

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
25/00098/FUL	Bob Melling	11 th March 2025

Address: The Phoenix Centre, L Cpl Stephen Shaw Mc Way, Heywood, OL10 1LR

Proposal: Change of use of part of first floor to educational facility (Class F1(a)).

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?	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	Grant subject to conditions
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: TH

DATE: 28.03.2025

SITE

The application relates to 'The Phoenix Centre' (formerly known as the Heywood Joint Service Centre), a four storey building located in Heywood Town Centre which provides a range of public services delivered by different providers including Rochdale Borough Council. The building sits at a prominent location to the rear of the Heywood Memorial Garden which includes the Grade II Listed War Memorial and Heywood Library, which is also Grade II Listed. The site is contained to the north by

the memorial garden, to the east by the Civic Centre, to the south by Pine Street and to the west by Hind Hill Street.

The site is located within the 'Defined Urban Area' along the southernmost section of the designated Heywood Town Centre boundary. It also forms part of the Central and East Heywood Physical Regeneration Area.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the change of use of part of the first floor from a training and conference space to an educational facility for a special educational needs school (Class F1). The proposed facility would cater for approximately 25 school-aged pupils and 4 staff. The facility would be operated by Redwood School and it would open from 7:30am-6pm for staff and 8:45am-3pm for pupils.

The proposed facility would accommodate four classrooms, one of which would include cooking facilities for the school's hospitality course. There are no external alterations proposed to the building.

The site benefits from an existing provision of 18 car parking spaces and no changes are proposed regarding the existing waste storage and collection arrangements.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2024
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE):

JP- P1	Sustainable Development
JP- P5	Education, Skills and Knowledge

Local

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1	Delivering a more prosperous economy
E1	Establishing thriving town, district and local centres
SO2	Creating successful and healthy communities
C7	Delivering education facilities
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
SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility
DM1	General development requirements

SD1 Delivering sustainable development

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area
G/R/1 Physical Regeneration
G/S/1 Hierarchy And Role of Centres

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

08/D50367 Erection Of 4 Storey Building With Link To Adjacent Library
Granted STC (March 2008)

08/D50368 Alterations To Listed Building To Form Link Extension To New Joint
Service Centre Building
Granted STC (March 2008)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

A press notice was published on 06.03.2025, a site notice was posted on 13.02.2025 and neighbour letters were sent to surrounding properties. No representations were received in response to the proposed development.

ANALYSIS

Principle for Development

The application site is allocated as 'Defined Urban Area' under saved UDP policy G/D/1, which establishes that new development should be located in the urban area to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside.

CS policy C7 states that Improving education and skills is a high priority in order to improve productivity, social and community cohesion and the overall prosperity and quality of life in the borough. It goes on to say that educational facilities should be provided in appropriate and accessible locations, by foot, cycling and public transport. Similarly, when read collectively, PfE policy JP-P5 and paragraph 100 of the NPPF support the delivery of new educational facilities for all ages, and that LPAs should take a proactive approach to meeting the needs of the community in terms of school places and choice.

CS policy C8 seeks to support and promote the provision of better community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities provided they are of a type and scale appropriate to the size of the settlement, are accessible and support the Council's objectives. Policy C8 requires facilities intended to serve the everyday needs of a community or neighbourhood to be in or adjacent to key local centres.

While the aforementioned policies make no specific reference to the provision of special educational facilities, the provision of this facility is considered an important contribution towards the overarching aim of increasing the educational attainment of young people in the borough. Owing to its town centre location, the site is considered to be in an appropriate and accessible location which is well-suited to serving the needs of the community, and by virtue of its current use as a training and conference facility, the site is similarly suitable for an educational facility. Given its current use,

its sustainable location and its contribution to the provision of educational facilities across the borough, the principle for development is therefore established.

Amenity

CS policy DM1 states that proposals need to demonstrate that they do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. Additionally, the NPPF advises that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The application proposes no external alterations or built form and so no concerns are had regarding the potential for the proposals to unduly overshadow or have an overbearing impact upon neighbouring buildings. The proposed use as an educational facility would make similar use of the existing rooms and proposes no alteration to, or addition of, window openings. Therefore, it is not considered that the change of use would unduly harm the privacy of surrounding occupiers, particularly the residential properties across Pine Street to the south.

The supporting report provided with the application notes that the facility would accommodate 25 learners aged 16-19 and 4 staff members, and would be open from 7:30am until 6pm. While the proposals would likely result in an intensification of the use of the site, particularly during drop off and pick up times, it is considered that this would be commensurate with the town centre location and current operational activity associated with the Phoenix Centre. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposed use would result in harmful levels of noise and disturbance to surrounding occupiers.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed change of use would have an acceptable impact on the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would accord with the requirements of CS policy DM1 and the NPPF.

Design

When read collectively, the NPPF, CS policies P3 and DM1, and PfE policy JP-P1 seek to achieve development of high quality design, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general. Development should function well and add to the overall quality of an area by being visually attractive as a result of effective architecture, layout and landscaping.

The application proposes no external alterations and, as such, there are no design concerns. The design of the proposal is therefore acceptable and accords with CS policies DM1 and P3, PfE policy JP-P1 and the NPPF.

Highways

CS policies DM1 and T2 require all new developments to provide safe accessibility, manoeuvring and parking for all residents and users. The site is in a highly sustainable location with good access to public transport. The supporting report also explains that some learners will arrive via local authority transportation. On this basis and given the existing provision of off-street parking, the proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with CS policies DM1 and T2.

Other Matters – Heritage

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The Phoenix Centre is viewed in the setting of the War Memorial and Heywood Library, both of which are Grade II Listed. The proposals do not include any external alterations and it is not considered that the internal alterations or change of use would affect the setting of nearby designated heritage assets. As a result, the proposals would not result in harm to the significance of the assets in accordance with the relevant legislation and planning policies contained within the CS, PfE and the NPPF.

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:-

- Planning Statement
- Location Plan dated 31/01/2025
- Existing Plan Part First Floor. Dwg no. 01
- Proposed Plan Part First Floor. Dwg no. 01

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings hereby approved unless otherwise required by the conditions below.

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

Procedure statement

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.

Report Author Bob Melling