

Officer Report

Case Reference: 25/01008/FUL
Location: Rough Bank Barn, Rough Bank, Milnrow, Rochdale, OL16 3QH
Proposal: Change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a residential children's home (Use Class C2), providing care and accommodation for up to four children and three carers
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application relates to Rough Bank Barn, a former barn which was converted to a single dwelling in the 1990s. The property is located in the Green Belt to the northeast of Newhey's urban core. The application property dates from the 18th century but may have incorporated elements of an early timber structure. The barn is constructed in hammer dressed stone with a stone slate roof. Glazing and rooflights have been inserted as part of the conversion. Internally, the original volume of the barn is still legible within the living room. To the south of the barn lies the former farmhouse, which is also listed at grade II and Higher Rough Bank Farm. The buildings form a small agrarian grouping in an isolated location. They are still read in this rural setting, and this contributes to their significance. The barn and farmhouse are good examples of vernacular architecture pre-dating the industrial revolution and are of special architectural and historic interest.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the conversion of a dwellinghouse (C3) into a children's care home (C2), accommodating up to four children and three carers. working on a shift pattern. No external works are proposed.

RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

93/D29009: Alterations To Listed Building To Provide One Dwelling. Approved.

93/D29007: Change Of Use And Conversion Of Barn To Provide One Dwelling And Installation Of Septic Tank. Approved.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

Legislation

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act) 1990

Section 16(2) – In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works 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.

National

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Local

Places for Everyone (PfE) 2024:

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-P2 Heritage

JP-G9 Green Belt

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

DM1 General development requirements

C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places

C3 Delivering the right type of housing

C6 Improving health and well being

P1 Improving image

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

T2 Improving accessibility

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Supplementary Planning Document 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (SPD) 2016

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: 13.12.2025

Press Notice: 13.12.2025

Neighbour notification letters: 13.11.2025

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The application site is located in the Green Belt, as per PfE Policy JP-G9, however no external additions or alterations are proposed. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposed change of use from C3 to C2 would conflict with the Green Belt purposes or result in an intensification the site's usage that would unduly impact Green Belt openness. As such, the proposed development would constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt.

NPPF Paragraph 96 seeks to promote healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other. Paragraph 98 aims to provide the social facilities and services the community needs, taking an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services. The most recent update to the NPPF in December 2024 has included additional text at Paragraph 63 to highlight some of the specific housing needs for different groups which must be accounted for in planning policies. This new wording includes 'looked after children' as one of the specific groups to be planned for in assessing housing need.

PfE Paragraph 9.4 aims to promote greater inclusion, including enabling all residents to lead healthier lives in safer places with good access to facilities that support health and wellbeing. Moreover, Paragraph 9.9 reads that it is vital to design neighbourhoods which enable residents to live healthier, happier and more fulfilling lives, with the barriers to doing so minimised as far as possible. This must include recognising and responding to the difficulties that people may face due to age, disability, illness or financial circumstances.

CS Policy C1 seeks to deliver the right amount of housing in the right places. Policy C3 notes that the Council will seek to ensure that new development provides housing types that take account of local needs and support the provision of housing on appropriate sites to meet the needs of specific groups including older people and other vulnerable groups.

The application seeks to change the use of the application property to a residential care home for up to 4 children and 3 carers working on a rotating shift basis.

While the application site is relatively isolated, far removed from any settlement and its associated amenities, the site's current use demonstrates its suitability for

habitation, and the isolated location could assist in providing a more tranquil setting for the children.

As such, it is considered that the proposal would meet with the objectives of the Core Strategy and Places for Everyone and would play an important role in facilitating the development of an inclusive community comprising an integrated approach to the location of housing, community facilities and services in accordance with the NPPF.

Heritage

In accordance with Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, when making a decision on all listed building consent applications or any decision on a planning application for development that affects a listed building or its setting, a local planning authority must 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 proposal seeks to change the use of the existing dwellinghouse into a children's care home. The barn is already in residential use, which has to an extent diminished its original agricultural character. The proposed use as a children's home would not materially alter the existing residential layout or appearance. In principle, there are no heritage objections to the proposed use.

No external alterations are proposed as part of the planning application. Internal works, including alterations to the fabric of the listed building and the replacement of rooflights on a like for like basis, do not require planning permission and are therefore not assessed as part of this application. These works are considered in detail under the accompanying Listed Building Consent application ref. 25/01009/LBC.

Residential Amenity

CS Policy DM1 requires that proposals do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. Also, impacts including noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution are required to be mitigated where necessary.

The site is currently in use as a residential dwelling and is recognised to provide a suitable level of occupier amenity for future residents. In light of the existing use, and the distance to the nearest neighbours, it is not considered that the proposed use would threaten any additional impact to the amenity of surrounding occupiers through overlooking or a loss of privacy.

The application property sits towards the end of a single-lane track shared with several properties. Given the existing intensity of traffic movements along the lane, it is not considered that the additional traffic associated with the proposed use would give rise to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to the properties which sit within close proximity to the track. Occupants of Rough Bank Farm and Higher Rough Bank Farm would likely witness an increase in the number of comings and goings to the site, however, on balance, it is not considered that this would give rise

to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance given the overall intensity of the use, which can be limited via condition.

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposals would not unduly impact the amenity of surrounding occupiers to a greater extent than the existing C3 use of the site. The proposals would accord with the requirements of CS Policies DM1 and G9 and the NPPF.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

NPPF Paragraphs 96 and 135 aim to achieve development which is safe and accessible so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion. CS Policy DM1 seeks to minimise opportunities for crime against people or property.

It is an established principle in law (Smith V First Secretary of State [2005]) that fear of crime can be a material consideration in planning (as an element of public safety) but that fear itself is not enough. That fear has to be objectively justified rather than just perceived. So in order to take criminal incidents into account it is necessary not only to attribute them to the individuals concerned but also to the use of the land. If the concern for the future rests at least partly on assumption not supported by evidence as to the characteristics of the future occupiers, it cannot be taken into account.

In light of the above, the planning application has to be determined on land use planning considerations. No objections have been raised by local residents and no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed change of use in this location would lead to an increase in crime and harm to public safety. As per the aforementioned case law (Smith V First Secretary of State [2005]), the fear of crime has not been objectively justified or attributed to the land use in order for it to be deemed a material planning consideration. As such, the proposal is in accordance with the NPPF and CS Policy DM1.

Highways

CS Policy T2 sets out that development and infrastructure proposals are required to satisfy the Council's accessibility hierarchy and, in all circumstances, the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area will have priority, while providing reliable journey times for those travelling through. Developments are required to provide parking in compliance with the Council's Maximum Car Parking Standards as set out in Appendix 5 of the Core Strategy.

The Council's Highways Department was consulted as part of the application process and raised no objections to the scheme. The application site is well removed from the local transport network with the nearest adopted highway over 1km away. The traffic generation associated with the usage is expected to be minimal and the level of parking provided on site is adequate for the development proposed.

Overall, the proposed parking arrangements would be acceptable, and similar in terms of parking demand to the current use as a dwellinghouse, as well as the

surrounding properties. As such, the impact on highway safety accords with CS Policy T2 and relevant NPPF policies.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions -

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Children's Services 04/11/2025:

This provider is well established in the borough of Rochdale and has discussed this home with Commissioning to increase the sufficiency in the market. There are a number of provisions in Rochdale and we do not have the sufficiency to use all of this, this home will increase the availability for children who require a home environment which is more remote from the busy centre of the borough.

Conservation Officer

(12/01/2026): Further details are required of the proposed subdivisions and proposals to replace existing internal doors.

(17/04/2026): Please condition:

- *Large scale details of partition walls, material, means of fixing, any change to levels*
- *Large scale details of replacement doors*
- *Details of rooflights. These should be conservation style and set flush with the roofslope*

Highways 27/10/2025:

We have no sustainable objection to this proposal.

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. No significant problems have arisen during the consideration of this application, and the application has been determined in a timely manner, in accordance with the policies with the Development Plan.

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. In particular, Article 6 (1), of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation civil rights and a fair hearing; Article 8 of the ECHR in relation to the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR in relation to the protection of property have all been taken into account.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers are satisfied that the application material and Officers' assessment has taken into account these issues.

The application has been considered in accordance with the Rochdale Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy – Embracing All Voices (2024-2026), which seeks to promote a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion that benefit the community as a whole.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (4)

- 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:

- Location Plan. Dwg no. 100
- Block Plan. Dwg no. 101
- Existing Ground Floor Plan. Dwg no. 102. Rev A

- Existing First Floor Plan. Dwg no. 103
- Existing Elevations Sheet 1. Dwg no. 104
- Existing Elevations Sheet 2. Dwg no. 105
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan. Dwg no. 106. Rev B
- Proposed First Floor Plan. Dwg no. 107
- Sections & Specification. Dwg no. 108. Rev A
- 'Design and Access Statement' by Meadows Care Limited submitted on 16 April 2026
- 'Meadows Care Limited Management Plan – Rough Bank Barn' submitted on 16 April 2026

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

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

- 3 The use hereby approved shall be carried out in full accordance with the document "Meadows Care Limited Management Plan – Rough Bank Barn" submitted on 16 April 2026 at all times.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to reduce the risk and fear of crime, and in accordance with Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4 The care home hereby approved shall not accommodate more than four children at any time.

Reason: In the interest of neighbour amenity and highway safety and in accordance with Policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 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.