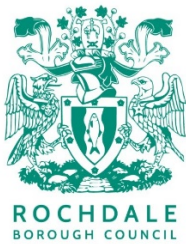


Agenda Item 6



Report Title: Report to Planning Committee

Application Number	24/01260/FUL
Proposal	Change of use from nursing home to student accommodation together with associated car parking and landscaping.
Site	Briarmede, 426-428 Rochdale Road Middleton Rochdale M24 2QW
Applicant	Mr G.H. Adeel
Recommendation	GRANT subject to conditions
Reason for report	The application has been called into the Planning Committee by Councillor Kathryn Bromfield.
Background Papers	The planning application documents are background papers to the report. They are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.
Ward	North Middleton
Township	Middleton

1. Site, Surroundings and Background

- 1.1 The application relates to Briarmede, a large two-storey detached building at no 426-428 Rochdale Road on the outskirts of Middleton. The building was formerly in use as a care home (use class C2). This use is understood to have ceased by 2020.
- 1.2 The existing building comprises bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, and communal halls at ground floor, and further bedrooms and bathrooms at first floor.
- 1.3 Externally, the building is surrounded by hardstanding areas at both sides and the rear which provide vehicle access and parking. There is a small area of landscaping to the immediate front of the building, as well as landscaping and hedging strips running along the side boundaries, which host three mature trees along the east side boundary. These trees are not subject of tree preservation orders.
- 1.4 The property includes two gated vehicle access points off Rochdale Road on either side of the front of the building.
- 1.5 The site is bounded to the north-east and south-west by residential dwellings. The site is bounded at the rear (south-east) by open fields, extended some distance to the Whit Brook and Rochdale Canal. The front of the site also faces onto fields and towards the Hopwood Hall College campus.
- 1.6 The area surrounding the site can be generally characterised as a long ribbon of single dwellings on alternating sides of Rochdale Road with open spaces and woodlands around the dwellings.
- 1.7 The site is within the Defined Urban Area and is not subject of any policies allocating it for development.
- 1.8 The site is not within the vicinity of any designated heritage assets (Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas) or any sites protected for their ecological, habitat or wildlife value.
- 1.9 Planning permission was sought in 2023 for the following:
 - *Change of use from Nursing home (Use class C2) to mixed use (sui generis) comprising mosque, including use for weddings and funerals, educational facilities, and overnight guest accommodation, with associated car parking and landscaping*
- 1.10 The application was withdrawn before a decision was made. Concerns were raised by officers in relation to the previous proposal in terms of potential impacts on the highway network as well as potential for noise and disruption to

surrounding residents, in part due to uncertainty about the details of operation of the proposed uses, including frequency of events.

- 1.11 **Members are asked to note the following circumstances around the application.**
- 1.12 The site has been subject of a number of complaints in recent years regarding unauthorised activities and uses of the building. These are subject of ongoing investigation by planning enforcement.
- 1.13 The planning officer visited the property in April 2024 during consideration of the previous planning application. It was observed that some refurbishment work was being undertaken to the interior of the building at that time.
- 1.14 The Council's Housing Standards team visited the property in April 2024 following a referral from Building Control that builders working on the property were suspected of sleeping on site. Housing Standards served an Emergency Prohibition Order on the owner and occupiers of the property.
- 1.15 The Council's Empty Property team received a complaint in June 2025 that the building was being used as a wedding venue.
- 1.16 Planning enforcement visited the property in December 2025 ahead of the planning committee meeting. The planning enforcement officer observed that the building was boarded up and did not note any activity at the site.
- 1.17 In December 2025, a website was brought to the attention of officers by a resident, advertising the property as 'a modern educational academy' and as 'a digitally equipped Islamic education and research centre' providing graduate and post-graduate education courses and language training. Such a use of the building would potentially be in contradiction to the intended use described in the current application. It is unclear when this website was published.
- 1.18 This matter was raised with the applicant at that time. They advised that the website was out of date and reflected their earlier intention for the building (subject of an earlier, withdrawn application), and that they no longer intend to use the building for such a purpose, and that the current application for student accommodation does reflect their intention. The website has subsequently been updated and now advertises the building as student accommodation.
- 1.19 In light of the circumstances around the website, the application was withdrawn from the planning committee agenda for the December 2025 meeting, to allow for officers to consider implications for the assessment of the application.
- 1.20 Planning officers visited the property again in May 2026 shortly before the completion of this updated report and inspected the interior of the building. The building is generally undergoing internal refurbishment and alterations which

appear to be in line with the plans submitted with the current application. Officers noted indications of rooms having been recently lived in (mattresses, cooking equipment and personal effects were observed in two rooms) and the ground floor hall appears to have been used for an event(s) or celebration(s).

- 1.21 However it is unclear exactly how recently any of these activities took place and it is not possible for officers to determine with certainty whether either of these uses of the building are continuing at present. All other rooms in the building are at various stages of refurbishment.
- 1.22 **The above summary has been provided to ensure that members are aware of the circumstances surrounding the application.**
- 1.23 **Nonetheless, members are reminded that the Council is required to consider the planning application solely on its own merits, and are advised that these circumstances are not material considerations relevant to the assessment of the application.**
- 1.24 **In the event that planning permission is granted, if the building is subsequently used for any purposes not approved by the permission, this would potentially be a matter to be dealt with under the Council's planning enforcement powers.**

2. Proposal

- 2.1. The planning application seeks full planning permission to change the use of the building to use as student accommodation.
- 2.2. The application describes the proposal as student accommodation, but the registered description of development also included an education facility, as officers considered this more appropriately reflected the extent of study facilities shown to be included by on the proposed floor plans.
- 2.3. Following clarification received from the applicant's agent during determination that the proposal will not provide any classes or education services and will solely comprise student accommodation, the description of development has been reverted accordingly and the application is assessed on this basis. In the event of approval, the development would be limited to this description.
- 2.4. Internal changes to the building would convert existing spaces into:
 - 11 bedrooms, two studios (all en-suite) and store rooms at first floor
 - Kitchens and dining hall/games room, library, study rooms, computer rooms and toilets at the ground floor.
- 2.5. In relation to the purpose of the proposal, the Planning Statement notes that:

The facility is to accommodate University students of all denominations, including foreign students participating in courses at the nearby University complexes. It will be exclusively for the purposes of Student Accommodation.

And:

The proposal will benefit young students exclusively attending Hopwood Hall University in Middleton, Oldham University, Bury University, Salford, and Manchester Universities.

- 2.6. Given the background to the application, the context in the site in terms of the highways network and surrounding residential uses, and in the interest of certainty as to the intended nature of the current proposal, the applicant's agent has confirmed that:
- On-site study facilities will be provided solely for the use of students living at the building, and the building will not be used to provide classes or any other educational services, including for residents of the building.
 - That the building will not be used for any purposes related to private functions, private classes or courses, or community events, or similar uses.
 - That the kitchens will be provided for the students' use to prepare their own meals, and that catering services will not be provided.
 - That on-site staff will comprise a receptionist, cleaners and security staff
- 2.7. The application is considered on the basis of these clarifications.
- 2.8. The application does not propose any external changes to the building with the exception of new doors and windows, in PVC to match existing.
- 2.9. An existing fence and gates previously installed without planning permission at the front of the property would be retained.
- 2.10. The existing landscaping strips would be narrowed to accommodate additional car parking spaces, to a nominal total of 23 spaces. This would also require the removal of two trees along the east side of the site (noted as T2 and T3 on the submitted landscape plan). In compensation the proposed site plan proposes the planting of three maple trees at the rear of the building and two holly or yew trees in the landscaped area to the front of the site.
- 2.11. The proposed site plans also indicates the installation of bat and bird boxes around the property.
- 2.12. The application is supported by the following documents:

- Planning Statement
- Transport Statement
- Noise Impact Assessment

3. Relevant Planning Policy

Development Plan

3.1. The adopted development plan for Rochdale consists of the:

- Greater Manchester Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD) (March 2024);
- Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) October 2016);
- Saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies (June 2006); and

3.2. Relevant policies include

Places for Everyone (PfE)

A strategic plan for Greater Manchester city region. It seeks to guide strategic housing and employment developments across the region. This Plan also sets up-to-date housing requirements and allocations for each district.

Strategic Objectives

Objective 6	Promote the sustainable movement of people, goods and information.
Objective 9	Ensure access to physical and social infrastructure.
Objective 10	Promote the health and wellbeing of communities.

Strategy

JP-Strat14	A Sustainable and Integrated Transport Network
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Sustainable and Resilient Places

JP-S1	Sustainable Development
JP-S4	Flood Risk and the Water Environment
JP-S5	Clean Air

Greener Places

JP-G6	Urban Green Space
JP-G7	Trees and Woodland
JP-G8	A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Places for People

JP-P1	Sustainable Places
JP-P5	Education, Skills and Knowledge

Connected Places

JP-C1	An Integrated Network
JP-C6	Walking and Cycling
JP-C8	Transport Requirements of New Development

Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016

The Core Strategy sets out local strategic and development management policies for Rochdale Borough, and should be read alongside PfE.

Spatial Strategy

SD1	Delivering sustainable development
SP1	Rochdale Borough's role in the city region
SP2	The Spatial Strategy for the borough
SP3/M	The Strategy for Middleton

Improving design, image and quality of place (SO3)

P1	Improving image
P2	Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and heritage
P3	Improving design of new development

Promoting a greener environment (SO4)

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

Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport (SO5)

T1	Delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility

Managing Delivery and Monitoring Progress

DM1	General development requirements
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Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006 Saved Policies

A majority of the UDP's policies have been superseded by the CS and PfE, except for the following:

EM/7	Development and Flood risk
EM/8	Protection of Surface and Ground Water

National Policies and Guidance

- 3.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are relevant overarching material considerations.
- 3.4. The following NPPF policies are of primary relevance and are broadly aligned with adopted development plan policies:
- Chapter 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development)
 - Chapter 4 (Decision-making)
 - Chapter 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes)
 - Chapter 9 (Promoting sustainable transport)
 - Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed places)
 - Chapter 14 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change)
 - Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)

4. Relevant Planning History

- 4.1. Permission (ref 23/00924/FUL) was sought in 2023 for the following change of use of the building:
- *Change of use from Nursing home (Use class C2) to mixed use (sui generis) comprising mosque, including use for weddings and funerals, educational facilities, and overnight guest accommodation, with associated car parking and landscaping*
- 4.2. The application was withdrawn before determination.

5. Publicity

Members

- 5.1. The application is referred to the Planning and Licensing Committee in accordance with the scheme of delegation, following a call-in request from Councillor Kathryn Bromfield, who requested that the Committee consider the impact of the proposal in terms of the following issues:
- This building is not suitable for a community building referred to in the application.
 - This building is in a residential area previously having a use that did not require many cars. Cars also did not need to attend at similar times for which there is no provision.
 - The traffic generated from meetings is likely to effect the surrounding area where it is already very busy and there is a lack of parking.

- There is no easy way to access and leave the property in numbers without causing significant issues to congestion and safety as many pedestrians pass by due to college and local secondary school.
 - The building is in very close proximity to residential properties with likely unacceptable noise levels and nuisance to the neighbours.
- 5.2. These planning matters are addressed in the relevant sections of the following assessment.
- 5.3. The application is expected to be discussed at a meeting of the Middleton Township Planning Panel ahead of the Planning Committee meeting. A summary of any comments from the panel will be provided at the meeting.

Summary of Third Party Responses

- 5.4. Letters of notification were sent on 6th March 2025 and a site notice was placed in the vicinity of the development site on 4th April 2025.
- 5.5. 479 public comments were received, comprising 439 objections and 41 supporting letters.
- 5.6. The objections received are summarised below.

Principle of development

- Not needed in the area
- Won't benefit the Middleton community
- There are already adequate educational facilities including the college over the road
- No need for student accommodation, there isn't a university around
- There are better uses of the land/building – a shop or housing, or something for children
- Object to it becoming a Muslim education centre. We don't need another mosque.
- Enough buildings being converted into religious groups, don't want or need more
- Should be left as a retirement/nursing home
- Should be built in Rochdale instead of Middleton

Traffic and pollution

- Increased traffic and noise associated with mosque and wedding venue
- Increase in traffic, congestion and parking problems. Traffic is already a nightmare.
- Will cause air and noise pollution from additional traffic
- Insufficient space for vehicle movements
- Not enough parking

Character and Appearance

- Without fully drawn up plans there is a risk to the outlook of the rural landscape at the rear.

Doubts about nature of application

- Sounds like a back door for the mosque application. Intentionally misleading to be only seen as educational instead of the place of worship intended. Shouldn't be allowed to change the description and re-apply.
- There were many objections to the previous application, applicant shouldn't be allowed to apply again.
- The application is deliberately vague to deceive the public and council

Other matters

- Disruption from comings and goings
- What will students be studying? Will it be overseen by Ofsted?
- Questions about nature of proposal – rules on guests, mixed or single-sex accommodation, priority for disabled students, control on on-site alcohol consumption, what will admission criteria be?
- Will lead to unacceptable demographic changes. Will cause anti-social behaviour. Will cause community tension.
- Will devalue the area.
- Comments about the character of the applicant / expected residents
- Large groups of men near children's spaces
- Removal of trees and greenery and increased pollution will harm wildlife

5.5 Comments made supporting the application are summarised as follows:

- This is a well-needed facility
- Students need accommodation around Manchester
- Good for the community
- Will provide invaluable resources for children and adults
- Will provide a conducive environment for students to study in as it gives a peaceful and cheap environment
- Represents a progressive step forward for the community
- It's important for our Islamic community to have more places to educate our children
- The proposal would provide educational and economic benefits as well as addressing student housing need, alleviating pressure on existing housing stock

6. Summary of Consultee Responses

6.1. GMP – Heywood and Middleton

No comments received

6.2. RBC Environmental Health

Submitted noise assessment states the internal noise levels will be achieved with the windows achieved. The Environmental Protection Team will not allow a scheme with

close windows therefore further details are required on the alternative MHEV system in the interest of the future occupants.

The hours of demolition and construction are restricted to 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday; 9.00am to 2.00pm on Saturdays.

Recommend controls on details of plant and equipment, external lighting and bin stores.

6.3. RBC Highways

Refuse collection and servicing from this location will be privately managed.

We have no new road safety concerns as a result of this proposal.

There will be no obstructions to any public highways as a result of this proposal

6.4. Transport for Greater Manchester

Response summarises the Transport Statement in terms of trip generation, access arrangements, parking provision. Nearby bus stops provided regular services to Rochdale and Middleton. Cycle parking provision should be made in accordance with adopted standards. Recommend that a Travel Pack is produced for future users providing journey planning information.

We suggest it may be beneficial for a review of Traffic Regulation Orders in the vicinity to be undertaken.

A robust Construction Traffic Management Plan should be employed.

6.5. RBC School Organisation and Development

I would suggest that the university campus offers at Rochdale/Oldham/Bury are designed to attract local students who wish to study at locations near to their home – none currently offer accommodation as there is no demand. Manchester University already offers student accommodation for those enrolling with them.

6.6. United Utilities

No comments received

Assessment

Principle of Development

6.7. As required by Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.8. The NPPF is a key overarching material consideration, such that development plan policies should align with its policies (paragraphs). Chapter 2 of the NPPF

confirms the principal objective of achieving sustainable development. To pursue this in a positive way, paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Paragraph 11(c) is most relevant and confirms that sustainable development is achieved through application of the above principle. The thrust of this is reflected in PfE Policy JP-S1 and CS Policy SD1.

- 6.9. Places for Everyone (PfE) was adopted in March 2024 and now forms part of Rochdale's adopted development plan. It provides a long-term strategic plan for sustainable inclusive growth across the nine Greater Manchester districts including Rochdale. PfE will guide how the city region will grow up until 2039, including by:
- identifying the amount of new development that will come forward across the 9 districts;
 - supporting the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities;
 - protecting important environmental assets across the city region; and
 - allocating sites for employment and housing outside of the existing urban area.
- 6.10. In alignment with this, Core Strategy (CS) policies SP1, SP2 and SP3/M set out Rochdale's spatial strategy and overarching goals for development in the Borough.
- 6.11. PfE policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places notes that all development should, where appropriate, be resource-efficient including by making efficient use of land. Core Strategy policy P1 notes that the Council will ensure new development improves the image of the borough through measures including promoting the development and re-use of under-used land and buildings.
- 6.12. The proposed development would bring back into use a substantial and prominent building which has been disused for several years and would therefore support the objectives of the above policies JP-P1 and P1.
- 6.13. The proposed use of the building as student accommodation would be broadly similar in overall purpose to the former use as a care home, in that it would comprise a form of managed accommodation (bedrooms together with study and computer rooms and library) of a similar intensity of occupation and similar, if not lower, staffing levels, comprising only a receptionist, security staff and cleaners. This proposed use of the building is considered to be appropriate within a largely residential area. The site is in a sustainable location well-served by public transport.
- 6.14. Public comments have been received in relation to matters including:
- The intentions of the applicant in light of the previous withdrawn application

- The need for the proposal (including as student accommodation and an educational facility)
- 6.15. These public comments, as well as similar points from the ward member, are noted. However, the Council is required to consider the merits of the proposal on the basis of the details provided within the application and the supplementary details received during determination.
- 6.16. Following clarification from the agent about the intended use of the proposal and an amended description of development to reflect the intended use, it is considered that the nature of the proposed development is sufficiently clear to allow for an appropriately robust assessment and determination to be made.
- 6.17. For the avoidance of any uncertainty, conditions are recommended to clearly control the use of the building. This approach is considered to be justified in the interest of controlling potential impacts in terms of traffic movements and highways safety, and noise and disruption, which might arise from other potential uses of the site. The applicant has been advised that the application would be determined on this basis, in the event of an approval.
- 6.18. For the above reasons, and subject to these conditions defining and controlling the use, it is considered that the proposed use of the building would be appropriate to the context of the site and acceptable in principle.

Transport, Highways, Access and Parking

- 6.19. NPPF paragraph 116 notes 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 on the road network would be severe. Local requirements for highways safety, transport and access matters are set out in Core Strategy policies DM1, T2, and PfE policy JP-C7.
- 6.20. The application is supported by a Transport Statement (TS). The TS characterises the site in terms of accessibility by walking, cycling and by public transport. The TS also provides a calculation of trip generation for the proposed use of the building, in the context of the previous use as a care home. This notes that the proposed use should be expected to generate less traffic in peak times compared to the existing approved use of the building.
- 6.21. The Highways Officer and Transport for Greater Manchester were consulted on the application and their comments are summarised above. Neither consultee has objected to the scheme in terms of effects on highways safety, parking provision, access arrangements or the potential for sustainable travel for future occupants of the building.
- 6.22. TfGM's recommendation for cycle parking provision and an occupants' travel pack are noted and it is considered that these would be beneficial in terms of

supporting the uptake of sustainable modes of transport. These matters can be adequately controlled by condition. Likewise the recommendation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan is considered to be appropriate given the potential for highways safety impacts upon the busy Rochdale Road which serves the site. This can also be controlled by condition.

- 6.23. Public and ward member comments on traffic and transport matters are noted. These largely relate to uses of the building other than that proposed in the application, and as clarified during determination.
- 6.24. For the above reasons, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of impacts on highways safety, access arrangements, and in terms of sustainable travel. The application is therefore considered to accord with policies DM1, T2 and JP-C7.

Character, Appearance and Landscaping

- 6.25. CS policy P3 states that high standards of design will be required of new development, including associated landscaping, regardless of location in the borough. CS policy DM1 states that all development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area. Places for Everyone policy JP-P1 'Sustainable Places' notes that all development should be consistent with certain key sustainable design attributes, including being distinctive with a clear identity, being visually stimulating, and being socially inclusive.
- 6.26. Proposed external changes would be limited, including the extension of existing hard surfacing areas at the sides of the property, removal of two existing trees and planting of new trees. The application notes that existing doors and windows would be replaced to match the existing PVC units.
- 6.27. The existing fence and gates at the front of the property would be retained and the application in effect seeks retrospective permission for these elements.
- 6.28. Whilst these elements are somewhat taller and more contemporary in design than would normally be expected at a property of this character, their hit-and-miss design (with horizontal gaps) means that the visual impact is limited. It is also noted that a fence of the same appearance, though with a maximum height of 1m, could be installed without planning permission. On balance, the design of the fence and gates is considered to be acceptable.
- 6.29. The proposed replacement tree planting is considered to be acceptable in terms of mitigating for the visual effects of the loss of the existing trees.
- 6.30. For the above reasons, the proposed development is considered to support the objectives of policies P3, DM1 and JP-P1, and to be acceptable in terms of

design and in terms of effects upon the character and appearance of the local area.

Residential Amenity and Standard of Accommodation

- 6.31. The NPPF advises that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land or buildings. Locally, Core Strategy policy DM1 and PfE policy JP-P6 set out planning expectations for the protection of residential amenity. The “Guidelines & Standards for Residential Development” SPD also sets out guidelines for reducing or omitting the impact of new development on the amenities of residential occupiers.
- 6.32. Given the nature of the proposal as a residential use with supporting facilities, and considering the context of the previous authorised use, it is not considered that the proposal would be likely to result in significant harm to the amenity of occupants of neighbouring properties, including that arising from any noise or disruption to be expected from the operation of the proposed accommodation. Public and ward member comments on these matters are noted.
- 6.33. The Planning Statement sets out brief measures for managing noise during operation of the accommodation and hours of visits for family and friends of students. It is considered that further details of the management of the building should be secured by condition via a full management plan to include details of waste management arrangements and arrangements for dealing with complaints. Approval and implementation of such a management plan can be secured by condition.
- 6.34. No external alterations are proposed that would give rise to any concerns relating to harm associated with loss of outlook or overbearing effects, loss of daylight or sunlight, or loss of privacy or overlooking.
- 6.35. It is not considered that the operation of the building as student accommodation would give rise to significant harm in terms of noise and disruption (including from vehicle movements) over the previous use of the building as a care home.
- 6.36. For the above reasons, it is not considered that the proposal would be likely to give rise to unacceptable impacts upon the amenity of adjacent and nearby residents.
- 6.37. In terms of the standard of accommodation for future occupiers of the proposed development, the proposed bedrooms would generally comply with the minimum widths and floor areas set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards. Taken together with the provision of the communal space at the ground floor, it is considered that a satisfactory standard of accommodation

would be provided for future occupants, given the nature of the proposal as student accommodation.

- 6.38. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in the relevant terms of policies CS DM1 and JP-P6.

Pollution (Noise, Air Quality and Light)

- 6.39. Core Strategy policy G9 sets out the Council's requirements approach to all forms of pollution as they relate to new development, including noise, air quality and light.
- 6.40. The application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment. The NIA assesses existing conditions surrounding the building in terms of the noise environment that future occupiers will experience, noting that road noise is high at the front of the building. The NIA recommends an upgraded glazing specification to the windows to front and rear of the building would achieve adequate internal noise levels for the habitable rooms, when these windows are closed.
- 6.41. The Environmental Health officer has been consulted and their comments relating to the noise environment are summarised above.
- 6.42. The advice relating to the acceptability of relying on closed windows to achieve an acceptable noise environment is noted. However, given that the application relates to the conversion of an existing building, it does not appear that an alternative approach to achieving noise mitigation would be practical in these circumstances. For these reasons, the approach set out in the NIA to mitigating the existing noise environment is considered to be acceptable in planning terms.
- 6.43. The Environmental Health officer's recommendations for conditions for hours of construction, approval of external lighting and of plant and equipment are noted and agreed.

Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain and Trees

- 6.44. Section 15 of the NPPF sets out requirements relating to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. This includes a requirement, set out in Paragraph 187, for development to minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. Core Strategy Policies G6 and G7 set out the Council's expectations in relation to green infrastructure (including trees), ecology and biodiversity. PfE policy JP-G8 sets out similar expectations including for improving habitats.

- 6.45. Under Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, all new development proposals (with some exemptions) must achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain, to contribute towards improvements to natural habitats. The proposal is exempt from these requirements due to it impacting less than 25 square metres of on-site habitat, as indicated in the application.
- 6.46. Due to the nature and scale of the proposal and it's existing context, the proposal would not have any material negative impacts upon ecology or biodiversity. The application proposes the addition of a number of bird and bat boxes around the property, and these are considered to provide an appropriate and acceptable improvement to biodiversity. It is recommended that the installation of these prior to first use of the building is secured by condition.
- 6.47. The application proposes to remove two trees from the site to provide additional parking. The tree losses would be compensated for by replacement tree planting at the rear and front of the property. The trees proposed for removal are set back from the road and are not considered to contribute significantly to local amenity.
- 6.48. Of the on-site trees, a large common Oak located at the south-west corner of the site is considered to make a significant contribution to local amenity. This tree is not proposed for removal, though it is noted that one car park space is proposed to be formed from embanked land around the base of the tree, which would likely result in harm to its longevity.
- 6.49. As noted by the highways officer, the proposed parking provision would be more than sufficient for the proposed level of occupation, and as such it is not considered that all of the proposed additional car parking spaces are necessary for the scheme to be acceptable in highways terms.
- 6.50. On this basis, it is considered that this concern can appropriately be resolved by requiring the submission and approval, prior to commencement, of an amended proposed site plan eliminating the specific parking space (numbered 17 on the proposed site plan) and indicating the retention of the existing embanked landscaped area at the foot of the tree. A condition to this effect is recommended.
- 6.51. For the above reasons and subject to the noted conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of local policies G6, G7 and PfE policy JP-G8 in relation to ecology, biodiversity and trees.
- 6.52. **Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage**
- 6.53. NPPF paragraph 182 notes that applications which could affect drainage on or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, and which are proportionate to the

nature and scale of the proposal. Local requirements relating to managing surface water, flood risk and protecting water resources are set out in Core Strategy policies G8 and saved UPD policy EM/8.

- 6.54. The site is not within an area identified as being at risk of flooding, including risks arising from rivers, the sea, localised surface water or critical drainage.
- 6.55. The limited nature of external changes would not give rise to any material changes in terms of surface water management. Extended parking areas would be placed adjacent to retained landscaping strips, continuing the existing surface water drainage arrangements.
- 6.56. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of flood risk and sustainable drainage considerations.

Other matters

- 6.57. A number of public comments received on the application do not relate to the merits of the proposed development, or to material planning considerations.
- 6.58. These comments cannot be taken into account in the determination of the application for planning permission for the proposed development.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The proposed development would bring a prominent and attractive building back into active use, supporting objectives for the efficient use of buildings and land. The proposed use of the building to provide student accommodation and supporting study facilities is considered to be appropriate, given the generally residential context of the site and the previous use of the building as a care home.
- 7.2. The proposed change of use and the modest external works proposed are deemed to be acceptable and in general accordance with the range of policies considering matters of design, visual impacts, arboriculture, ecology and biodiversity; flooding and drainage, highways, and pollution (noise and air quality).
- 7.3. The representations made by local residents have been considered through this assessment, and there are no unresolved outstanding objections from consultees. Where noted, planning conditions can be used to further manage and control the development's impact.
- 7.4. On this basis, Officers are overall satisfied that the proposal subject of the application for full planning permission would accord with the adopted development plan taken as a whole and represent a sustainable form of

development. The proposals are further supported by a range of material considerations (including the NPPF, the NDG and local SPDs).

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. It is recommended that the Planning Committee resolves to **GRANT** full planning permission for the change of use of the building and associated external works, subject to planning conditions noted below.

Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this decision.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that any conditions imposed on the original permission remain in force other than as expressly hereby varied and development must be started in accordance with Section 73(5) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents hereby approved unless otherwise required by the conditions below:

- Site Location Plan
- 1344 PROPOSALS REV 2 (Floor Plans and Elevations)
- 1344 AS PROPOSED SITE PLAN
- 1344 LANDSCAPING
- 1344 STREET SCENE
- Noise Impact Assessment by Braiden Acoustics Limited

Reason for the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory development in accordance with the policies within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The approved use of the building shall be strictly as described in the application and supporting documents and for no other purpose. For the avoidance of doubt, this means that:
 - The facilities provided within the approved scheme shall be solely for the use of residents of the building.
 - The building shall not be used to provide classes, education services or private or community events at any time.

Reason: In the interest of defining the permission and to control the impact of the proposal in terms of highways safety and impacts upon residential amenity, and in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy policies DM1, G9, and T2,

4. Prior to commencement of development, a Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The construction phase of development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with 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.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: As the matter relates to the construction phase of development.

5. Prior to commencement of any external works hereby approved, and notwithstanding the approved plans, an updated proposed site plan and landscaping plan removing parking space 17 and indicating the retention of the existing embanked landscaped area adjacent to the existing oak tree (numbered T1 on the approved landscaping plan) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the updated plans.

Reason: In the interest of protecting trees of local amenity value, in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy policies G6 and G7.

6. Prior to the use hereby approved first commencing, full details of cycle parking provision shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved cycle parking shall be implemented in accordance with the details prior to commencement of the approved use.

Reason: To ensure the provision of satisfactory and secure facilities for cycle storage and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies P3, T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-P1 and JP-C6 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Prior to use hereby approved first commencing, a full Travel Plan for staff and residents of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of the Travel Plan.

Reason: In the interest of promoting sustainable modes of transport in accordance with policies T1 and DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and policies JP-Strat14, JP-S1, JP-C6 and CP-C8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. Prior to the use hereby approved first commencing, a building management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include (but not be limited to):

- a. Waste management arrangements
- b. Arrangements for dealing with public complaints

The approved development must then be operated in accordance with the approved management plan.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the amenity of neighbouring residents in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy policies DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Prior to the use hereby approved first commencing, the bat and bird boxes indicated on the approved plans shall be installed.

Reason: In order to secure an enhancement for biodiversity in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy policies G6 and G7 and PfE policy JP-G8.

10. The bin store shown on the approved site plan shall be fully constructed and made available for use prior to first occupation of the building.

Reason: In the interest of public health in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework

11. The approved landscaping works shall be carried out in full no later than the end of the next planting season following first occupation of the development hereby permitted.

Any trees or shrubs planted or retained in accordance with this condition which are removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or become severely damaged or become seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

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 Core Strategy Policies G6 and G7, Policies JP-G6 and JP-G7 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. No external lighting shall be installed to the building before full design details of such lighting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved lighting details.

Reason: In the interests of controlling light pollution in the interest of residential amenity in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy policies DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework

13. No external plant, ventilation or extraction systems shall be installed to the building before full details of any such systems have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of controlling noise and air pollution in the interest of residential amenity in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy policies DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework

14. Hours of construction for the external works hereby approved are limited to 0800-1800 Monday to Friday, 0900-1400 Saturdays, and no works on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the amenity of neighbouring residents in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy policies DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework