

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.
25/00927/FUL

CASE OFFICER
Claire Ringwood

DATE
14th November 2025

Address: 5 Market Place, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 6AE

Proposal: Change of use from vacant former bank premises Class E(c)(i) to a place of Religious 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:

DATE:

SITE

The application site is a three storey non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) formerly occupied by the Royal Bank of Scotland. The majority of the building was rebuilt in brick in the early 1990s, but the building retains its stone façade which contains several of its original features. Due to levels at the site, the rear is at a lower level and access from the building to the rear yard is from steps at first floor level.

The adjoining building at 3 Market Place was designed by Edgar Wood and is a Grade II Listed Building and 1 Market Place is the Assheton Hotel which is located at the junction of Long Street and Market Place. 7-11 Market Place is an attractive NDHA. Surrounding land uses are predominantly commercial with Middleton Arena located on the opposite side of Long Street Roundabout.

The front of the building is adjacent to the entrance of the subway and rear access is available via Cemetery Street.

The site is within the Defined Urban Area (G/D/1), Middleton Town Centre (G/S/1) and Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

The application is for the change of use from the existing vacant bank (Use Class E(c)(i)) to a place of Religious Workshop (Use Class F1(f)). The Planning Statement advises there will be around 25-30 people present at any one time.

The ground floor would consist of a Prayer Room and back office and the first floor would comprise of a meeting room, office, kitchen and toilets.

There appears to be a second floor level as there is a blocked up front and rear window however, the agent has confirmed that there is no internal access to that part of the building and this part of the building is not intended to be used.

No external alterations are proposed.

The agent confirmed in an email dated 7th November 2025 that the opening hours would be Wednesday 18:00-20:00 and Sunday 09:00 to 12:00.

No on-site parking provision is proposed.

The submitted application form states bin storage is to the rear of the building and will be disposed of by a private waste disposal company.

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

Site Location Plan

Drawing No: A-100 Rev A – Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: A-101 Rev A – First Floor Plan

Drawing No: A-102 Rev A – Existing Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: A-103 Rev A – Existing First Floor Plan

Drawing No: A-105 – Existing Site Plan

Drawing No: A-106 – Proposed Site Plan

Planning Statement

Received on 5th September 2025

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

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

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:

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

80/D11858 - Fire Escape. Approved 05/03/1989.

83/D15322 - Two Storey Extension To Rear Of Existing Bank Premises. Approved 07/07/1983.

89/D23309 - Rebuilding Of Bank Premises With Retention Of Existing Front Façade. Approved 08/06/1989.

89/D23310/LBC - Partial Demolition Of Bank Premises (Front Facade Retained). Approved 08/06/1989.

97/D34159 - Installation Of 90CM Wall Mounted Satellite Dish. Approved 10/06/1997.

01/D39522 - Alterations To Front Elevation To Include Improved Access For The Disabled Including Installation Of Lighting Facilities. Approved 16/01/2002.

05/A5461 - Externally Illuminated Fascia & Wall Mounted Signs And Externally Illuminated Projecting Box Sign. Approved 12/01/2006.

12/A5970 - Installation Of One Internally Illuminated Fascia Sign, One Externally Illuminated Projecting Box Sign And One Internally Illuminated ATM Header Sign To Front Elevation Of Premises. Approved 21/05/2012.

16/00195/ADV - One internally illuminated fascia sign, one internally illuminated projecting sign, one non-illuminated wall mounted sign and one non-illuminated window vinyl. Withdrawn 02/11/2016.

18/00599/FUL - Removal of the branded fascia, face-fixed signage and projecting sign above ground floor and adjacent to the entrance and repair stonework behind. Removal of the automatic teller machine and a stainless steel receptacle for ATM receipts below and replace with a new window and stone sub cill-to restore the window and cill to their former condition. Approved 10/09/2018.

18/01391/DOC - Submission of details to comply with conditions 3 and 4 on planning permission 18/00599/FUL. Request completed 18/01/2019.

20/00805/FUL - Change of use from financial and professional services (A2) to nightclub (Sui Generis). Refused 11/11/2020.

22/00619/FUL - Change of use from financial services (use class E) to mixed use as cafe and nightclub (sui generis). Approved 05/01/2023.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Environmental Health (Noise)

No comment at the time of writing.

Highways

No objection.

Heritage

No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised with a press notice, a site notice and neighbour notification letters. 24 letters of representation have been received, 19 in support of the application and 5 objections. Comments are summarised below:

Support

1. The building has been vacant for some time and has become an area for anti-social behaviour. Occupation of the building will provide a better community spirit;
2. This is an excellent initiative to have a charity contribute to the local area;
3. A church is a great place to develop British values;

4. The sites location makes it accessible for local residents;
5. The use will provide an active community service;
6. This use will have a positive impact on the community

Objection

1. The area desperately needs a better variety of shops and activities for families and children;
2. The use will take away crucial parking spaces for people accessing the arts/health services and local businesses;
3. Being situated on a busy roundabout has the potential for a serious road traffic accident when worshippers are dropped off;
4. Middleton doesn't need another place of worship;
5. It will bring unwanted attention to Middleton

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.

In addition, Policy JP-P3 of PfE states that '*we will proactively develop and support cultural businesses and attractions in our cities and towns through a range of measures*'. One of these measures (2) includes supporting the development of new cultural venues in town centres and places with good public transport connectivity. As well as (5) considering the use of vacant properties and land for pop-ups or meanwhile uses for cultural and creative activities during the day and at night-time to stimulate vibrancy and viability and promote diversity in town centres.

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*'.

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, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. More specifically, paragraph 125 (c) states that '*planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other*

identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land".

The application is submitted by the Redeemed Christian Church of God and is for the change of use only of the vacant building to a place of worship. The site is on previously developed land and was a former bank building. 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.

Regards has also been had to the adopted Middleton Town Centre Masterplan (2022) which includes the site within the East Side character area, under Plot 3.1, which seeks to re-use the site for commercial and residential opportunities. Whilst the proposed use is neither, it would still support the overarching objectives of the Masterplan in terms of bringing activity into the town centre and providing opportunities for linked trips, and thus it is not felt that such use would prejudice any intentions.

The site is located within the Middleton Town Centre and Middleton Town Conservation Area and given the surrounding land uses and proposed development, it is considered that 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 within an existing well established town centre location and within close proximity to a busy junction. There are no residential properties within close proximity of the site which would be adversely affected by the proposed development, and it is not considered that any additional traffic movements into and around the site would be so great as to create unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance above and beyond the existing circumstances surrounding the application site.

No comments have been received from the Council's Environmental Health (Noise) Officer and the opening hours are not considered unreasonable however, it is considered that a condition prohibiting the provision of any external speakers would be reasonable in this instance to ensure there is no impact on the surrounding area.

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 reviewed the application and advised that as the proposal does not include any external changes and the proposed use would have a neutral impact on the significance of the Conservation Area, there are no 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

The Council's Highways Officer was consulted on the application and raised no objection given the highly sustainable location of the site. The traffic generation associated with the use is not expected to be large enough to become problematic during the peak period and there are no road safety concerns. The service yard to the rear remains as existing and operates in the same way as neighbouring businesses. Although no parking is provided, the site is opposite a car park and given the sustainable location, the Council's Highways Officer considers this acceptable. Accordingly, the proposed development is acceptable and would comply with DM1 and T2 of the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Ecology and Trees

Core Strategy Policy G7 sets out that 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 but given the urban and built environment on and around the application site, it is acknowledged that this site does not impact any biodiversity and the site has a completely sealed surface and therefore has a biodiversity value of zero.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the statutory requirement to provide 10% BNG is applicable in this instance.

Drainage and Flood Risk

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

The proposed development comprises a change of use only to a place of worship on previously developed land in an existing former bank building, on a sustainable site which would wholly accord with both local and national planning policies. 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 proposal would therefore be 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:

Site Location Plan

Drawing No: A-100 Rev A – Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: A-101 Rev A – First Floor Plan

Drawing No: A-106 – Proposed Site Plan

Received on 5th September 2025

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. No external speakers must be externally placed around the exterior of the entire building for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the surrounding town centre location in accordance with Policy G9 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

4. The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until such time as the bin store as shown on the approved site plan has been installed and made available for use. The bin store shall be retained as such thereafter for its intended use.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until such time as the cycle store as shown on the approved site plan has been installed and made available for use. The cycle store shall be retained as such thereafter for its intended use.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to, and sustainable access to, the development and in accordance with Policies P3, T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 and JP-C8 of the adopted 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.

Notes for the Applicant

The planning permission hereby granted does not grant or imply consent for any advertisements. A separate application under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 maybe required for the installation of any advertisements in the future.