

PLANNING STATEMENT

Change of Use: Solicitors' Offices to Child Care / Learning Centre

Project information	Details
Property	146 Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 1LD
Planning application	PL/2026/0671
Proposal	Change of use from solicitors' offices into Child Care Centre (Class F1), as described in the Council's validation correspondence
Applicant / client	RISING STARZ LTD
Architectural drawing	Syed Helal Uddin Architectural Services, Drawing 2229, July 2026
Planning authority	Rochdale Borough Council
Statement status	Planning Statement prepared to address the Council's validation request; operational details provided by the applicant are incorporated throughout this statement

Purpose of this document

This Planning Statement explains the planning case for the proposed change of use and associated internal works. It should be read alongside the separate Heritage Statement submitted because the site lies within the Townhead Conservation Area. The Council's validation letter also requires this Planning Statement as a separate document.

Prepared: August 2026 | Version: Final

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 This Planning Statement supports planning application PL/2026/0671 for 146 Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 1LD. The application proposes a change of use from solicitors' offices to a Child Care Centre / learning centre, as described in the Council's validation correspondence and the submitted architectural drawings.

1.2 The application is intended to bring an existing town-centre building into an active community-focused use. The proposal also includes internal alterations associated with circulation and fire-safety arrangements, including new partition walls, enclosure of the existing staircase arrangement and fire-resistant doors, together with replacement business signage.

1.3 The principle of making productive use of an existing town-centre building is consistent with the Council's established strategy of supporting viable, active and diverse town centres. The

adopted Rochdale Core Strategy includes policy themes on thriving centres, community facilities, health and wellbeing, design, accessibility and sustainable transport.

1.4 The building is within the Townhead Conservation Area. A separate Heritage Statement has been prepared to address the Council's specific heritage validation requirement and assesses the heritage implications of the works in detail. This Planning Statement therefore concentrates on land-use, amenity, access, transport, community benefit and general planning matters. The proposed centre would provide places for up to 45 children aged 5–16, with a staffing level of 2–3 staff.

1.5 The proposed centre would operate during defined morning and afternoon/evening periods, from 6:30am to 9:30am and from 2:30pm to 7:30pm. It would accommodate up to 45 children with 2–3 staff. The proposal is capable of providing a positive community use within an accessible town-centre location, reusing an existing building with limited external change and without introducing a large-scale expansion or new built footprint.

Key planning proposition

The proposal seeks to adapt an existing town-centre premises to provide a community-oriented child care / learning function, while retaining the existing building and making targeted internal changes. The main planning issues are therefore the acceptability of the proposed use, accessibility and transport, neighbour and environmental effects, design, and heritage.

2. Application and Site Information

Item	Information
Site	146 Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 1LD
Application reference	PL/2026/0671
Received by Council	24 July 2026
Applicant	RISING STARZ LTD
Existing use	Solicitors' offices
Proposed use	Child Care Centre / learning centre, described in the Council correspondence as Class F1
Building form	Existing multi-storey town-centre premises with ground, first and second floor accommodation and a pitched roof, as shown on Drawing 2229
Conservation status	Within the Townhead Conservation Area; the separate Heritage Statement addresses this designation and

Item	Information
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associated heritage significance

2.1 The architect's existing drawing records the current floors, roof and elevations and identifies the site at 146 Yorkshire Street. The proposed drawing records the proposed layouts and elevations for the change of use. The drawings form the basis of this statement's description of the physical works.

3. Existing Site and Surroundings

3.1 146 Yorkshire Street occupies an established commercial position on Yorkshire Street in Rochdale town centre. The photographic record prepared for the accompanying Heritage Statement shows a mixed historic and commercial streetscape, with active shopfronts and upper-floor accommodation adjoining the application building.

3.2 The building currently accommodates solicitors' offices. The existing ground-floor frontage contains a shopfront and principal entrance, while internal areas include offices, circulation spaces and an open timber staircase / balustrade arrangement. The existing rear of the building includes a separate rear exit and access arrangement.

3.3 The submitted drawings indicate no substantial extension to the building footprint, no major change to the roof form and no change to the basic external massing. The proposed external intervention visible from Yorkshire Street is principally replacement business signage.

3.4 The site is in a highly accessible central location. Rochdale Council's current town-centre information records the town-centre tram stop at the heart of the centre, a bus interchange around five minutes' walk from Rochdale Town Hall, and Rochdale railway station around 15 minutes' walk from the town centre. This is relevant to the accessibility of a community service in a central location.

4. Proposed Development

4.1 The proposal is a change of use from solicitors' offices into a child care / learning centre. The architectural drawing is titled "Proposed layout" and identifies the proposal as a change of use into a learning centre for RISING STARZ LTD.

4.2 The proposed physical works shown or described for the application include:

- new internal partition walls to establish a protected corridor on the ground floor;
- additional internal walls around the existing staircase to improve enclosure and fire separation;
- four fire-resistant doors associated with the proposed circulation / fire-safety arrangement;
- retention and use of the existing principal entrance;
- retention of the existing rear exit / escape route arrangement;

- replacement of the existing Kinetic Law business signage with the applicant's business signage; and
- general internal fit-out and arrangement of rooms for the proposed use, as shown on Drawing 2229.

4.3 The proposed maximum attendance is 45 children on site, with 2–3 staff. The centre would operate from 6:30am to 9:30am and from 2:30pm to 7:30pm. There is limited public parking on both sides of Yorkshire Street and a limited car park to the side of the premises. The side car park is intended primarily to function as the fire assembly point and is linked to the rear of the building, while also being accessible from the front of the building. The car park is therefore not proposed as a dedicated customer parking facility. The operational details set out in Appendix B have been confirmed by the applicant.

Element	Existing condition	Proposed approach	Planning relevance
Main frontage	Existing commercial frontage and Kinetic Law sign	Existing frontage retained; business signage replaced	Limited external change; supports continued active frontage
Ground-floor circulation	Existing open internal arrangement	Two new partition walls to create protected corridor	Supports safe circulation and change of use
Staircase	Open timber balustrade arrangement	Additional enclosure / walls around stair	Internal alteration associated with fire separation
Doors	Existing internal door openings	Four fire-resistant doors	Safety-related adaptation of existing building
Rear exit	Existing rear exit	Retained and used as part of escape arrangement	Makes use of existing access rather than creating a new external opening

5. Planning History and Application Context

5.1 The current application is PL/2026/0671, received by Rochdale Borough Council on 24 July 2026. The Council's validation correspondence states that the submission is incomplete because the site is within the Townhead Conservation Area and a Heritage Statement is required, and because a Planning Statement is also required.

5.2 The Council requested that the outstanding information be provided, or that the applicant contact the service to confirm it is being collated, within 21 days of the validation request. This statement is prepared specifically to respond to the second outstanding validation requirement.

6. Planning Policy Framework

6.1 The Council's website confirms that the adopted Core Strategy forms part of the current Local Plan, while Places for Everyone was adopted in March 2024 and provides the strategic Greater Manchester framework. The Council is also preparing a new Local Plan, with the Regulation 18 draft consulted upon in late 2025 / early 2026; that emerging document is not treated here as adopted policy.

6.2 The most relevant adopted Core Strategy policy themes for this application are:

Policy	Relevance to this proposal
E1 – Establishing thriving town, district and local centres	Supports the vitality, viability and appropriate diversification of centres.
C6 – Improving health and wellbeing	Provides a relevant strategic context for uses that contribute to community wellbeing.
C7 – Delivering education facilities	Relevant to learning and educational provision.
C8 – Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities	Relevant to community-focused facilities and services.
P1 – Improving image	Relevant to maintaining and improving the quality and image of places.
P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage	Relevant because the site lies within a conservation area; detailed heritage matters are dealt with in the separate Heritage Statement.
P3 – Improving design of new development	Relevant to the quality of alterations and their relationship to the existing building.
T1 – Delivering sustainable transport	Relevant to the location and accessibility of the proposal.
T2 – Improving accessibility	Relevant to access by pedestrians, public transport, cyclists and people with impaired mobility.
DM1 – General development requirements	Provides the broad development-management framework for considering proposals.

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration. Its current structure includes chapters on town-centre vitality, healthy and safe communities, sustainable transport, effective use of land, well-designed places and the historic environment.

7. Assessment of the Proposal

7.1 Principle of the Proposed Use

7.1.1 The proposal seeks to reuse an existing commercial premises in a town-centre location for a community-oriented child care / learning function. The building already has an established commercial use and is within a location where a mixture of employment, services, community and other town-centre activities can be expected.

7.1.2 The proposal therefore does not involve the development of a greenfield site or the introduction of a new large building. It is an adaptive re-use of an existing building, which is consistent with the planning objective of making effective use of existing land and premises.

7.1.3 The proposal should be considered on its actual operational effects. The maximum attendance is 45 children with 2–3 staff, and the operating periods are limited to 6:30am–9:30am and 2:30pm–7:30pm. On the information supplied, there is no indication of a scale or intensity of use that would be incompatible in principle with a central town-centre location. Arrival and collection arrangements will be managed from the existing front entrance in accordance with the operating details set out in this statement.

7.2 Town Centre Role and Diversification

7.2.1 The Council's adopted Core Strategy contains a specific policy for establishing thriving town, district and local centres. The wider policy direction is to support town centres as active locations that can accommodate a suitable mix of uses and adapt to changing needs.

7.2.2 The proposed use would diversify the function of an existing premises and would provide an active service-based use during the morning and afternoon/early evening periods, with opening hours of 6:30am–9:30am and 2:30pm–7:30pm. This can contribute to the continuing vitality of Yorkshire Street by keeping an existing unit occupied and in active use during periods when families and children are using the service.

7.2.3 The proposal would also contribute to the service economy through the operation of the centre and employment for 2–3 staff, together with associated local expenditure by families and visitors. Up to 45 children would be accommodated on site at any one time.

7.3 Community, Education, Health and Wellbeing

7.3.1 The proposed function has a clear community dimension. A child care / learning centre can support up to 45 children and their families by providing a local place for learning, supervised activity and community support. This is directly relevant to the Core Strategy themes of health and wellbeing, education facilities, and community facilities.

7.3.2 The town-centre location has potential advantages for accessibility by walking and public transport. It also allows the existing building stock to support a service without requiring a new-build community facility on another site.

7.3.3 The planning balance should recognise these social benefits alongside the limited physical scope of the works and the need to manage any operational effects responsibly.

7.4 Design and Heritage

7.4.1 The proposal retains the existing building envelope and makes predominantly internal changes. The existing and proposed architectural drawings show the basic form, roof profile and external envelope retained, with the main external change being replacement business signage.

7.4.2 The submitted Heritage Statement provides the detailed assessment of the Townhead Conservation Area and the heritage significance of the building and its context. It also documents the existing condition through a photographic record and compares the existing and proposed layouts.

7.4.3 For planning purposes, the design approach is therefore one of adaptation rather than replacement. The proposal seeks to retain the building's townscape contribution while introducing internal changes needed for the proposed use.

7.5 Access, Transport and Parking

7.5.1 The site is centrally located and is served by established pedestrian and public transport connections. Rochdale Council's current town-centre information identifies the town-centre tram stop, the Transport Interchange and Rochdale railway station as accessible transport options for the town centre.

7.5.2 The submitted drawings retain the existing principal entrance and the existing rear exit. No new vehicular access is proposed and there is no proposal to extend the building footprint for parking or servicing.

7.5.3 The proposal would make use of existing town-centre transport infrastructure and the existing principal entrance. There are limited public parking spaces on both sides of Yorkshire Street and a limited car park to the side of the premises. The side car park is intended to be used as the fire assembly point because it is linked with the rear side of the building, although it can also be accessed from the front of the premises. It is therefore not proposed as dedicated parking for the childcare centre. Because the centre will accommodate up to 45 children, drop-off and collection activity should be managed so far as practicable to avoid obstruction of Yorkshire Street and neighbouring premises.

7.5.4 Staff numbers are expected to be 2–3. No dedicated customer parking is proposed. There is limited public parking on both sides of Yorkshire Street. The limited side car park is linked to the rear of the building and can also be accessed from the front; it will be used as the fire assembly point rather than as routine customer or staff parking. Staff may travel by car and use available public parking, or use public transport, including buses and trams, which are readily accessible from the town-centre location.

Transport and operational information confirmed | The planning assessment is based on a

maximum simultaneous attendance of up to 45 children aged 5–16, supported by 2–3 staff. The centre will operate from 6:30am to 9:30am and from 2:30pm to 7:30pm. Drop-off and collection will take place at the existing front entrance of 146 Yorkshire Street. Limited public parking is available on both sides of Yorkshire Street and may be used by staff and visitors where spaces are available; no dedicated customer parking is proposed within the site. Staff may also travel by public transport, including buses and trams, which are readily accessible from the town-centre location. The limited side car park is linked to the rear of the building and can be accessed from the front, but is intended to function as the fire assembly point rather than routine parking.

7.6 Residential Amenity, Noise and General Environmental Effects

7.6.1 The principal environmental consideration associated with the proposed use is its effect on neighbouring occupiers through activity, noise, movement and servicing. The site is already within an established commercial street with existing customer-facing and office uses.

7.6.2 The internal works themselves are not expected to create material environmental impacts once constructed, and the proposed use does not introduce heavy industrial processes, significant plant or manufacturing activity.

7.6.3 A child care / learning use can generate periods of activity associated with arrival, departure and supervised use. The proposed operating periods are 6:30am–9:30am and 2:30pm–7:30pm. Children are aged 5–16. Parent and guardian drop-off and collection will take place at the front entrance of 146 Yorkshire Street. The rear area is not proposed for routine outdoor play or general external use; its existing function is as part of the rear escape arrangement. These parameters assist in understanding and managing the likely pattern of activity, particularly during early-morning arrivals and afternoon/evening collections.

7.6.4 On the information currently available, there is no indication that the proposal requires a separate industrial or commercial noise regime. No routine outdoor play use is proposed at the rear. Any amplified music, mechanical plant or other notable noise sources, if introduced, should be managed appropriately and addressed if requested by the Council.

7.7 Fire Safety and Building Regulations

7.7.1 The proposed internal alterations include new corridor partitions, additional enclosure around the staircase and four fire-resistant doors. These works are described as part of the means-of-escape and fire-safety arrangements for the proposed use.

7.7.2 The planning significance of these works is that they represent targeted adaptations to an existing building rather than an expansion of the building envelope. The Heritage Statement considers their effect on the building's heritage significance.

7.7.3 Technical compliance with fire safety and Building Regulations is a separate matter from planning permission and will be dealt with through the appropriate regulatory process. This Planning Statement does not purport to certify technical compliance.

7.8 Accessibility and Inclusive Use

7.8.1 The adopted Core Strategy includes improving accessibility as a specific policy objective. The proposal should therefore be designed and operated so far as practicable to support safe access for children, parents, staff and visitors, including people with disabilities or mobility limitations.

7.8.2 The existing main entrance is retained. Detailed accessibility arrangements within the building will be addressed through the final layout and Building Regulations strategy, taking account of the existing building fabric and the needs of children, parents, staff and visitors.

7.8.3 Where the building's existing fabric constrains full accessibility, the applicant should explain what reasonable measures are proposed and how the centre will manage access to all services provided.

7.9 Waste, Servicing and Site Management

7.9.1 The proposed use will generate ordinary domestic / commercial-type waste associated with staff, children and the operation of the centre. No specialist industrial waste stream is anticipated from the information supplied.

7.9.2 The applicant has confirmed that operational rubbish will be taken to the nearby waste centre on Chichester Street, OL16 2AU. No waste storage or collection arrangement is proposed to obstruct the public highway or alter the building frontage. The operational arrangement should continue to comply with any applicable waste-management requirements.

7.9.3 Management arrangements will organise deliveries, staff arrival, parent collection and contractor visits so that the operation does not create avoidable obstruction or disturbance on Yorkshire Street or at the rear access. The side car park will remain available for its intended emergency assembly function and will not be relied upon for routine parking.

7.10 Sustainability and Climate Considerations

7.10.1 The proposal reuses an existing building rather than requiring new construction. That is an inherently efficient approach to land use and helps avoid the embodied impacts associated with demolition and new build.

7.10.2 The applicant should retain and improve energy-efficient lighting and heating controls where practical, subject to the existing building fabric and Building Regulations. Any future replacement of plant should seek efficient equipment.

7.10.3 The site's town-centre location also supports lower-carbon travel choices by making walking and public transport viable for staff and visitors.

8. Planning Balance

8.1 The proposal should be considered as a change-of-use and adaptation project rather than a major redevelopment scheme. Its main benefits are the productive reuse of an existing town-centre premises, introduction of a community-oriented child care / learning function, support for local services and employment, and retention of the existing building envelope.

8.2 The principal potential adverse effects are operational and can be addressed through appropriate management of arrival/departure periods, noise, waste, servicing and accessibility. The proposed internal alterations are limited in nature and are associated with the functional requirements of the new use.

8.3 Heritage matters are dealt with in the separate Heritage Statement, which assesses the proposal against the significance of the building and the Townhead Conservation Area. The application therefore presents a coherent package of planning and heritage information to enable the Council to determine the proposal.

9. Conclusion

9.1 The proposed change of use at 146 Yorkshire Street would bring an existing town-centre building into a new community-oriented child care / learning use while retaining the building and making limited internal alterations.

9.2 The proposal is consistent in principle with the adopted planning strategy's support for thriving centres, community facilities, health and wellbeing, education, good design and sustainable accessibility. The site is centrally located and benefits from established pedestrian and public transport connections.

9.3 The proposal does not introduce a new building footprint or major external redevelopment. Its physical interventions are focused on internal circulation, fire separation and signage, with the detailed heritage implications addressed separately.

9.4 The proposed operating parameters are up to 45 children on site, 2–3 staff, and opening hours of 6:30am–9:30am and 2:30pm–7:30pm. Subject to suitable management of arrival and collection activity, waste, servicing, accessibility and emergency arrangements, the proposal is capable of providing a beneficial and appropriately located community use with no significant planning harm identified from the information currently available.

9.5 The Council is therefore invited to validate and determine the application on the basis of this Planning Statement, the submitted architectural drawings and the separate Heritage Statement, together with any further operational details requested during determination.

Appendix A – Documents and Drawings

Document / drawing	Status / purpose
Architectural Drawing 2229 – Existing & proposed layout, Page 1/2, July 2026	Existing plans, elevations, roof and site context
Architectural Drawing 2229 – Proposed layout, Page 2/2, July 2026	Proposed floor plans, roof, elevations and section
Heritage Statement – 146 Yorkshire Street	Separate heritage submission addressing the Townhead Conservation Area requirement
Council validation correspondence – PL/2026/0671	Identifies the outstanding Heritage Statement and Planning Statement requirements

Appendix B – Confirmed Operational Details

Confirmed operational details

Maximum number of children on site: up to 45.

Age range of children: 5–16.

Staffing: 2–3 staff.

Opening hours: 6:30am–9:30am and 2:30pm–7:30pm.

Drop-off and collection: from the front entrance of 146 Yorkshire Street.

Parking: limited public parking on both sides of Yorkshire Street. The limited side car park is linked to the rear of the building and can also be accessed from the front; it is intended for use as the fire assembly point rather than dedicated routine parking.

Rear exit / assembly: the existing rear exit is retained and the side car park is used as the fire assembly point.

Outdoor use: the rear area is currently used only for the fire exit/escape arrangement; no routine outdoor play use is proposed.

Waste arrangement: rubbish is taken to the nearby waste centre on Chichester Street, OL16 2AU.

Staff travel: staff may travel by car and use available public parking, or use public transport including buses and trams.

Operational clarification

No amplified music or separate industrial/commercial noise-generating activity has been identified in the information supplied. Any future mechanical plant or amplified sound would be managed appropriately and addressed through any further approvals or conditions required.

Policy and Evidence Sources Consulted

Rochdale Borough Council – Current Local Plan policies and plans: the Council confirms that the adopted Core Strategy forms part of the current Local Plan; Places for Everyone was adopted in March 2024.

Rochdale Borough Council – Draft Local Plan: Regulation 18 consultation closed 5 February 2026; the plan remains emerging and is not treated as adopted policy in this statement.

Rochdale Borough Council – Rochdale Publication Core Strategy (January 2013), including E1, C6, C7, C8, P1, P2, P3, T1, T2 and DM1 policy headings.

Rochdale Borough Council – Getting to Rochdale Town Centre: town-centre tram, bus interchange, railway and parking information.

National Planning Policy Framework – current GOV.UK structure and decision-making chapters covering town centres, healthy communities, sustainable transport, effective use of land, design and heritage.