

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

24/00328/FUL

CASE OFFICER

Majid Mir

DETERMINATION DATE 21.08.2024 **EXT OF TIME** 04.04.2025

Address: Smallbridge Business Park, Unit 7 Riverside Drive Rochdale OL16 2SH

Proposal: Change of use from commercial, storage and distribution [Use Classes E(g) and B8] to vehicle/car body repair shop (Use Class B2), with associated works including installation of flues and erection of 2.4m high perimeter paladin fence

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
-----	--	---

CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RG

DATE: 04 April 2025

SITE

The application relates to an industrial building (unit 7) within Smallbridge Business Park. The Business Park, plus additional land to northeast, east and south of the site are located within a Primary Employment Zone (policy EC/2 of UDP). There is a mixture of commercial and industrial uses within Smallbridge Business Park. The building is sited on a bend on Riverside Drive and towards the end of the business park.

To the south and east of the application site, there is a plot of land that has been allocated as a development site within an employment zone under policy EC/8 of the UDP. To the south of the site is also the River Roch which also wraps around the land allocated under policy EC/8 of the UDP.

A small proportion of the site is located within flood risk zone 2, however, the application building is located outside of flood risk zone 2. Riverside Drive to the west of the site is located within national surface water 1 in 30 year risk of flooding area.

The front of the application building is used as an office and the rear of the building use for manufacturing and storage of goods. Access is gained to the site directly off Riverside Drive, with staff/visitor access provided at the front and deliveries taking place via a separate access to the rear. The application building is enclosed by 1.8m high fencing to the side and rear. To the front, the car parking area is marked by 1.1m high railings. Beyond the boundary, between the fencing and highway, there are landscaped areas containing trees, grass and low lying vegetation which act as a buffer between the buildings and the highway. It is noted that the trees along this landscaped area have been recently removed.

PROPOSAL

The application proposes a change of use from its existing use within Use Class E(g) and B8 (commercial, storage and distribution) to Use Class B2 as vehicle/car body repair shop with associated works including installation of two flues on rear elevation and erection of perimeter paladin fencing up to a height of 2.4m enclosing the whole site.

The application proposes operating times of:

Monday to Friday: 08:00 to 17:30.

Saturday: 08:30 to 12:00.

Sunday and bank holidays: None proposed.

The supporting report states that there will be 22 full time employees on the site.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

JP-P1 Sustainable places

JP-J1 Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth

JP-J4	Industry and Warehousing Development
JP-C8	Transport Requirements of New Development
JP-C7	Freight and Logistics
JP-C8	Transport Requirements of New Development
JP-S1	Sustainable Development
JP-S4	Flood Risk and the Water Environment
JP-G8	A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1	Delivering a more prosperous economy
E1	Establishing thriving town, district and local centres
E2	Increasing jobs and prosperity
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P3	Improving design of new development
SO4	Promoting a greener environment
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
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
EC/2	Primary Employment Zone
EC/8	Development Sites in Employment Zones
EM/7	Development and Flood Risk

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

15/00097/DOC	Submission of details to comply with condition 3 on planning permission 14/00148/FUL. Decision: Request completed.
14/00148/FUL	Single storey extension to existing warehouse. Decision: Grant subject to conditions.
01/D38699	Erection of industrial unit with detached chemical store. Decision: Granted subject to conditions.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

No objections to this proposal.

A dilapidation survey should be undertaken before alterations to the site and upon first operation. Any new damage should be remedied to by the developer. In order to protect the unadopted highway from further damage.

Following amendments:
No comments on proposal.

Env Health - Noise/Odours
No comments received to date

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)
No comment.

Environment Agency
No comments received to date.

Natural England (North West Planning)
No specific comments to make on this proposal or issue.

Tree Officer
No comments received to date.

Gtr Manchester Ecology Unit
The Ecology Report states 'native-species hedgerow will be planted along the northern boundary' as compensation for losses and to provide a net gain in biodiversity – considered acceptable but information not provided.

Transport For Greater Manchester
Guidance provided, including:

A robust Construction Traffic Management Plan should be employed as part of the development to minimise disruption during the construction period.

TfGM recommends that a Staff Travel Plan is produced for the development, with the objective of reducing reliance on the private car, particularly single occupancy use.

Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards and where possible spaces in excess of the minimum provided. Additionally, appropriate welfare facilities (shower/changing rooms/lockers) should be provided for staff to promote and encourage cycling as an alternative to car travel.

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage
No comments received to date.

Strategic Planning
No comments received to date.

Canal And River Trust
No comment.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to neighbouring properties and site notices were placed in the vicinity of the site. No responses have been received.

ANALYSIS

Principle of development

The application site is within the Defined Urban Area and Primary Employment Zone as allocated under the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan. Under the supporting text for saved policy G/D/1 it is advised that wherever possible, new development should be located in the urban area so as to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside. Saved policy EC/2 (which should be read in conjunction with Core Strategy Policies E2 and E3) advises that development and change of use, for industrial, business and warehouse uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) will be permitted where proposals:

- “a) Are of an appropriate scale and character to the area;
- b) Will cause no unacceptable environmental or amenity problems in the employment area or adjoining areas; and
- c) Will cause no unacceptable traffic problems and have adequate on-site provision for parking, servicing and manoeuvring.

Other uses will not be permitted unless it can be shown that they are ancillary and complementary (both in terms of size and function) to the industrial and business nature of the employment area.”

In the supporting text related to policy EC/2, it states that ‘Primary Employment Zones identified on the proposal map are the major industrial areas and estates that are predominantly in employment uses in Use Classes B1, B2 and B8, along with sites that have planning permission for these employment uses but are not yet developed.’ Furthermore, the UDP emphasises the importance of these sites and the need to be protected from encroachment from other uses. As such the aim of the policy is to protect and enhance Primary Employment Zones for the retention and expansion of existing firms and to attract new industrial and business enterprises.

Additionally, policy E2 of the Core Strategy relates to increasing jobs and prosperity and advises that the Council will promote the delivery of infrastructure relating to the sufficient supply of suitable land, buildings and infrastructure required to create and retain successful businesses. Policy JP-J1 of PfE puts emphasis on maintaining a very high level of economic diversity across the boroughs.

The proposed use would provide a B2 use that will allow the site to be retained within the uses the UDP states should be permitted within a Primary Employment Zone. The development is considered to proportionate and within the character of the area. Additionally, as discussed below, the proposed development would not cause unacceptable environmental or amenity problems and nor would it cause unacceptable traffic problems.

Overall, the proposal is acceptable in accordance with Policy E2 of the Core Strategy, policy EC/2 of the UDP, the PfE and the NPPF.

Design and Visual Amenity

The application building itself comprises a traditionally designed industrial building with a front facing gable, brick plinth up to 2.6m high and cladding above for the elevations. The building also has multiple brick pillars running up the height of the building and large proportion of glazing to the front. The rest of the building is predominantly brick and cladding.

The external alterations will consist of the addition of the two flues towards the rear and the erection of perimeter paladin fencing up to a height of 2.4m enclosing the whole site.

As noted above, the site is located at the end of a Primary Employment Zone with land further east allocated for extension within the saved UDP. The flues would be of a standard design. The addition of the flues would not be out of keeping within the industrial/commercial nature of the Primary Employment Zone. Furthermore, the flues would project out from the roof and would be most prominent when travelling east to west along Riverside Drive. Nevertheless, the flues would be proportionate in comparison to the size of the building.

In regards to the proposed boundary treatment, it is noted that the existing boundary treatment consists of 1.8m and 1.1m tall boundary treatment. To the front the boundary treatment is set to a height of 1.1m, and to the sides and rear the boundary treatment set to a height of 1.8m.

It is noted the neighbouring properties do have similar scale boundary treatments up to the highway. The proposed boundary treatment proposed would be largely set back from the highway and would not be as prominent as that found on the neighbouring units. The proposed boundary treatment would be of a standard design. Furthermore, the boundary treatment would not be too dissimilar to the boundary treatment found on the neighbouring units. Additionally, the boundary treatment proposed is similar to what would be commonly expected in industrial/commercial zones. As such, it is considered the boundary treatment would not be out of character in this location.

As such the proposed development would accord with the relevant policies in the Core Strategy, the PfE and NPPF.

Highway and Road Safety

The site is accessed from the front and rear. The front appears to be the access used by customers and workers. There are five bays marked out to the front of the building. There is additional parking available around the front of the site. The transport statement states there is approximately 9 marked parking spaces including 3 disabled bays. To the rear of the site is the servicing yard which includes a turning area for larger vehicles and access to the large industrial openings in the rear elevation of the building.

The application originally proposed to remove a large proportion of the trees and foliage to create additional parking for 63 vehicles. The development has subsequently been amended, with the proposed site plan showing parking spaces for 34 vehicles to the front and rear. In response to the original proposal, the highways department stated that whilst the allocation of parking bays was below Council's standards, it was acceptable for a business of this size and nature and was well justified within the Transport Statement. The Transport Statement noted that following the standards within appendix 5 of the Core Strategy, general industry developments under Use Class B2 would require 29 parking spaces whereas a car workshop would require 88 parking spaces. The Transport Statement however added that a traditional car workshop includes 'fast repair' garages, where a higher proportion of trade comes from the general public / retail uses, which typically generate higher visitor numbers and therefore parking demand. However, a large proportion of the applicants work would be from insurance-based work where the majority of vehicles are delivered on car transporters / flatbed vehicles, reducing visitor numbers and parking demand. The highways department did not raise any objection in the reduction in the number of parking bays. Furthermore, it is noted that the site is located within a Primary Employment Zone with good public transport links available within walking distance. As such, it is considered the parking arrangements on the site are considered acceptable.

Furthermore, the highways department did not consider that the proposed development would raise new safety concerns. The highways department considered the access to the site was acceptable. The highways department stated that they had no concerns in regards to servicing the facility with there being sufficient space for vehicle transporters to safely access and egress the site.

The highways department did however raise concerns about the potential impact on the unadopted highway caused by the proposed work. However, the proposed external alterations proposed following the amendments would be limited.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of highway safety and compliant with policies T2 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, the PfE and the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy G8 requires that new development does not lead to any form of increased flooding or impeded natural water and flood risk management. In this regard it is important that development includes drainage that is appropriate for the site and that utilised sustainable urban drainage solutions where ever possible. Policy JP-S4 of the PfE expects developments to manage surface water run-off through sustainable drainage systems and as close to source as possible.

The site is predominantly in flood zone 1, with a small proportion of the site close to the southern boundary being located within flood zone 2. The building on site is located within flood zone 1. However, a proportion of the building and the site to the south is located within a flood warning area.

The supporting flood risk assessment states that the site and building are safe from fluvial flooding up to and including a 100+70% fluvial flood event, the change of use would not be subject to flooding, or cause flooding elsewhere and there is no residual risks. The supporting flood risk assessment concluded that the proposal does not need specific design mitigation. Furthermore, since the flood risk assessment was written, the proposed development was amended to remove the additional parking and therefore the need for additional hard surfacing. The proposed alterations would not lead to an increase in flooding.

In regards flood warning area, the flood risk assessment provided details of an emergency evacuation plan and strongly advised that the owner to sign up to receive flood warnings via the Environment Agency Flood Information Service.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of flood risk and drainage is compliant with relevant policies in the Core Strategy, the UDP, the PfE and the NPPF.

Ecology and trees

The proposal originally proposed to remove trees, shrubs and grass around the site to increase the level of parking on the site. The proposal was subsequently amended with all parking now being allocated within areas of hardstanding. The existing trees, shrubs and grass would remain. As such, the proposal can be considered 'de minimus' and exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

It is however noted that the Topographical Survey has identified 6 stumps on the grass verge adjoining Riverside Drive. Furthermore, historic images also show there were trees on the grass verge. It appears that the trees were felled at some point between November 2023 and October 2024. The trees on the verge along with the other foliage created a buffer on the bend of Riverside Drive. Policy G6 requires

removed trees from a site to be replaced at a ratio of 2:1. There is sufficient space within the site, in particular along the verge, to replace the trees at a ratio of 2:1. As such, in accordance with policy G6, it is considered appropriate to include a condition require the trees removed to be replaced at a ratio of 2:1.

The accompanying Preliminary Ecological Survey concluded that the site is unlikely to support any protected species. The survey did however recommend precautionary avoidance mitigation measures for hedgehog, nesting birds, reptiles and common toads and bats. It is considered appropriate to include a condition requiring the recommendations to be adhered during the construction process.

The survey also concluded that the proposal provide the opportunity to retain and enhance the ecological functionality on site and subsequently made a number of recommendations. These include:

- ☐ A native-species hedgerow planted along the northern boundary.
- ☐ At least four crevice-roost sites for roosting bats are installed on the south and east elevations of the building.
- ☐ At least four bird boxes are installed on the building on the east or west elevation, or along the fence on the south and east side of the site close to open vegetation.
- ☐ Fencing around the site to be raised approximately 13cm above the ground in at least 4 locations on each boundary to allow movement of wildlife beneath. Alternatively, holes are to be created in walled boundaries.

It is considered appropriate to include a condition requiring the addition of the ecological enhancements in accordance with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Survey are to be undertaken.

As such, it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the relevant policies in the Core Strategy, the PfE and NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

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:-

- Location plan. Drawing number: N173-03
- Existing site plan. Drawing number: N173-05
- Existing elevations. Drawing number: N173-06
- Proposed site works. Drawing number: N173-002/B. Received by email on 11/03/2025
- Existing and Proposed fence details. Drawing number: N173-04/A. Received by email on 11/03/2025
- Proposed fit out. Drawing number: N173-01/B. Received by email on 11/03/2025
- Proposed elevations. Drawing number: N173-07/A. Received by email on 11/03/2025

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings hereby approved.

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 adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Prior to first use of the development hereby approved, the biodiversity enhancement as recommended in section 9.7 of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (prepared by Verity Webster, dated March 2024), shall be carried out in full and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure protected species are appropriately protected from the development and to accord with the requirements of policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, policy JP-G8 of Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The recommendations made for measures during the construction process as submitted in pages 25 and 26 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (prepared by Verity Webster, dated March 2024) shall be adhered at all times during the construction process unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure protected species are appropriately protected from the development and to accord with the requirements of policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, policy JP-G8 of Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to first use of the development, 12 replacement trees shall be planted within the application site. If the replacement trees are removed, dies, becomes severely damaged or seriously diseased within five years of planting, the trees shall be replaced by trees of a similar size and species.

Reason: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily landscaped having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed development and in accordance with policies P3, DM1, G6 and G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until such a time as the parking arrangement as shown on the approved plans have been made fully available. The parking spaces shall be kept available for parking at all times thereafter and shall not be used for the storage of materials, goods or bins.

Reason: In the interest of highways and pedestrian safety and in order to comply with the requirements of Policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-C8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. The development hereby approved shall only operate between 08:00 and 18:00 on all days unless first agreed in writing by Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of nearby occupants and in accordance with policies G9 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.

Procedure Statement

The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.

Notes for Applicant:

1. Bats
All bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010). In the event that a bat is identified during the course of works, then works must cease and an ecologist should be contacted immediately. Before any work can proceed which may cause harm to bats, a License will need to be obtained from Natural England derogating from the terms of the legislation protecting bats. The License application process is separate from any grant of planning permission.
2. Birds
The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended it is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of a wild bird, while the nest is in use or being built. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. If a birds nest is suspected work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the nest(s).
3. Protected species
If at any time any protected species are found or are suspected of being present on the site and adversely affected by the development, work should cease immediately and an ecologist/LPA should be contacted.