

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
PL/2026/0279	Nick Brookman	7 th July 2026

DETERMINATION DATE
17th July 2026 (Extension of time)

Address: Land to the south of Queens Drive, Rochdale, OL11 2NW

Proposal: Change of Use of land to form Community Gardens land (Sui Generis) and erection of 1.8m high boundary 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/A
	Neighbour comments received?	N/A

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

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

DATE: 10 July 2026

SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The application site lies within a designated Green Corridor adjacent to the existing allotment gardens which in itself is designated as being within the Urban Area.

The application site relates to the Change of Use of a small parcel of land (approx. 0.06Ha) which lies to the south of Queens Drive, within the Kirkholt area of Rochdale, (postcode OL11 2NW), approximately 1.6km south west of Rochdale town centre.

The site itself is bounded to the south by dense woodland, to the north-east by the former Kirkholt Medical Centre site and to the north-west by the 'QGardens' Community Gardens site, who will ultimately be the beneficiaries of the proposed use of the land.

The site is accessible via Manchester Road to the north and the Rochdale bypass (A664) to the west. These roads link Kirkholt to the surrounding areas of Rochdale as well as the wider motorway network via the A627 and M62. The M62 runs to the south of the site giving access to Manchester to the southwest and the rest of the Greater Manchester regions

PROPOSAL

The application site is currently vacant and lies to the south of the existing community gardens land. The submitted application proposes the change of use of this small parcel of land to form an extension of the existing Community Gardens land (Sui Generis) which will be facilitated by the erection of a new 1.8m high boundary fence which would adjoin the existing security / boundary fencing.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- National Design Guide
- National Model Design Code
- Building for a Healthy Life Toolkit

Local

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SD1 Delivering sustainable development
DM1 General development requirements

SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities
C6 Improving health and well being

SO3 Improving Design, image and quality of place

P1 Improving Image
P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

G6 Enhancing green infrastructure

- G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
- G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

- T2 Improving Accessibility

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

- G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

- JP-S1 Sustainable Development
- JP-G7 Trees and Woodland
- JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- JP-P1 Sustainable Places
- JP-P7 Sport and Recreation
- JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

RELEVANT SITE AND NEIGHBOURING SITE HISTORY

PL/2026/0141 - Erection of 3-storey apartment building of consisting 23no. units, erection of 5no. 3-storey dwelling houses, erection of a new sub-station with associated access, car parking, landscaping and boundary treatment – pending determination.

10/D52917 – Change of use of land to form allotments including erection of 2.4m high fencing to perimeter, access gates to Queens Drive and installation of three cabins and two greenhouses – Approved subject to condition 7th April 2010.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)

No objection subject to condition.

Land Contamination Officer

No objection subject to condition.

Highways

No objection.

Environmental Health (Noise)

No comments received.

Q Gardens Committee

No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to occupiers of neighbouring properties on the 7th May 2026 and a site notice was posted adjacent to the application site on the 21st May 2026.

No comments were received.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The existing allotment gardens site lies within the Defined Urban Area, but the proposed application site lies within a Green Corridor (as designated on the saved Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map).

Core Strategy Policy G6 sets out that the Council will sustain and enhance a green network to support growth and regeneration in the borough and provide a high quality environment that meets the needs of our community and visitors to the borough. We will protect and improve green spaces and water bodies and ensure that their value to sustainable development and regeneration is maximised. Our priorities are to improve opportunities for recreation in urban areas and the countryside, improve opportunities for healthy lifestyles, and to help manage and respond to environmental risks such as flooding and the impacts of climate change.

Core Strategy Policy C6 (Improving Health and Well Being) sets out that the Council will improve people's health and well-being and reduce health inequalities by:

- Creating an economic, physical and social environment which promotes and supports healthy lifestyles;
- Supporting and promoting accessible new health facilities and services in town centres and local centres; and
- Focusing the above actions in areas of deprivation, poor health and/or greatest need.

The Council will achieve the above through various measures with one of those being protecting allotments and encouraging other local food growing areas so that residents can grow their own food.

PfE Policy JP-P7 (Sport and Recreation) confirms that a network of high quality and accessible sports and recreation facilities will be protected and enhanced, supporting greater levels of activity for all ages.

From a National Policy perspective, NPPF Paragraph 96 sets out that:

'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*

- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of beautiful, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.*

Paragraph 98 also sets out that ‘To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*

NPPF Paragraph 103 states that ‘Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate’.

The proposed development is entirely aligned with the NPPF with particular reference to the protection and improvement of an existing community space which would promote social interaction, boost community participation and ensure the existing recreational space is retained and protected for the benefit of the wider community.

The proposed development is not considered to be harmful to the existing Green Corridor which lies on the periphery of the designation and the proposed development would not prejudice the remainder of the Green Corridor given the nature of the development proposed. The application would assist in supporting the community, protecting the existing green space around the application site and improve opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

Accordingly, proposed development would comply with PfE, Policy the relevant Policies of the Rochdale Core Strategy, Saved Policy G/3 of the UDP, and the NPPF.

Design and Appearance

In terms of design Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy require development proposals to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general.

In addition, paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

The appearance of the application site as an allotment site would seamlessly integrate with the existing use of the neighbouring allotment site. The extension of the existing allotments in this location to the south would therefore assimilate easily with the site surroundings.

From a design perspective in regard to new construction, the proposed development purely incorporates the construction of matching boundary fencing to the existing gardens site. Therefore, by virtue of the design of palisade fencing which is typically slimline and not bulky, it would in this instance have the benefit of providing much needed security whilst also providing a modern appearance and uninterrupted view into the site which would assist in retaining the current open presence of the application site to an acceptable degree.

The fence would be 1.8m in height and would bound the perimeter of the application site only. It would therefore function well and be visually appropriate for this site.

Accordingly, the proposed development is acceptable and in accordance with Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Neighbour Amenity and Noise

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

Paragraph 198 of the NPPF also states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.

The NPPG states that local planning authorities' decision taking should take account of the acoustic environment and in doing so consider whether or not a significant adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; whether or not an adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; and whether or not a good standard of amenity can be achieved.

Paragraph 135 also seeks to ensure that planning decisions create places which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy seek to ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users, also requiring that development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution.

The resulting scheme by its very nature would not cause any significant impacts in terms of noise and disturbance as it would continue to be used in the manner of the existing allotment site. Whilst the application site is located closer to the residential properties to the west (101 to 123) Queens Drive, in terms of floor area, more of the existing allotment site is being lost than what is being proposed under this application as demonstrated by the submitted Proposed Site Plan Drawing No 04 Rev A.

Environmental Health were consulted on this application, but their comments remain outstanding.

Furthermore, with regards to implications of the proposed development on neighbouring privacy, the proposed development would not negatively impact or give rise to a detrimental impact upon the amenities of surrounding residential land uses through visual intrusion for example.

In the absence of Environmental Health comments, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of amenity in accordance with Policy G9 and DM1 and the Council's Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

PfE Policy JP-G8 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity resources through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021), the NPPF and supporting guidance documents. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications and so the proposed development should achieve net gains for biodiversity via species enhancement as guided by the NPPF (paragraphs 187d and 192b) to achieve measurable net gain for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications paragraph 193 of the NPPF sets out that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should also be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains.

As of 2nd April 2024, BNG of 10% for minor planning applications is mandatory for development in England under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which confirmed that no further surveys are required. The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) were consulted on this application and they have no objection subject to conditions relating to the provision of Biodiversity Enhancements and the management/eradication of invasive species.

The Statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition will apply to this permission and to discharge this condition, sufficient information will be required to demonstrate that a 10% net gain will be achieved, including a Biodiversity Gain Plan, a final version of the BNG metric showing a 10% net gain in habitat units, and evidence that the correct number and type of units have been purchased and allocated to the development.

Accordingly, subject to conditions, the scheme is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Core Strategy Policy G6 and G7, PfE Policy JP-G8 and the NPPF.

Drainage

CS Policy G8 requires that new development does not lead to any increased form of flooding locally or further downstream, does not impede natural water and flood risk management, is not detrimental to existing or potential flood storage areas, contributes where possible to alleviating existing flood risk and is itself well protected from flood risk and ensures prudent use of water resources.

Policy JP-S4 (Flood Risk and the Water Environment) of PfE expects developments to manage surface water runoff through sustainable drainage systems and development should achieve greenfield run-off rates unless it is demonstrated to be impracticable.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding the development would not increase or re-direct surface water elsewhere off site.

Officers consider that the development accords with Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S4 of PfE and the NPPF.

Land Contamination

Core Strategy Policy G9 requires that any risks arising from contaminated land are identified and that any appropriate actions are taken.

The application is accompanied by a Ground Contamination Risk Assessment which concludes that elevated levels of lead have been recorded in three of the five samples screened that represent a potential risk to human health where exposure pathways are available.

In the event of an approval remedial works will be required and it has been recommended that for any areas of allotment gardens, a clean cover system be implemented comprising at least 450mm of clean imported sub-soil and at least 150mm of clean imported topsoil (total cover thickness of at least 600mm).

The Council's Land Contamination Officer was consulted on this application, and they have advised that they do not believe the site poses a risk to the proposed end use. However, it is not clear from the provided application documents what the works to necessitate the proposed change of use will comprise. Therefore, a condition is imposed to that effect regarding the submission of a Site Investigation and Remediation strategy if the site investigation identifies the need for it.

Accordingly, it has been confirmed through consultation with the Council's Environmental Protection team that subject to condition, the proposed development is acceptable with regards to CS Policy G9 and the Framework.

Highways

The application site is in a sustainable location and is situated close to public transport routes on Queensway.

Policy T2 of the CS requires development to comply with the Council's car parking standards and Policy DM1 requires that development provides satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring and servicing arrangements, taking into account the proposed use and location.

Policy JP-C8 of PfE requires new development to be located and designed to enable and encourage walking, cycling and public transport use to reduce the negative effects of car dependency and help deliver high quality, attractive, liveable and sustainable environments.

Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework states 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.

The development is not considered to have an adverse impact on highway safety and would not generate a level of additional traffic which would have a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the immediate local highway network, or strategic routes. Highways Services were consulted on this application and they have no objection to the proposed development. Therefore, the development is considered acceptable in accordance with CS Policies T1 and T2, Policy JP-C8 of PfE and the NPPF.

Conclusion

The proposed development is entirely aligned with the NPPF with particular reference to the protection and improvement of an existing community space which would promote social interaction, boost community participation and ensure the existing recreational space is retained and protected for the benefit of the wider community.

The proposed development is not considered to be harmful to the existing Green Corridor which lies on the periphery of the designation and the proposed development would not prejudice the remainder of the Green Corridor given the nature of the development proposed.

The end use would assist in supporting the community, protecting the existing green space around the application site and improve opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

Accordingly, proposed development would comply with PfE, Policy the relevant Policies of the Rochdale Core Strategy, Saved Policy G/3 of the UDP, and the NPPF and the development is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that permission is **Granted** subject to the conditions below:

Time Limit

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).

Approved Plans and Documents

2. This permission relates to the following drawings and documents:

Drawings

- Location Plan Drawing No 1 Rev A
- Site Topographical Survey Drawing No 02 Rev A
- Existing Site Plan Drawing No 03 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan Drawing No 04 Rev A
- Site Sections Drawing No 05 Rev A

Documents

- Planning Covering Letter 22-042C Planning Statement Rev A
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & BNG Assessment RHE.4415 Queens Drive Kirkholt - Allotment Site PEA BNG Assessment 2026-FINAL Rev B dated 08/06/2026
- BNG Metric Calculations RHE.4415-Queens Drive Kirkholt - Allotment Site-Statutory_Metric dated 03/06/2026
- Ground Contamination Risk Assessment referenced 26-138.01L

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these details hereby approved unless otherwise required by the conditions below.

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.

Site Investigation and Risk Assessment

3. No development shall take place until an investigation and risk assessment (in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall investigate the nature and extent of any contamination on the site (whether or not it originates on the site). The assessment shall be undertaken by competent persons.

The submitted report shall include:

- i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination
- ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland, and service lines and pipes,

- adjoining land,
- groundwaters and surface waters,
- ecological systems,
- archaeological sites and ancient monuments;

iii) where unacceptable risks are identified, an appraisal of remedial options and proposal of the preferred option(s) to form a remediation strategy for the site.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy thereafter.

No part of the development shall be occupied until a verification report demonstrating that the approved remediation has been implemented has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the safe development of the site in the interests of the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: Further investigation will be necessary prior to commencement of any building or engineering works on site.

Invasive Species

4. Prior to the commencement of any earthworks or vegetation clearance, a method statement detailing eradication or avoidance measures for Himalayan Balsam should be supplied to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If any other non-native invasive species are identified on site, a method statement detailing their eradication or avoidance measures for such invasive species shall be submitted to and agreed in writing to the Local Planning Authority. The agreed method statement shall be adhered to and implemented in full.

Reason: To eradicate invasive species and protect the biodiversity of the area.

Reason for Pre-commencement Condition: Construction/clearance works on site have the potential to cause the further spread invasive species, which therefore need to be managed sensitively prior to works starting on site.

Biodiversity Enhancements

5. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a scheme of biodiversity enhancements has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such measures could include, but not be limited to, the provision of bird boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels, hibernaculum, wildflower seeding and hedgehog habitat (including provision of 'Hedgehog friendly fencing'). The duly approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior first use of the development hereby approved and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of enhancing biodiversity and habitat provision within the site in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Boundary Treatments

6. Notwithstanding any details submitted as part of the application, the proposed boundary fencing shall match in colour, material, appearance, design, style and height to the fence bounding the existing Q Gardens Community site.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 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.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- a) A Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority,
- and;
- b) The planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Rochdale Borough Council.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

For the purposes of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, a biodiversity gain plan is a plan which:

- (a) relates to development for which planning permission is granted, and;
- (b) specifies the matters referred to below:

The matters are:

- (a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- (b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- (e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and

(f) any such other matters as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.

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.

Informatives

1. Should any protected species or evidence of protected species be found prior to or during development, work must stop immediately and Ecological advice must be sought or Natural England contacted for further advice. This is a legal requirement under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and applies to whoever carries out the work. All contractors on site should be made aware of this requirement.