school coaches. The proposal would encourage more vehicles and cause more traffic congestion and noise and pose safety hazard for road users. The additional traffic would burden Slattocks Roundabout.
- Traffic would be exacerbated from the upcoming proposed housing development in Stakehill.

- The site has adequate existing vehicle access within Stakehill Industrial Estate and does not need a new access from Bentley Avenue. The application states a very limited number of vehicles would use the site therefore the new entrance is unnecessary.
- Separation of traffic between commercial and residential use should be maintained.
- Planning condition/covenant stipulated the access to the site would only be from the industrial estate. This was a key factor in its previous approval and must still stand.
- Site seems to have ignored other planning conditions including landscaping, no vehicles stored overnight and lighting hours.
- Work has started without planning permission and without consultation with residents. Workers were abusive to local residents when challenged.
- The site has been subject to other material changes outside of the proposed works which require planning permission.
- Access to industrial units along Bentley Avenue are only for emergency services.
- Spotlights installed in the car park are on all night and intrusive to local residents.
- Customer has not seen any notification letters being sent to neighbours.
- There is no need to spoil the existing walkway.
- Noise and air pollution.

Officer's Comments:

- Concerns relating to traffic and highway safety are addressed under the 'Highways and Parking' heading of this report.
- The proposal is assessed under the relevant material planning considerations as per below.
- Notification letters have been sent to neighbouring properties and a site notice was posted within the vicinity of the site in accordance with statutory procedures.
- Concerns relating to planning conditions are addressed under the 'Other Considerations' heading of this report.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments have been made to add shrubbery to the grass verge on either side of the vehicle access junction.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The application site falls within a Primary Employment Zone as set out under saved UDP Policy EC/3 which should be read in conjunction with Policies E2 and E3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy. Policy E2 seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of land for employment uses to increase jobs, whilst Policy E3 aims to focus employment

development on high quality sites in economic growth areas, including Stakehill Business Park, where the application site is located.

The application relates to the formation of a new vehicular access junction to an existing car park. No change of use of the car park is proposed and the access would support the operations of a local business in an established economic growth area.

Subject to the assessment of all other material planning considerations, the principle of development is therefore acceptable, in accordance with Policies E2 and E3 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Design and Appearance

The NPPF states achieving good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and decisions should ensure developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. This is also reflected in Policy JP-P1 of the PfE and Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, which require development to respect local context with regard to siting, size, scale, massing, height and materials.

The proposed works comprises the formation of a vehicular access, the relocation of the existing fence and the installation of a new gate. The proposed gate is of a similar height and lightweight design to the existing fence. The resultant development is therefore not considered to have a material visual impact on the character of the immediate street scene.

It is also noted the applicant has agreed to include native hedgerows in the residual space to compensate for the partial loss of the grass verge, which would reflect the use of soft landscaping to the opposite side of the highway and represent an enhancement to the visual amenity of the area.

The design of the proposal is therefore acceptable and accords with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted PfE and the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Protection of residential amenity is considered under Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, which states development proposals should ensure they do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

Owing to the lightweight design of the fencing and the location of the site in excess of 60m away from the nearest residential dwelling, no harm has been identified with regard to residential amenity impacts to neighbouring occupiers.

The proposal is therefore acceptable in accordance with Policy DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Highways and Parking

Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy requires development proposals to provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location.

The proposed works would introduce a new access to the car park from Bentley Avenue. The submitted supporting statement notes that it is expected that 10 vehicles may access and 10 vehicles may exit on a regular trading day.

Concerns raised in representations relating to congestion and traffic safety is noted. It is acknowledged that Bentley Avenue and Slattocks Roundabout have been subject to continued traffic issues. However, regards have been had to Paragraph 116 of the NPPF which states that “development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.”

Based on the scale of the site and the extent of its operations, and taking into account of the cumulative impacts to the existing road conditions, the impact of the proposed access to highway safety is not considered to be so significant as to amount to unacceptable harm. The Council’s Highways Officer was also consulted and raised no objection.

The proposal would therefore not result in any undue harm to highway safety and would accord with Policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy.

Other Considerations

Objections have been raised with regard to planning condition restrictions on access, landscaping and operating hours. The condition details refer to an historic permission for the site (ref: 04/D43679) and relates specifically to a separate proposal and land use. In the time between the historic permission and the current submission, the nature of the site and its use has changed. Any proposals for the site must therefore be assessed on its own merits and against the current relevant planning policies and guidance. No concerns have been raised to the proposed vehicle access in terms of design, amenity and highways and the application has been recommended for approval accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

Procedure Statement

Notes for Applicant: