

Officer Report

Case Reference: OTH/2026/0410
Location: Grove Lodge, Various Locations Within Littleborough
Proposal: Application to amend condition 2 (Plans) of planning permission 22/00485/FUL in relation to the additional removal of trees
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Tom Hiles

Site Description

The application relates to an existing permission for various flood defence works around Littleborough, comprising Phase 1B of the Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme, approved under 22/00485/FUL.

The scheme comprised a variety of works at a total of seven locations along the river Roch as it flows north to south through the town, and two of its tributaries, Greenvale Brook and Ealees Brook. The scheme followed an earlier approval for Phase 1A comprising flood defence works at other sites around Littleborough, under permission ref 20/00082/FUL.

Phase 1B is currently being implemented. The current application relates to the works approved at Grove Lodge, which were for a flood defence wall along a railway embankment, bank lowering and footpath improvements.

As approved, works at a number of the locations, including Grove Lodge, required significant tree removal, comprising a mix of total clearance and selective removals.

These were detailed on tree retention/removals plans approved by condition 2. The tree removals proposed in the original application were considered by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, who noted that the scheme overall would involve the full or partial loss of around 1.735ha of tree groups, and recommended that approval be subject to conditions to secure details of new tree planting and a woodland management plan. Approval was granted on this basis (conditions 19 and 20), requiring that the conditioned details be approved prior to any part of the flood defence scheme being brought into use. The conditions have not been discharged at this time.

Approval was also subject to approval (by condition 18) of - and compliance with - a tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement. Discharge of condition application ref 23/00673/DOC addressed condition 18 and approved updated

versions of the tree removals plans approved in the original permission, increasing the area of total tree clearance at Grove Lodge.

At the Grove Lodge site, linear areas of existing groups of trees on the west side of the site (to the west of the railway line) would be cleared, including to provide access to the site from Todmorden Road. Further areas within the site would be subject of selective tree removals, 'focusing where possible on removal of non-native tree species and retention of standing deadwood to promote biodiversity.' As previously approved, the areas for full clearance of existing trees at Grove Lodge measured around 5700 square metres in total, including parts of an area noted in the arboricultural impact assessment as a group of around 100 sycamore, common alder, common ash, and willow trees of between 80mm and 350mm stem diameter, in quality category B.

Proposal

The application seeks a non-material amendment to Planning Permission 22/00485/FUL under s.96A of the Town and Country Planning Act to amend the details of tree removals at the Grove Lodge site.

The amended tree removals and retentions plan now submitted would extend the area of full group clearance into one of the areas previously marked for selective removals. The indicated change would result in an additional section of G55 measuring around 999m² being cleared instead of being subject to selective removals as originally approved. The amendment would require an alteration to conditions 2 and 18 on the original application and the subsequent discharge of condition application to refer to the updated tree removals plan at Grove Lodge.

Relevant Planning Legislation

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Part III Section 96A

Relevant Site History

The Section 96A application relates to a Section 73 application which was granted in December 2020 permitting the erection of 198 dwellings and a block of 24 apartments including the demolition of existing structures together with associated ground works to the north of the site, public open space, landscaping and vehicular access from Royle Road (Ref: 20/01401/AM).

Representations

In accordance with the Council's Code of Publicity for Planning Applications, the application was not publicised. Given the application relates to one made under S.96a of the 1990 Act, in granting consent the Council is of the view that the amendments would not result in a materially different impact on the surrounding environment.

Analysis

NPPG acknowledges that there is no statutory definition of non-material, and that it is entirely dependent on the context of the overall scheme.

The amendments to the extent and details of tree removals would not, in the context of the scale and nature of the original permission, would not materially alter the approved development. As in the case of the original application, the impact of this change is expected to be mitigated by tree replanting and woodland details, which are yet to be secured, and which can therefore be required to mitigate for the additional tree losses now proposed.

Particularly in the context of these planning controls, the approximate 0.09 hectare increase in the area proposed for full tree clearance (above 5.7ha clearance originally approved) is not considered to be a material change to the approved scheme

In light of the above, the proposals are considered to sit comfortably within the scope of an application under s.96A.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (2)

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following list of plans and documents hereby approved:-
- IMNW000100-JAC-ZZ-4B0-DR-PL-0150 Rev C04 - Tree Removals, Retentions and Protection Plan Sheet 1 of 6 Grove Lodge

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 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 18 The development shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the approved Tree Removals, Retentions and Protection Plan ref IMNW000100-JAC-ZZ-4B0-DR-PL-0150 C04, in addition to the arboricultural method statement and details of tree removals, retentions and protection previously approved under discharge of condition application ref 23/00673/DOC.

Reason: In order to protect existing trees on the site and ensure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies G6 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 1 This decision notice is to be read alongside that issued with planning permission 22/00485/FUL and all conditions that were imposed on all previous applications and amendments, with the exception of those conditions which are explicitly varied in accordance with the provisions of this decision, or which have been explicitly varied by way of other S96A non-material amendments.