

APPLICATION NUMBER: 25/00971/PIP

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.
25/00971/PIP

CASE OFFICER
Rosalind Gralton

DETERMINATION DATE 11.11.2025 **EXT OF TIME** 28.11.2025

Address: Land Rear Of 22 Birch Avenue, Wardle, OL12 9QH

Proposal: Application for permission in principle for residential development of up to 8 dwellings.

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	NA

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?	NA
	Neighbour comments received?	Y

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

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 26/11/2025

SITE

The application relates to a vertical strip of land at the rear of 22 Birch Avenue and properties the rear of Birch Hill Crescent. The site is characterised by dense trees and grassland. It does not appear any substantial buildings to be occupying the site at present. The access is proposed via a single track lane off Birch Avenue.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for permission in principle. Planning Practice Guidance advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or 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. This application relates to the first of these two stages.

The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent technical details consent application if permission in principle is granted. This application seeks Permission in Principle (Stage 1) for the erection of 5 dwellings on the site (indicated minimum and maximum of 5).

A location plan showing the outline of the site and a covering letter is the only item submitted. This application is therefore determined on that basis and these plans are used only as an aid for assessing the matters which can be considered at this stage.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

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

Sub-Regional

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-H1 Scale Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development
JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Development
JP-P1 Sustainable Places

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):

- GD/1 Defined Urban Area

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

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

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

86/D19421 - Use Of Land For Private Garden Areas - Grant subject to conditions
1986-09-18

88/D21562 - Erection Of Stable Blocks With Storage And Tack Room - Grant subject
to conditions 1988-04-26

89/D23487 - Siting Of Two Stable Blocks - Grant Permission subject to condition
1989-06-08

78/D06140 - Plot 2 Birch Avenue Garage Site Wardle - Grant subject to conditions
1978-03-13

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

United Utilities

Details regarding likely conditions imposed in the instance of a Technical Detail
consent being submitted.

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)

Any technical detail consent would need to provide a Phase I report (Preliminary
Risk Assessment).

Env Health - Air Quality

No comments received to date

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date

Tree Officer

No comments received to date

Gtr Manchester Ecology Unit

No specific ecological constraints that would prevent a permission in principle however it is noted a number of constraints that would impact a Technical Details Consent.

Highways And Engineering

Concerns regarding the site being used for residential purposes, however if these can be addressed we would not object to the proposal in principle.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification and site notice. Councillor Taylor contacted the case officer requesting if a call in to committee was possible however the date within which the application needed to be called-up by had expired.

17 letters of objection have been received. Concerns raised are the following:

- Impact of overlooking
- Concern of lack of information in the submission
- Illogical location, given the steep land and stream through the site
- Poor access for construction and property access
- No layout of properties shown
- Concern over lack of detail on the type of properties
- No detail of demographic of people to be housed
- Concern of noise, dust and disruption during construction
- Traffic since closure of Gloucester Avenue
- Habitats of animals on the land will be disrupted
- Houses by virtue of height would be overbearing
- Impact on visual amenity
- Potential overshadowing and loss of light
- Impact on parking
- Japanese Knotweed on the site
- Existing parking issues on Birch Avenue
- Drainage issues
- Impact on trees
- The access width is insufficient

Officer Response: The application is a permission in principle application and scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent technical details consent application if permission in principle is granted. A location plan, application form, and fee is the only required details for determination of this application. Further considerations such as impact on highways and wildlife, will be considered at a Technical Details Consent stage.

Disruption during the works are covered through separate legislation and cannot be controlled through planning.

ANALYSIS

Permission in Principle (Stage 1)

Location of the site and the type of land use proposed

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 application seeks permission in principle for the construction of up to 8 dwellings and a key consideration in the determination of this application is whether the proposed development represents sustainable development or not.

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.

Places for Everyone Policy JP-H1 states 'A minimum of 175,185 net additional dwellings will be delivered over the period 2022-2039 ... The new homes will be of good quality and design, adaptable, supported by the necessary infrastructure and amenities and their distribution'. Specific to Rochdale, during 2025-2030, annually Rochdale must achieve 616 new dwellings to meet these targets. 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 70 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 123 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*". Paragraph 124 of the NPPF advises that "*Planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing...*"

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 Core Strategy target; however this does not preclude the promotion of sustainable development where this can assist in delivering additional housing to meet local needs.

The principle of redevelopment of the site for residential use would be compatible with the surrounding residential area. The site is well located a short distance from A56 Halifax Road, with easy reach of bus routes and sustainable transport modes. It is therefore considered that the site is well located in terms of access to jobs, shops and services by modes of transport other than the private car. The site is therefore in a sustainable location.

Furthermore, the proposal would make efficient use of land within the Defined Urban Area and would contribute to the supply of housing in a sustainable location within

the borough. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable and in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy, saved policies within the Unitary Development Plan and the NPPF.

The amount of development

This application seeks permission for up to 8 dwellings.

The applicant has provided a site location plan only. As this is an application for permission in principle, this is the only required drawing at this stage.

Consideration can only be given to the site's location, land use and the proposed amount of development - which is 8 dwellings. Given the sustainable location of the site, compatible residential use and noting the site area, it could be feasible to achieve 8 residential units on the site and therefore there is no objection to the amount of development in principle at this stage.

Important to note:

Whilst matters relating to highways and ecology would be assessed at the technical details consent stage following the submission of detailed plans and reports, the LPA would note the information contained within the consultation responses are relevant at the point of Technical Details stage.

With regards to possible designs, the below shall be taken into consideration by the applicant. More specifically, this is achieved through an appropriate and successful:

- Layout (how the development is arranged and relates to open spaces and buildings).
- Form (the three-dimensional shape and modelling of buildings and the spaces they define. E.g. size and shape, height, bulk – their volume, massing – how bulk is shaped into a form, building lines – the alignment of building frontages along a street);
- Scale (height, width and length of each building proposed affecting enclosure);
- Appearance (architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture);
- Landscape (treatment of the land, landform and drainage, surfacing, boundary treatments);
- Materials (The materials used for a building or landscape affect how well it functions and lasts over time. They also influence how it relates to what is around it and how it is experienced); and
- Detailing (Detailing affects the appearance of a building or space and how it is experienced – both functional and deliberate).

To that effect, any application would need to ensure it addressed policies P1, P2, P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy as well as design policies contained within the NPPF and PfE with consideration given to the aims and aspirations of the National Design Guide.

Overall, the considerations of this application for Permission in Principle at this stage are limited to those related to location, land use and amount of development. The LPA have therefore found the location to be acceptable, and the proposed residential use and amount of dwellings would be compatible in the local context in principle.

Impact on Surrounding Land Uses and Residential Amenity

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

The Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development', which establishes minimum space standards will be applied to all new residential developments and development which affect existing residential properties.

The minimum space standard set out in the SPD are:

- 21m between directly facing principal windows of habitable rooms, at an upper floor level AND 10.5m between a principal window at an upper floor level and a directly facing boundary of the curtilage
- 14m between a principal window and any directly facing two storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room
- (10m between a principal window and any directly facing single storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room.

These separation distances would need to be met, subject to full 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 Local Highway Authority have raised concerns about the sites access for the scale of development and residential use. The main concern being the access into the site has insufficient space to accommodate a required 5.5m vehicle access width, with 2m wide footways. Any submission must consider emergency vehicle access and refuse collection, and pedestrian access without conflict; or a suitable mitigation made. The Highways Officer also concludes concerns regarding ground conditions on the site due to the stream on the site.

While no objections are raised, the above amount to a road safety concern which would likely result in a reason for refusal under Paragraph 115 and 116 of the NPPF. While the above considerations do not amount to a refusal in principle, Highway related matters involving the proposed access to the site for example should be adequately addressed under a technical details stage 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.

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

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. Any Technical Details Consent application would therefore need to account for statutory Biodiversity Net Gain.

The following documents have been requested at the point of a Technical Details Consent application:

- ☐ A preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA),
- ☐ Any additional surveys recommended by the PEA, such as badger, water vole and invasive species and;
- ☐ A UK Habitat survey and habitat condition assessment and
- ☐ A BNG assessment and metric or BNG statement providing evidence of exemption from 10% BNG.

Additionally, information is requested on how the developer would protect the watercourse during construction and post-development.

Trees

Linking in with the above, it is noted that there are a number of existing trees on 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.

Drainage and Flood Risk

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding.

The site includes a watercourse which is considered at risk of surface water flooding, with a 1 in 30 annual probability probability. Additionally, the entire site is located within a critical drainage area.

United Utilities were consulted on this application, a response was received and as viewable on the public access portal of the Council's website. In any case. United Utilities offer a pre-development enquiry service which is strongly encouraged to discuss proposals directly with their Developer Services team.

United Utilities strongly encourage all developments to include sustainable drainage systems to help manage surface water and to offer new opportunities for wildlife to flourish. They request that Local Planning Authorities and applicants do all they can to avoid surface water entering the public sewer. The flows that come from this surface water are very large when compared with the foul water that comes from toilets, showers, baths, washing machines, etc. It is the surface water that uses up a lot of capacity in their sewers and results in the unnecessary pumping and treatment of surface water at pumping stations and treatment works. If new developments can manage flows through sustainable drainage systems that discharge to an alternative to the public sewer, it will help to minimise the likelihood of sewers spilling into watercourses and the flooding of homes and businesses.

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

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.

Any potential contamination risks associated with development could be dealt with in a future Technical Details Consent application through the submission of a phase 1 contaminated land report.

Noise

Core Strategy policy G9 sets out the Council's requirements approach to all forms of pollution including the risk of noise, as they relate to new development.

Environmental Health were consulted on this application and have advised that they would have not responded. In the instance of a Technical Details Consent application, it is likely a construction management plan is required to be provided, to cover areas such as noise, vibration, mud and dust suppression. Given the close proximity to existing residential properties we would also recommend restricting the site hours to site hours to 08:00-18:00 Monday - Friday 09:00-14:00 Saturdays and no work on Sundays or Bank holidays.

CONCLUSION

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 (or 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 have been assessed as being acceptable.

All other material planning consideration matters are to be considered at the Technical Details Consent Stage, though it must be clearly noted at this stage that the current indicative proposals are not acceptable when considering design and layout.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant Permission in Principle (Stage 1).

Notes for Applicant:

The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments received on the application from the various consultees which may contain advice relating to the expected level of detail to be submitted alongside an application for Technical Details Consent. These comments can be provided upon request.

The applicant's attention is also drawn to the Council's Validation Checklist, which is available online, but the Local Planning Authority would expect the following documents as a minimum to be submitted with any application for Technical Details Consent:

- ☐ Location Plan at a 1:1250 or 1:2500 scale
- ☐ Existing and Proposed Site Plans at 1:200 or 1:500 scale
- ☐ Proposed Elevation Drawings at 1:50 or 1:100 scale
- ☐ Proposed Floor Plan Drawings at 1:50 or 1:100 scale
- ☐ Street Scene and Section Drawings
- ☐ Topographical Survey
- ☐ Design and Access Statement
- ☐ Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (PEA) and any additional surveys recommended by the PEA, such as badger, water vole and invasive species and;
- ☐ A UK Habitat survey and habitat condition assessment and
- ☐ BNG assessment and metric or BNG statement providing evidence of exemption from 10% BNG.
- ☐ Phase 1 Site Investigation
- ☐ Ground conditions survey
- ☐ Heritage Statement
- ☐ Noise Impact Assessment
- ☐ Planning Statement / Supporting Statement/Letter
- ☐ Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- ☐ Drainage Strategy
- ☐ Proposed Hard and Soft Landscaping Plan
- ☐ Boundary Treatment Plan
- ☐ Servicing Plan (for domestic waste/refuse collection)

