

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
25/00067/ADV	Hamish Rigg	12/03/2025

Address: Footpath outside 239 Albert Royds Street, Rochdale, OL16 2TS

Proposal: Integrated double-sided 75 inch advertisement display within Communication Hub unit comprising of an LCD portrait screen presenting illuminated content.

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

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?	N

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

RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 13/03/2025

SITE

The application relates to an area of pavement outside 239 Albert Royds Street; a small detached supermarket in a residential area of Belfield, Rochdale. Albert Royds Street is a main transport route forming part of the ring road around Rochdale town centre. However, the character of the area surrounding the site is residential, comprising medium density housing, grass verges and mature trees.

The application site is a small paved area at the junction between Albert Royds Street and Bellshill Crescent. No. 239 lies to the east, whilst Albert Royds Street lies west, running north and south.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the installation of a BT 'street hub' and 2no. digital illuminated screens, one on each side. The hub is a free standing black metal structure, measuring 3m (height) X 1.2m (width) X 0.35m (depth). The screens would display digital advertisements and the occasional public information message. The hub would also provide free public WiFi, free UK calls, USB charging, and an emergency service button.

The proposed elevations and views only show the perspective looking southwards. For the avoidance of doubt, the submitted Planning Supporting Statement (ROC-104: Telent Technology Services Ltd) confirms that the hub will have a digital display on both sides, and therefore it is assumed that hub will have the same appearance looking northwards.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

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

Sub-Regional Policy

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application:

Places for People

JP-P1: Sustainable Places

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO3	To improve design, image and quality of place
P1	Improving Image
P3	Improving design of new development

SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
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T2 Improving accessibility
DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

None

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways:

The applicant proposes the introduction of an advertisement directly adjacent to a busy highway. This would constitute a distraction to drivers and as such compromise road safety and as such we object to this proposal.

The main generator of income this hub will have is an advertising revenue. This land is not in the ownership of the applicant. There is no detail of how the applicant intends to compensate the Highways Authority for use of the Highway to generate income. We do not consent to the introduction of this advertisement on the highway.

Environmental Health:

No objections

REPRESENTATIONS

In line with the Council's Publicity Code for Applications, no direct publicity was undertaken and no representations have been received.

ANALYSIS

In assessing applications for advertisement consent, paragraph 136 of the NPPF establishes that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Amenity:

The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. As such, with all applications for advertisements an assessment should be made as to the impacts on visual amenity and to accord with policy P3 of the Core Strategy; signs should be compatible with the surrounding area and protect the character and appearance of the street scene.

Albert Royds Street and the wider Belfield area has a residential and verdant character, comprising tree-lined roads, dwellings set back from the highway, and grass verges. Commercial uses are scarce, but where they are present, such as the adjacent supermarket to the east, they conform to the established building line and scales, and use discreet, non-illuminated signage.

The proposed communication hub would be the only feature within the vicinity which is illuminated, that is not a lighting column, and due to its excessive scale (measuring 3m in height) would subsequently comprise an incongruous addition to the street scene that would not respond well to the area's verdant and open character.

It is noted that the application seeks the removal of the existing phone box, which detracts from the character and appearance of the street scene due to its bulky form and dilapidated appearance. Notwithstanding, the proposal is considered to comprise a more visually harmful feature due to its greater scale, illumination, and generally more conspicuous appearance.

By virtue of its siting, scale and illumination, the proposed hub would harm the visual amenity of the street scene and therefore would fail to comply with policies JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Safety:

Policy DM1 sets out the Council's general development requirements and establishes that proposals should not adversely impact on highway safety. Whilst it is accepted that the purpose of an advertisement is to attract attention, it is important to consider whether such adverts would have the potential to have an adverse impact on road safety.

Albert Royds Street (A664) is a key transport route forming part of the ring road around Rochdale and at peak times it accommodates high volumes of traffic. The proposed location for the communication hub is directly adjacent to the highway on Albert Royds Street, at the junction with Bellshill Crescent, and approximately 5m forward of a pedestrian crossing. Navigating this section of the highway therefore requires the utmost care and attention of drivers to ensure the safety of pedestrians and other road users.

The Council's Highways Officer has objected to the proposal on account of the digital displays being a distracting feature directly adjacent to a busy highway, at a location with a pedestrian crossing and road junctions. Given the digital displays are intended to draw attention, it would be reasonable to suggest that they would pose an unnecessary risk to road users and pedestrians. The risk is further exacerbated by the scale and brightness of the displays. The proposal would therefore have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and policy DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse:

1. The proposed digital display, by virtue of its siting, scale and illumination, would represent a garish and imposing feature on the street scene and landscape. The identified harm to the character and appearance of the area, as a result of the proposed hub, is not mitigated or outweighed by public

benefit or other material considerations. On this basis, the proposed development would fail to comply with policies JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone joint development plan, DM1 & P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The proposed digital displays present a distracting feature to road users and pedestrians at a critical and busy location, which requires the utmost care and attention, therefore posing an unacceptable and unnecessary risk to highways safety. As such the proposal would adversely impact on highways safety, contrary to: the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy JP-P1 of The Places for Everyone Joint Development plan; Policies P3 and T2 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.

Procedure Statement

The proposal would not improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area nor does it comply with the development plan and therefore does not comprise sustainable development. There were no amendments to the scheme, or conditions which could reasonably have been imposed, which could have made the development acceptable and it was therefore not possible to approve the application.

Notes for Applicant:

INFORMATIVES:

1. For the avoidance of doubt, this decision relates to the following plans and supporting documents:
 - Proposed site plan: ROC-103
 - Proposed site elevation: ROC-103
 - Planning Supporting Statement (ROC-103: Telent Technology Services Ltd)
 - BT Street Hub Unit and Dimensions
 - BT Street Hub Anti-Social Behaviour Management plan, Version 3
 - Street Hubs Beyond Connection Supporting Report
 - Covering Letter (ROC-103: Telent Technology Services Ltd)

Report Author Hamish Rigg