

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

25/00447/FUL

CASE OFFICER

Anna Hayes

DETERMINATION DATE 28.08.2025 **EXT OF TIME** 29.10.2025

Address: Mitchell Hey Mills College Road Rochdale OL12 6AE

Proposal: Change of use of existing building from Class B2 (General industrial) to Class E(d) (Indoor sport and recreation) to create/facilitate a padel sports facility inclusive of nine indoor courts, changing facilities, reception area together with associated internal alterations. Proposed external works include new doors, shutters, and minor facade maintenance

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?	Y

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

RECOMMENDATION	Grant subject to conditions
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 27/10/2025

SITE

The application site relates to Mitchell Hey Mills, a late 19th century cotton mill complex, which lies on College Road to the north of the River Spodden in Rochdale.

The surviving buildings consist of spinning mill buildings and an early 20th century office block. The buildings are currently vacant. They have undergone a number of changes, some of which are unsympathetic, including the blocking up of windows, and the replacement of many of the original timber windows with UPVC.

As 19th century industrial buildings, the site has been included on the Council's list of non-designated heritage assets, due to their architectural and historic interest. The site is not a listed building nor located within a Conservation Area. It is identified as part of the defined urban area (G/D/1), a mixed employment zone (E/C/3), and an area of physical regeneration (G/R/1). The site is located within Flood Risk Zone 2.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing building from Use Class B2 (General Industrial) to Class E(d) (Indoor Sport and Recreation) to create a padel sports facility comprising 9no indoor courts. Proposed external works include new doors, shutters and minor façade maintenance.

Existing parking is provided within the wider industrial estate and there are no changes proposed to the overall parking numbers, through either adding or removing spaces.

Proposed hours of operation are Monday – Sunday (including Bank Holidays) are 06:00 – 00:00.

Any adverts or signage are not subject of this application, and where necessary, separate Advertisement Consent should be sought. Those illustrated within the plans and Design and Access statement are indicative only.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 2 Achieving sustainable development
Section 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 9 Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 Making efficient use of land
Section 12 Achieving well-designed places
Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Development Plan

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

The development plan for the proposal consists of the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan, Rochdale Core Strategy (CS), adopted 2016, and saved Unitary

Development Plan (UDP) policies. The Council also has an adopted series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) (2024)

Sustainable and Resilient Places

JP-S1 Sustainable Development
JP-S2 Carbon and Energy
JP-S3 Heat and Energy Networks
JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment
JP-S5 Clean Air
JP-S6 Resource Efficiency

Greener Places

JP-G1 Landscape Character
JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Places for People

JP-P1 Sustainable Places
JP-P2 Heritage

Connected Places

JP-C1 An Integrated Network
JP-C2 Digital Connectivity
JP-C6 Walking and Cycling
JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1 Delivering a more prosperous economy

E2 Increasing jobs and prosperity
E3 Focusing on economic growth corridors and areas

SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities

C6 Improving health and well being

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

G8 Managing water resources and flood risk
G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

T2 Improving accessibility

DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area
EC/3 Mixed Employment Zones

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (June 2016).

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

10/D52941 - Change Of Use Of Part Of Industrial Unit To Retail Use – Withdrawn
22/04/2010

22/01284/FUL - Change of use of lower ground floor and part of ground floor from mixed Use Class B2 and B8 to Use Class B2 (industrial) including new external staircase and new first floor window to south west elevation – Approved 20 July 2023

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

No objection to the proposal.

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

No comments received to date.

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date

Environment Agency

No objection to the proposal.

Conservation And Design

No objection to the proposal.

Waste And Recycling Manager (Environmental Management)

No comments received to date

GM Fire Service

No comments received to date

Health and Safety Executive

Confirms no comments to make falling outside any HSE consultation zones.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised with a site notice and neighbour notification letters.

The Council has received one objection. The comments received are summarised as follows:

Current Issues

- Existing parking provision is insufficient for daily visitors, deliveries, and collections.
- Vehicles routinely obstruct shared access routes, blocking access to other parts of the site.
- Private parking spaces are misused due to lack of available parking.

Impact of Proposed Change

- Leisure-related use will significantly increase vehicular traffic and pedestrian footfall.
- Existing parking and access problems will worsen.
- Increased risk of accidents due to no segregation between vehicles and pedestrians.

Policy Concerns

- NPPF states that development should be refused if it causes unacceptable highway safety impacts or severe cumulative impacts on the road network and that developments should minimise conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.
- Local plans require adequate on-site parking and protection of neighbouring occupiers' access, safety, and amenity.

ANALYSIS

Principle

Mitchell Hey Mills is a Brownfield site located within a designated Mixed Employment Zone, as defined by saved UDP Policy EC/3. These zones are typically situated in older urban areas, often adjacent to residential neighbourhoods, and comprise older industrial premises, infrastructure, and vacant buildings that may present redevelopment constraints due to previous uses.

Within these zones, the Council supports a variety of commercial and employment activities that facilitate redevelopment and job opportunities, provided they do not cause disruptions or nuisances to existing operations. The overarching aim is to maintain and enhance Mixed Employment Zones for diverse industrial, business, and commercial purposes, promoting retention and expansion of existing firms and attracting new employment uses. Core Strategy Policies E2 and E3 also align with these aims, reinforcing support for employment generating uses and the reuse of previously developed land.

PfE policy JP-J2 also seeks to maintain a diverse supply of employment sites and premises to support businesses of all sizes. PfE Policy JP-C1 encourages development patterns that minimise the need to travel by ensuring key services, including recreation and leisure, and are well located and accessible. PfE Policy JP-P7 aims to protect and enhance sports and recreation facilities across the plan area.

The proposed change of use from a vacant industrial unit to a leisure facility comprising nine padel courts falls within the category of entertainment, leisure and tourism uses, which are explicitly supported under Policy EC/3 (e). The proposed development would bring a vacant building back into productive use, generate employment and sports/leisure opportunities, and contribute to the regeneration objectives of saved UDP Policy EC/3, Core Strategy policies E2 and E3, and PfE policies JP-J2, JP-C1 and JP-P7.

Due to the nature of the application, however, in accordance with paragraph 91 of the NPPF, there is a question of whether the sequential test should be applied since 'intensive sport and recreation uses' are defined as being a 'main town centre use'.

The proposed development comprises of nine courts with 3 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees. The business operates on a booking system, requiring customers to reserve specific time slots and confirm the number of players, which helps distribute demand throughout the day. The floor plans also indicate that 8 out of the 9 courts will

be situated in close proximity limiting any capacity for continuous spectator provision. For these reasons, it is considered that a sequential test is not a requirement of this application since the development does not constitute an intense sports use as defined by the NPPF.

Overall, the principle of the proposed use of the premises is found to be acceptable, subject to full consideration of other material development management issues.

Design and Heritage

Mitchell Hey Mills is a late 19th century cotton mill complex, which lies on College Road to the north of the River Spodden. The surviving buildings consist of spinning mill buildings and an early 20th century office block. They have undergone a number of changes, some of which are unsympathetic, including the blocking up of windows, and the replacement of the original timber windows with UPVC. The brick facade of the building has also been recently painted grey, obscuring the original brickwork. Nevertheless, the buildings retain some original features. As 19th century industrial buildings, the site has been included on the Council's list of non-designated heritage assets, due to their architectural and historic interest.

The impact of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset is a material planning consideration (NPPF paragraph 216). A balanced judgement should be had, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Mills are also key heritage assets for the purposes of Rochdale CS policy P2. This policy seeks to conserve, enhance and promote the borough's key heritage assets. The provisions of PpE policy JP-P2 also apply.

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement (rev A dated 18.06.2025).

The proposal is for the use of part of the building as a padel sports facility. This includes internal alterations. There are no heritage objections to the principle of this use.

Externally, the proposal includes a new entrance door with roller shutter as well as general like-for-like refurbishments to the existing walls and cladding. The plans also indicate signage, however this requires separate advertisement consent and so is not subject to consideration as part of this application.

There is an existing entrance door and roller-shutter on the building. These would be replaced by the new entrance door and shutter. The Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed that, ideally, the new shutter would be situated internally to minimise its visual impact, although it is noted that there is an existing shutter in place currently. On this basis, on balance, there are no objections to the development in regard to design or on a heritage basis.

Overall, the proposals are found to be acceptable in relation to paragraph 216 of the NPPF and p.135 in regard to visual amenity.

Residential Amenity

At paragraph 135, the NPPF outlines the importance of planning in securing good standards of amenity for future and existing occupiers of land and buildings. Core Strategy policies DM1, G9, C1 and C6 cumulatively seek to reduce air and noise pollution, and DM1 in particular requires development to not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

The site is located within a designated Mixed Employment Zone. As highlighted within policy EC/3, these zones are typically situated in older urban areas, often adjacent to residential neighbourhoods. In this instance, those nearest to this site are the first-floor residential properties on College Road and the terraced/ mews properties opposite on Holmes Street.

The proposed development is unlikely to cause significant noise and disturbance particularly when considered against the existing industrial use of the former mill site, mindful also of the proposed hours of operation (06:00 – 00:00 7 days a week). Furthermore, as this proposal involves a change of use within a building that has limited window and door openings, it is not anticipated to adversely affect neighbouring occupiers in terms of outlook, natural light, or privacy.

However, in the interests of the amenities of the surrounding area/uses so as to prevent the introduction of what might be an inappropriate use in this location without the land use planning implications having first being considered by the local planning authority, it is recommended that a condition is attached to any approval notice, restricting the permission to use Class E(d) 'for indoor sport, recreation or fitness, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms or use as a swimming pool or skating rink, principally to visiting members of the public', as proposed.

Having regard to paragraph 193 of the NPPF, the LPA are satisfied that the new development could integrate sympathetically and effectively with surrounding existing businesses without unacceptably harming the functionality of existing nearby uses/businesses (explored in more detail in the *Access and Highway Safety* section below).

The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Core Strategy policies DM1, G9, C1 and C6 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF in regard to amenity.

Access and Highway Safety

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF 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, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios”.

Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided and, in all circumstances, prioritises the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area. Policy DM1 also states that all development proposals should provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location.

The application site is in close proximity to Rochdale Town Centre and is accessed off College Road via a gated priority-controlled accesses. The existing car park comprises of 27 regular spaces, and 6 disabled spaces, resulting in a total of 33 existing car parking spaces. Of these, 21 car parking spaces are currently allocated to the application site.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) have been consulted on the application and requested that a full Transport Study be undertaken of the existing car park to determine whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the predicted demand, as well as the submission of a Transport Statement to assess the potential impact of the

development on the local transport network. Transport Statement ref. 250871-TA (0.0), received 5th September 2025, was subsequently submitted for review.

Officers acknowledge the objection comments received; however, the LHA have since confirmed that adequate segregation of HGV movements and car parking exists. The Padel facility and neighbouring property have differing peak periods and as such the conflict is reduced. The submitted swept path analysis demonstrates that HGVs can turn with ease within the site. Access to the site is deemed to be acceptable and no changes are proposed to the existing highway. There are no concerns highlighted by the Highways Officer regarding servicing of this location. On the basis of the above, there are no objections from the LHA. Officers have no reason to disagree and therefore consider the scheme to be acceptable in regard to access and highway safety, in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future).

Core Strategy Policy G8 also seeks to ensure that new development (including flood risk mitigation measures) does not lead to any form of increased 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, is itself well protected from flood risk and ensures prudent use of water resources.

The application site abuts the northern bank of the River Spodden, which is recognised as a main river by the Environment Agency. A small portion of the site falls into Flood Zone 2 therefore is considered as a high risk of flooding. A sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding.

The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (dated June 2025) prepared by Unda Consulting Limited, which summarises the following:

- The development is for the change of use with no increase in vulnerability.
- There will be an intensification of usage at the site.
- There will be no increase in built footprint. Only some small external alterations.
- Floor levels post development will be set no lower than existing levels.
- There will be no loss of fluvial floodplain storage.
- Due to the nature of the development, there will be no increases to surface water runoff.
- Flood proofing of the development will be incorporated as appropriate.
- The applicant will register with the Environment Agency Floodline Alert/Warnings Direct service.
- Assuming accordance with these flood risk management measures, Unda Consulting Limited consider the proposed application to be suitable in flood risk terms.

The EA have confirmed no objection in principle to the proposed development, as the proposal is to use the development under a "less vulnerable" use category. It is advised that if in the future this proposal is amended to extend beyond less vulnerable use, or

future ones are, or there are modifications and/or extensions proposed to the site, the Environment Agency should be re-consulted.

The LLFA have been consulted but not provided any comments.

No additional hardstanding, or extension is proposed to the building and as the Environment Agency have raised no objections, and there are no extensions or alterations to the footprint of the building (being change of use only) the proposal is found to be acceptable in regard to flood risk.

Other Considerations

Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should strive to create healthy, inclusive, and safe environments by: encouraging social interaction and community engagement; ensuring places are secure, accessible, and designed to deter crime; and supporting healthy lifestyles through features such as green spaces, sports facilities, and infrastructure that promotes active travel like walking and cycling.

In order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, paragraph 98 of the NPPF states that, amongst other things, planning policies and decisions should “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”.

Core Strategy Policy C6 also seeks to improve people’s health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in the borough by creating an economic, physical and social environment which promotes and supports healthy lifestyles. This is achieved by supporting the provision of health facilities and services.

The proposal has been designed in accordance with the SAPCA Code of Practice for the Construction of Padel Courts (carried out in collaboration with the Lawn Tennis Association), where practicable within the constraints of the existing warehouse structure. All key safety, layouts and construction guidance has been followed. The only departure is the available clear ceiling height, which falls marginally below the SAPCA standard. Given that the facility is intended as a recreational and community sports venue, rather than a professional competition venue, the applicant has advised that this variation does not compromise player safety or the playability of the courts. Officers are therefore satisfied that the design therefore reflects best practice while ensuring the sustainable reuse of an existing building. The proposal also supports the aims and aspirations of Chapter 8 of the NPPF, in particular paragraphs 96 and 98 as above.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposed development would see the effective reuse of a vacant building and generate employment opportunities whilst also encouraging social interaction and supporting healthy lifestyle opportunities for sport and recreation. The scheme would have a neutral impact on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset and satisfies flood risk and highway safety requirements. The application is therefore recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of 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 by Section 51 of 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:

Plans

- D050 revision A (Proposed Site Plan)
- D100 revision A (Proposed Ground Floor Plan)
- D300 revision B (Proposed Elevations)
- D310 revision A (Elevation Detail and Schedule)

Documents

- Transport Statement, reference 250871-TA (0.0) prepared by SCP Transport Planning
- Flood Risk Assessment, reference 95968-VentureCo-MitchellMill prepared by Unda

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 parking and servicing areas as shown on the proposed site layout plan within Appendix B of the submitted Transport Statement (reference 250871-TA (0.0) prepared by SCP Transport Planning) shall be marked out and made available in accordance with the approved plan prior to the first occupation of the building and development hereby approved. Such parking facilities shall thereafter be permanently retained for that purpose (notwithstanding the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015) as amended.

Reason: To ensure provision of adequate off-street parking facilities within the site in accordance with Policy T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The approved Padel facility shall not be open outside the following hours:
Mondays to Sundays 06:00 to 24:00 (Midnight).

Reason: In interests of amenity in order to reduce noise and general disturbance in accordance with Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.

5. This permission allows for the use of the premises, as defined on the approved Site Location Plan, for purposes falling within Use Class E(d) of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or in

any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification, and for no other purpose.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the surrounding area/uses so as to prevent the introduction of what might be an inappropriate use in this location without the land use planning implications having first being considered by the local planning authority.

Procedure Statement

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.

Notes for Applicant:

ECOLOGY INFORMATIVE:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended it is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of a wild bird, while the nest is in use or being built. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. If a birds nest is suspected work should cease immediately, and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the nest(s).

ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT INFORMATIVE:

Should it be intended to display any advertisement at the premises, the applicant is advised to contact the Local Planning Authority with details to establish whether a separate application is required for approval under the Advertisement Regulations (2007).