

APPLICATION NUMBER: 25/00741/PIP

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO. 25/00741/PIP **CASE OFFICER** Majid Mir

DETERMINATION DATE 10.09.2025 **EXT OF TIME**

Address: Land Adjacent To 12 Eton Close, Rochdale

Proposal: Application for permission in principle for the erection of one dwelling

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	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
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 10/09/2025

SITE

The application relates to a plot of land associated with No. 9 Eton Close and adjacent to no. 12 Eton Close. The land is identified as a part of the curtilage of no. 9 (01/D39199). The site is enclosed by private access gate and also encloses the residential properties of no. 9 and 12 Eton Close. The main part of the site stretches in a linear fashion from the northwest by no.9 to southeast. The site runs along the side of no. 12 which is located to the southwest of the site. The land also drops down a considerable amount from northwest to southeast. There is a considerable drop from approximately the rear boundary of no. 12.

Along the east and southeast of the site, the application site adjoins land in the ownership of the application. This land is characterised by predominantly by densely growing mature trees. Beyond this area lies a residential area with Ford Gardens to the north east of the site and larger houses, including the Grade II listed 'Hill House' lying to the east, which are accessed off Chadwick Hall Road. To the south of the southeast edge of the site is an area of land adjacent to no. 12 and comprises a mowed grass lawn.

Eton Close is a cul-de-sac characterised by a variety of house types that have been variously modified over time, and extends eastward from the main turning head by means of a narrow un-adopted access road which serves six dwellings. Nos. 9 and 12 can be accessed via the access gate that enclose both properties.

The site is located within the Defined Urban Area, and is also land designated as a Greenspace Corridor. Nos 7, 9 and 12 Eton Close are also located within the Greenspace Corridor. To the southeast, a part of the site falls within the Roch Valley Heywood Recreational Management Area. The site is also located within close vicinity of the Meadowcroft Woods Site of Biological Importance (SBI),

PROPOSAL

The application seeks Permission in Principle (Stage 1) for the erection of one dwelling on the site. At this stage, whilst this is an application only for Permission in Principle, the applicant has submitted an indicative proposed site plan showing one detached dwelling.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

Strat13	Strategic Green Infrastructure
JP-S1	Sustainable Development
JP-S2	Carbon and Energy
JP-S4	Flood Risk and the Water Environment
JP-H1	Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development
JP-H2	Affordability of New Housing
JP-H3	Type, Size and Design and New Housing
JP-H4	Density of New Housing

JP-G1	Landscape Character
JP-G2	Green Infrastructure Network
JP-G3	River Valleys and Waterways
JP-G5	Uplands
JP-G6	Urban Green Space
JP-G7	Trees and Woodland
JP-G8	A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
JP-P1	Sustainable Places
JP-P5	Education, Skills and Knowledge
JP-C1	An Integrated Network
JP-C2	Digital Connectivity
JP-C5	Streets for All
JP-C6	Walking and Cycling
JP-C8	Transport Requirements of New Development

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO2	Creating successful and healthy communities
C1	Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places
C3	Delivering the right type of housing
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P1	Improving image
P2	Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3	Improving design of new development
SO4	Promoting a Greener Environment
G1	Tackling and adapting to climate change
G2	Energy and new development
G6	Enhancing green infrastructure
G7	Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
G8	Managing water resources and flood risk
G9	Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility
SD1	Delivering sustainable development
SP2	The spatial strategy for the borough
DM1	General Development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1	Defined Urban Area
G/8	Greenspace Corridors
EM/7	Development and Flood Risk
EM/8	Protection of Surface and Ground Water

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (June 2016).

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

1. The application site is situated within a finger of the Roch Valley Greenspace Corridor and, by virtue of previous piecemeal encroachment, would result in an unacceptable narrowing of this corridor, encroaching into routes used by wildlife and the Meadowcroft Wood Site of Biological Importance and diminishing its amenity value and contribution towards providing visual relief from the urban environment. In addition the scale, massing, position and design of the dwelling fails to respond to the natural context of the site and would result in a jarring and imposing form of development that is completely at odds with the character of the site and the surrounding area. As a result, the proposal would have a significant negative impact on the openness, landscape quality and character of the greenspace corridor. Therefore the proposal is contrary to saved policy G/8 part A of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan which seeks to limit development in Greenspace Corridors to those which will enhance their recreational, ecological, landscape and amenity value; and part B, which states that developments within the corridor will be of a design, and use materials appropriate to, the character and setting of the corridor. The proposal also fails to comply with policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy which seeks to enhance the Roch Valley corridor as a key landscape feature forming a part of Greater Manchester's strategic green infrastructure network and an ecological corridor, and policy P3 which requires development proposals to have regard to the local context. As such the application is considered to be unacceptable in principle and in matters of design and visual appearance and is contrary to the requirements of the above local policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed dwelling would be sited approximately 110m from the adopted highway and accessed along a shared private road and then over land within the curtilage of No. 9 Eton Close. Even with the provision of a bin store within the front garden area of No. 12 Eton Close, waste would have to be transported a distance of approximately 70m by the occupants of the new dwelling to the waste store which is significantly in excess of the 30m recommended by part H of the Building Regulations (2015) and contained within the Manual for Streets (2007). The refuse store would also be sited in excess of the 25m maximum distance for refuse collection and as a result, waste containers would have to be transported to the adopted highway for collection. Given the lack of suitable space to accommodate the cumulative total number of bins from all properties, this would lead to a significant over-concentration of waste receptacles being presented on the footpath of the highway on collection day, resulting in an unacceptable impact on pedestrian safety. The application therefore fails to comply with the requirements of policies DM1 and T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the supplementary planning document 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (2016) and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. The application site comprises made ground comprising soft, sandy gravelly clay fill with some brick and there is a significant fall in levels from north to south as the land slopes towards the Meadowcroft Woods SBI and beyond to the Roch Valley Greenspace Corridor. The south-easternmost corner of the proposed development, which would involve the erection of substantial structural columns, is also located immediately adjacent to a defined Coal Authority Development High Risk Area and the presumed path of a subterranean watercourse. Whilst the submitted Mining Study Report concludes that there is no risk to the site from past coal mining activities,

insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate whether or not the made ground of the site is stable and whether or not the proposed construction works are likely to result in slope instability to the extent that it will affect either the development itself or the identified SBI. Therefore, based on the level of information provided, it not possible to conclude that the proposal would satisfy the requirements of Rochdale Core Strategy policy G9, which requires that any risks arising from land instability, and appropriate actions to address these risks, are identified prior to any development taking place; and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

01/D39199 Erection of 1 Dwelling [12 Eton Close].
Decision: Granted STC January 2002.

96/D32735 Residential Development - 3 Dwellings.
Decision: Refused July 1996.

1. The site lies within a Greenspace Corridor as designated in the Deposit Draft Rochdale Unitary Development Plan. The proposed development, involving the erection of three dwellinghouses, would not be capable of implementation without impinging seriously on the visual quality and amenity value of the corridor, and would result in inevitable disturbance to existing flora and wildlife within the valley, contrary to the objectives of UDP Policy R/10A (Greenspace Corridors).
2. Sole vehicular access to the site is obtained via Eton Close which is of single vehicle width and without footways. The introduction of three additional dwellings served via this access will result in further congestion to the detriment of the amenity existing residents and cause potential danger to users of the highway. The proposal would also result in 6 dwellings served via a provide a private drive contrary to adopted Council Policy.

86/D19862 Residential Development – Three Dwellinghouses.
Decision: Granted STC April 1987.

78/D07234 Detached Double Garage.
Decision: Granted October 1978.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

We have no objection to this proposal subject to the applicants agreement to a dilapidation survey and refuse collection strategy.

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date.

Tree Officer

No comments received to date.

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)

Phase I geo-environmental desktop study to be provided as a minimum with Technical Detail Consent application.

The Coal Authority

We have reviewed the site location plan provided and can confirm that the site falls within the Coal Authority's defined Development Low Risk Area. On this basis we have no specific comments to make.

However, in the interest of public safety, it is requested that the Coal Authority's Standing Advice note is drawn to the applicant's attention, where relevant.

United Utilities

Advise provided to applicant.

GM Fire Service

No comments received to date.

Gtr Manchester Ecology Unit

Wildlife

The site has been cleared of vegetation since the previous application. Any risk to wildlife could be dealt with via condition and or informative.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 187 of the NPPF 2024 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

The development site appears to lack any significant vegetation, having been cleared and developed, presumably as paved garden sometime since the previous application. Given the clearance appears to have occurred in late 2019 and prior to April 2020, based on google earth, there is insufficient evidence to require baseline habitats to be those at pre-clearance, the deadline for such an approach for unauthorised habitat degradation being January 2020.

The development may or may not be exempt from mandatory BNG.

Conclusion & Recommendations

It is unlikely as for that there are any ecological reason to refuse development.

As part of technical details, I recommend:

- A preliminary ecological appraisal, given the proximity to the SBI and potential presence of protected species such as badger and invasive species in the SBI and along the stream valley and;
- A BNG assessment/statement the latter if the developer believes the development to be exempt.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to neighbouring properties and site notices were placed in the vicinity of the site. Two representations were received objecting to the proposal. Both objections were received after the deadline for comments had passed. Nevertheless, the comments are summarised below:

- ☐ Loss of privacy and amenity
- ☐ Impact on residents of neighbouring properties
- ☐ Highway safety, parking and access (including for emergency services)
- ☐ Loss of green space, ecological harm and biodiversity loss
- ☐ Noise and disturbance

Officer comments: The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Where relevant, the

concerns are discussed in the report below. Other matters, including those noted above, will be considered at the Technical Detail Consent application stage.

- ❑ Overdevelopment and harm to local character
Officer comments: Discussed in the principle section of the report where relevant.
- ❑ Precedent for wider development
Officer comments: The application is assessed on its merit and in accordance with relevant material considerations.
- ❑ Harm to property values
Officer comments: This is not a material consideration and as such cannot be taken into consideration.

ANALYSIS

The permission in principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle and the second (technical details consent) stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the Technical Detail Consent stage.

A decision on whether to grant permission in principle to a site following a valid application must be made in accordance with the relevant policies in the development plan unless there are material considerations, such as those in the NPPF, which indicate otherwise.

Principle of development - Location of the site, type of land use proposed and amount of development

Paragraph 11 of the Framework contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

The proposed 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. This site however, also lies within land designated as a Greenspace Corridor on the saved UDP proposals map. Additionally, the southern part of the application site is located within the northern extent of the arm of Meadowcroft Woods Site of Biological Importance and partially within the Roch Valley, Heywood Recreational Management Area. The proposed dwelling as indicated on the indicative proposed site plan suggest that the proposed dwelling would site just outside both the site.

Annexe 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework defines 'previously developed land' as 'land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including

the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed.' This excludes 'land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.' As the site now forms part of a residential garden, the site would therefore be considered to represent an area of previously un-developed, or greenfield, land.

Policy C1 of the Core Strategy (CS) outlines that the Council will promote the reuse and regeneration of vacant and underused previously developed sites, seeking to provide 80% of new housing on previously developed land. Additionally, policy C1 seeks to focus only on sustainable Greenfield sites which provide the best access to a range of services, jobs and facilities and have limited impact on green infrastructure and amenity. CS Policy C3 sets out that the Council will deliver the right types of homes, well designed and built to appropriate densities to meet the overall needs and aspirations of the borough. Paragraph 73 of the NPPF sets out that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF sets out that 'planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses'.

Further to those relevant policies as identified in the Rochdale Core Strategy, relevant policies in Places for Everyone (PfE) have been identified. PfE Policy JP-S1 sets out that development should seek to maximise economic, social and environmental benefits. PfE Policy JP-H2 states that there should be a significant increase in the supply of new housing, including, specifically, the supply of low-cost market housing. Furthermore, as set out in PfE Policy JP-H4, new housing should be delivered at a density appropriate for the location and taking into account the site's accessibility.

The latest published information suggests that the Council can demonstrate more than a five year supply of housing land based on the updated PfE target; however this does not preclude the promotion of sustainable development where this can assist in delivering additional housing to meet local needs.

Consideration however needs to be given to the requirements of saved UDP policy G/8. The supporting report argues that policy G/8 should be afforded limited weight in the determination of the application. It continues to argue that where the LPA comes to a different conclusion, the proposal would comply with the requirements of the policy, adding that the policy consists of a 'series of criteria for development to meet in order to be found acceptable, as opposed to being restrictive in nature.'

Policy G/8 is a saved policy within the UDP and therefore forms a part of the Development Plan for the borough and as such is a material consideration when determining any relevant planning application as per section 70(2) of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Due to the nature of the application, part B and D of policy G/8 cannot be assessed through this stage of the application and would therefore need to be assessed at Technical Details Consent stage. However, part A of policy G/8 is of relevance at this stage of the application. The policy states that 'Greenspace Corridors shown on the Proposals Map will be protected. Development and other measures which will enhance their recreational, ecological or landscape and amenity value will be permitted. In those parts of the corridors which are outside the Defined Urban Area, the provisions of Policy D/10 will also apply. Within all parts of Greenspace Corridors, the Council will not permit development proposals which would:

- a) **Lead to an unacceptable narrowing or a division of the corridor into sections, thereby,**
 - i. **restricting the movement of wildlife along it, or**
 - ii. restricting the movement of people along established or proposed recreational routes or rights of way;
- b) Result in the loss or severance of links between areas of recreational open space;
- c) Result in the loss of existing valued recreational facilities or prejudice proposed new facilities; or
- d) Prevent public access into the corridor at strategic locations;

or which would result in unacceptable harm to:-

- e) **The better landscape qualities and character of the corridor;**
- f) **The amenity value of the corridor where it provides welcome visual relief from urban development, including attractive views in and out of the corridor;**
- g) Features of nature conservation interest, including designated and non designated sites; or
- h) Viable agricultural operations, including good quality grazing land and allotments.'

Additionally, policy JP-Strat13 (Strategic Green Infrastructure) of the PfE seeks to protect and enhance key strategic green infrastructures including river valleys and waterways (policy JP-G3), trees and woodlands (policy JP-G7) and Uplands (policy JP-G5).

The application site is situated within a finger of the Roch Valley Greenspace Corridor and, by virtue of previous piecemeal encroachment has resulted in an unacceptable narrowing of this corridor. The piecemeal development has encroached into routes used by wildlife and the Meadowcroft Wood Site of Biological Importance (SBI) and diminished its amenity value and contribution towards providing visual relief from the urban environment.

The proposed site is set on higher ground to the northwest and drops down when travelling along the site towards the southeast edge of the site. The natural topography of the land falls away from approximately where the boundary wall of no. 12 is sited. The indicative proposed site plan suggests that the proposed dwelling would be sited on the slope. The slope does provide a natural boundary along the Greenspace Corridor. The curtilage of the proposed dwelling would drop down the slope and as was noted on the site visit, there has been considerable work done on the site to create levels on the site, with the natural slope being removed. Nevertheless, the southeastern part of the site does sit on considerably lower ground than the northwestern part of the site.

The site of the proposed dwelling as indicated on the indicative proposed site plan would project out further than the neighbouring properties on Eton Close and would be set further southeast than the properties on Eton Close. A dwelling sited further northwest on the site and to the west of no. 12 would have limited impact on the Greenspace Corridor. However, this part of the site is narrow with it being 5.4m wide at its narrowest point, and 12.6m at its widest. Due to the size of and nature of the site, it is unclear whether an acceptable dwelling can be conceivably constructed on this part of the site. Nevertheless, the site does project further southeast into the Greenspace Corridor, and this would lead to the construction of an additional dwelling within the Greenspace Corridor. This would further erode the Greenspace Corridor and further narrow it along this part of the Greenspace Corridor and would

result in a significant negative impact on the openness, landscape quality and character of the greenspace corridor. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to saved policy G/8 part A of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan which seeks to limit development in Greenspace Corridors those which will enhance their recreational, ecological, landscape and amenity value.

Additionally, the planning officer for planning application 17/01414/FUL concluded that the proposal also failed to 'comply with policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy which seeks to enhance the Roch Valley corridor as a key landscape feature forming a part of Greater Manchester's strategic green infrastructure network and an ecological corridor, and policy P3 which requires development proposals to have regard to the local context.' Although the proposal is an application for permission in principle and relates to a smaller site than the one proposed for 17/01414/FUL, it nevertheless would still extrude further into the Greenspace Corridor and would fail to enhance the Roch Valley Corridor.

It is accepted that through piecemeal development within this part of the Greenspace Corridor, it has been narrowed and reduced the ecological and wildlife value. The Greenspace Corridor may likely be updated to remove parts of the area around the site from the Greenspace Corridor, however, this would be done through the emerging Rochdale Local Plan and it is unclear to what extent the Greenspace Corridor will be amended. Given that there is no formalised policy in regard to the amendment of the Greenspace Corridor, this cannot be given any weight.

The applicant has stated that the discussions have been had with the planning department in regard to the reallocation of the Greenspace Corridor in the area around the proposed site. No formal pre-application advice has been sought, however, discussions have been had with Strategic Planning department.

As such, the application is considered to be unacceptable in principle and contrary to the requirements of the UDP, Core Strategy, PfE and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design and Visual Amenity

The applicant has only provided an indicative proposed site plan and a location plan as part of this application. In any case, approval of matters relating to the appearance, layout, scale and landscaping of the development is not a consideration at this stage as only Permission in Principle is sought. The scope of Permission in Principle applications is limited to location, land use and amount of development.

As noted above, the site is within the Greenspace Corridor and policy G/8(b) of the UDP states that 'any new development permitted within or adjacent to the corridors will be of a design, and use materials appropriate to, the character and setting of the corridor. Boundary treatments and landscaping should help to retain or re-establish a 'countryside' character in the corridors and contribute to nature conservation interest through design and use of appropriate species.' The indicative proposed site plan suggests that the proposed dwelling would be set over two floors and would project out further than any of the neighbouring properties. Additionally, the layout on the indicative proposed site plan suggests an irregular form.

The addition of the proposed dwelling within this location of the Greenspace corridor would lead to a significant change to the character and appearance of the area. A proposed dwelling sited further northwest on the site and adjacent to no. 12 would reduce the impact on the Greenspace Corridor, however, due the size of the site, it is unclear if it would be possible to construct a dwelling on this part of the site that would be acceptable in regard to all relevant material considerations.

It is also noted that the site would likely have limited views from the public highway. Additionally, the properties along Eton Close as well as those within the enclosed complex are of varied designs. A development on the site will need to consider the character and appearance of the locality as well as ensuring that any development respects the visual amenity of the area. Scale, massing and appearance should be at the forefront of the design of the proposed dwelling making sure that the development would complement the existing landscape but utilising an acceptable material palette.

At this stage it is not possible to make a planning judgement on the design of the proposed development and this would be explored in any future Technical Details Consent application. To that effect however, any application would need to ensure it addressed policies P1, P2, P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, policy G/8 of the UDP, as well as design policies contained within the NPPF and PfE.

Residential Amenity

Matters associated with the design, siting and fenestration of the proposed dwellings are not for consideration at this stage.

It should be noted that the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development', which establishes minimum space standards that will be applied to all new residential developments and development which affect existing residential properties. The standards set out in the SPD would need to be met, subject to all other material planning considerations.

Access and highway safety

Core Strategy policy T2 states that development will be appropriately located to minimise the need to travel by car and the number and length of car trips. Core Strategy policy DM1 requires all development proposals, provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring and servicing arrangements, taking into account the proposed use and location. Developments are required to provide parking in compliance with the Council's Car Parking Standards as set out in Appendix 5 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy. Paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF require that safe and suitable access to a site can be achieved for all users and 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 of the road network would be severe.

The highways department have raised no objection to the proposal subject to the addition a dilapidation survey and refuse collection strategy. The highways department have raised concerns that construction traffic will damage the highways leading to the site. And as such, a dilapidation survey would need to be undertaken of the highway prior to development and any new damage repaired upon completion of construction.

The highways department noted that the application site is located within a well established residential area and at the end of an unadopted highway. The highways department concluded that the traffic generation associated with usage would be minimal.

The highways department also noted that a dwelling of this size requires two off street parking bays. In regard to the request for the dilapidation survey and refuse collection strategy, along with the parking requirements, these can be adequately addressed under a Technical Details Consent application.

Ecology

Policy G7 requires that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. CS policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

PfE policy JP-G9 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity resources through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021), the NPPF and supporting guidance documents. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications and so the proposed development should achieve net gains for biodiversity via species enhancement as guided by the NPPF (paragraphs 187d and 192 b) to achieve demonstrable net gain for biodiversity.

As of 2nd April 2024, BNG of 10% for minor planning applications is mandatory for development in England under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. However, statutory BNG requirements are to be considered at Technical Details Consent application. A BNG assessment or statement will be required with any future Technical Details Consent application

It should be noted that when determining planning applications, paragraph 193 of the NPPF sets out that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should also be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable gains

The site is adjacent to Meadowcroft Woods Site of Biological Importance (SBI). The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) noted that that the site has been cleared of vegetation since the previous application (17/01414/FUL) and concluded that any risk to wildlife could be dealt with via condition and or informative. GMEU concluded that there was unlikely any ecological reason to refuse development on the site and recommended that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal should be provided given the proximity to the SBI and potential presence of protected species such as badger and invasive species in the SBI and along the stream valley. This would be dealt with through the Technical Detail Consent application.

Trees

It is noted that there are a number of existing mature trees along the boundary of the site and adjacent to the site. Additionally, there are numerous trees that have been recently planted on the site.

The NPPF recognises the important contribution of trees to the character and quality of urban environments, and their role in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Policy JP-G2 of the adopted PfE identifies trees and woodland as vital elements of the green infrastructure network and key features of urban green spaces, which policy JP-G8 seek to protect and enhance through conserving and managing existing trees of heritage and/or aesthetic value. Policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy sets out provision for enhancing green infrastructure and requires regard to local landscape character and contribute to its conservation or enhancement.

Developments should avoid the loss of existing urban greenspace or features e.g. trees unless suitable alternative provision is made, it has limited value and its development or change of use will help meet other sustainability or local regeneration objectives. Policy G6 requires a tree replacement ratio of at least 2:1. Additionally, Policy G7 requires developments to protect existing biodiversity including trees and vegetation.

Mature trees which have a high amenity value would be expected to be retained. Any Technical Details Consent application would need to account for loss of trees and provide the required mitigation for any losses, however it must first be demonstrated that the losses are unavoidable. An Arboricultural Report should also be submitted with any future any Technical Details Consent application.

Drainage and Flood Risk

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flood risk. United Utilities have provided guidance for the applicant. United Utilities have advised that the applicant uses the pre-development enquiry service to discuss their proposals directly with the Developer Services team.

Any Technical Details Consent application would need to ensure the drainage hierarchy is followed and that the proposed development would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere off site.

Land Contamination and Stability

Paragraph 187 and 196 of the NPPF seeks to prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Core Strategy Policy G9 similarly seeks to ensure that sensitive new forms of development are not adversely affected by existing sources of pollution.

The Coal Authority have confirmed that the site falls within the Coal Authority's defined Development Low Risk Area. As such, the Coal Authority had no specific comments to make. The Land Contamination Officer also confirmed that a Phase I geo-environmental desktop should be submitted with any future Technical Detail Consent application.

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

1. The application site is situated within a finger of the Roch Valley Greenspace Corridor and, by virtue of previous piecemeal encroachment, would result in an unacceptable narrowing of this corridor, encroaching into routes used by wildlife and the Meadowcroft Wood Site of Biological Importance and diminishing its amenity value and contribution towards providing visual relief from the urban environment. As a result, the proposal would have a significant negative impact on the openness, landscape quality and character of the greenspace corridor. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to saved policy G/8 part A of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan which seeks to limit development in Greenspace Corridors to those which will enhance their recreational, ecological, landscape and amenity value. The proposal also fails to comply with policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy which seeks to enhance the Roch Valley corridor as a key landscape feature forming a part of Greater Manchester's strategic green infrastructure network and an ecological corridor. As such the application is considered to be unacceptable in principle and contrary to saved policy G/8 of the adopted Rochdale Unitary

Development Plan, policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Notes for Applicant:

For avoidance of doubt the decision relates to the following plans:

- Location Plan. Drawing number: AS868-01. Revision: D
- Indicative Proposed Site Massing Plan. Drawing number: AS868-SK02. Revision: B

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