

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

25/00782/FUL

CASE OFFICER

Aimee Bovaird

DETERMINATION DATE 02.12.2025 **EXT OF TIME**

Address: Unit 9 Midway House, Long Street, Middleton, M24 6UZ

Proposal: Change of use from bank (Class E)(c)(i) to a place of worship (Class F1)(f)

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

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT subject to conditions
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RG

DATE: 27 November 2025

SITE

The site is located at Unit 9 of Midway House, Long Street, in the eastern section of the town centre and within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area and Middleton Long Street secondary shopping area. Midway House stands as a modern red brick building with a grey tiled roof. The building was previously occupied by NatWest Bank and it is now unoccupied.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for a change of use from bank (Class E)(c)(i) to a place of worship (Class F1)(f). The planning statement sets out that the capacity for the main service hall is 257 people. The applicant has confirmed that the operating hours will be Sunday: 12-3pm and Friday Evenings: 6pm – 9pm.

The proposed ground floor will consist of the main service hall, service alter area, preparation room, storerooms and toilets.

The proposed first floor will consist of the main conference room, additional meeting rooms, staff facilities and a plant room/ storage.

There is a section of the building on the first floor that will remain unchanged with no internal works proposed and no additional uses applied for. This section of the building has not been included in the red edge.

No external alterations are proposed. No on-site parking is proposed.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

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

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

JP-S1	Sustainable Development
JP-P1	Sustainable Places
JP-P2	Heritage
JP-P3	Cultural Facilities

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SD1	Delivering sustainable development
DM1	General development requirements

SO2	Creating successful and healthy communities
C8	Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities

SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P2	Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area
G/S/1 Hierarchy and Role of Centres
BE/17 New Development Affecting Conservation Areas
BE/18 Changes of Use to Buildings in Conservation Areas

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

25/00157/FUL - External alterations including removal of ATM machines, night safe. letterbox and signage followed by repair works. Approved

15/00695/ADV – installation of 5, A1 internally illuminated light pocket poster holders and 1, A0 internally illuminated light pocket poster holder to be fitted internally in the branch windows. Approved

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

No objections

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date

Conservation And Design

No objections

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification have been sent out to surrounding properties and a site notice displayed in the vicinity. 32 objections and one comment in support, the comments have raised the following:

- Inappropriate use
- Inadequate parking
- Inadequate access
- There are already existing places of worship
- Traffic will increase and result in problems
- Loss of commercial space
- Will not contribute to local businesses
- Increase in noise
- Need for more shops and other facilities in town centre

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Defined Urban Area as designated under the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). New development, wherever possible and appropriate, should be concentrated within the urban area in order to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside. The application site is also located within Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.

Policy C8 of the adopted Core Strategy sets out that the Council will support and promote the provision of better community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities and

the Council will follow a sequential approach provided the facilities are of a type and scale appropriate to the size of the settlement, are accessible and support the Council's objectives. In this instance, of relevance is point b, which requires facilities serving towns to be located in or adjacent to town centres or local centres, or highly accessible locations.

Paragraph 98 of the NPPF sets out that *'to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments'*.

The application is for the change of use only of the vacant building to a place of worship. The site was formerly a bank. Officers consider this is a sustainable site and the proposal is in accordance with both local and national planning policies whereby the Core Strategy provides strong policy support for developments of this nature that are located in accessible locations such as town centres and this location is highly accessible. The supporting policy text to Core Strategy Policy C8 recognises that facilities such as the one proposed are vital to local communities and provide the services needed for a good quality of life which also help to promote community cohesion. Whilst objectors have raised concerns in relation to the need for more retail facilities and other community uses, the loss of the application site as a class E use is not considered to restrict the town centre's ability to meet other needs given the current level of vacancies in the area, in addition to a number development opportunities within the centre.

The principle of development for a place of worship is acceptable and in accordance with the NPPG and the requirements of Policy C8 of the Core Strategy and Policy JP-P3 of PfE.

Noise, Impact on Surrounding Land Uses & Residential Amenity

Policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy seek to ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users, also requiring that development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution. Additionally, Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy requires that proposals should not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF also states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. Paragraph 135 also seeks to ensure that planning decisions create places which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The site is located in a town centre location close to transport links, no residential properties will be notably impacted by the proposed development. A noise impact assessment has been submitted as part of the application, if the application is approved a condition can be added to ensure this is complied with. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has been consulted and not provided any comments. The applicant has confirmed the opening hours will be Sunday: 12-3pm and Friday

Evenings: 6pm – 9pm. This is not considered unreasonable given the site is in a town centre location and the noise generated is not thought to have an increased impact on the surrounding occupiers.

For the above reasons it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with the amenity requirements of Core Strategy Policies DM1 and G9 and the SPD.

Heritage

The building is located within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. The Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted as part of the application process and has advised the proposed use will have a neutral impact on the significance of the Conservation area. The Conservation Officer has not raised any heritage concerns.

As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of its appearance and impact on the character of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. Where no harm to the character of the Conservation Area is identified, no balancing act otherwise required by the NPPF is necessary, and the proposals would therefore accord with the requirements of Policies P2 and P3 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Highways

As part of the application process the Council's Highways Officer has been consulted and raised no objections. The Council's Highways Officer has set out in their response that the proposal is within a pedestrianised public realm and there is not expected to be any direct vehicular traffic. They have also stated refuse collection and servicing should not be a problem at this location. Whilst objectors have raised concerns over lack of parking and impacts on traffic, suitable restrictions exist on the local highway and the location is highly accessible by public and active travel.

Accordingly, the proposed development is acceptable and would comply with DM1 and T2 of the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Other Matters

The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications, however as the application relates only to a change of use of an existing building with no other external works, the application is exempt from this requirement.

The proposed development does not break any ground, and purely comprises a change of use. The development therefore would not increase or re-direct surface water elsewhere and Officers consider that the proposed development would accord with policy G8 of the Core Strategy, Policy JP-S4 of PfE and the NPPF.

Conclusion

In conclusion the proposed development consists of a change of use only from a bank to a place of worship in a sustainable location. The Core Strategy provides strong policy support for developments of this nature that are located in accessible locations such as town centres and this location is highly accessible.

The proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of impacts on design, residential amenity, highways safety and access arrangements, flood risk and drainage arrangements, ecology and biodiversity and heritage. For these reasons

the proposal would comprise sustainable development because it complies with the development plan, and accordingly the application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. This permission relates to the following plans and documents:

- o Location Plan
- o Proposed Ground Floor Plan PL01
- o Proposed First Floor Plan PL02
- o Noise Impact Assessment Project Reference No: NP-013282
- o Design and Access Statement with Proportionate Heritage Statement

The development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings and documents hereby approved unless otherwise required by condition below.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The development hereby approved shall not be operated outside the hours of Sunday, 1200-1500 and Friday, 1800-2100.

Reason: To protect the amenity of nearby occupants and to accord with policies G9 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The development hereby approved shall be operated in accordance with the noise mitigation measures set out within Noise Impact Assessment NP-013282 dated 3/10/25. The noise attenuation and mitigation measures shall be retained thereafter in perpetuity.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of residents in order to comply with the requirements of Policies G9 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.