

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0610
Location: HEYWOOD COMMUNITY FIRE STATION, MIDDLETON ROAD, HEYWOOD, OL10 2LU
Proposal: Two storey temporary fire station with an appliance bay to enable the continued operation of GMFRS during the redevelopment of the existing Fire Station
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Claire Ringwood

SITE

The application site relates to Heywood Community Fire Station on Middleton Road (previously Greater Manchester Fire Station). The site is within a predominantly residential area with residential properties directly to the north, east and south boundaries of the site. The building is currently occupied, and access is from the north end of the site with car parking and training area at the rear.

The site falls within a Defined Urban Area (G/D/1) as defined in Rochdale Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map and there are TPO trees to the north of the site and in the rear gardens of 11-13 Tangmere Avenue (TPO220).

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a temporary fire station to enable the continued operation of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service during the redevelopment of the existing fire station. A full planning application will follow in due course for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new building.

The proposed temporary fire station will be installed prior to the demolition of the existing fire station and will remain operational only for the duration of the construction period. Once the replacement fire station has been completed and brought into use, the temporary facility will be removed from the site.

The temporary building comprises a two storey flat roof modular building measuring 6.9m in height. The building will be a white pre-fabricated modular building with PVC double glazed windows. An appliance bay to accommodate an operational emergency vehicle is also proposed. An existing auxiliary building will also be utilised to house an additional specialist operational emergency vehicle. The building will be located on the existing parking area at the rear.

The temporary buildings will be located to the rear boundaries of 11, 13, 15 and 17 Tangmere Road. An external staircase is for emergency escape purposes only and will not be used for day-

to-day access. First floor rear facing windows will be obscure glazed and will be secured by condition.

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

Location Plan

Drawing No: 0100 Rev P1 – Site Location Plan

Drawing No: 0100 Rev P01 - Below Ground Drainage Outline Drainage Strategy

Drawing No: 0101 Rev P1 – Site Location Plan Levels

Drawing No: 0110 Rev P01 – External Works Plan

Drawing No: 0400 Rev P2 – Existing Station Site Sections

Drawing No: 0410 Rev P2 – Proposed Site Sections Temporary Station

Drawing No: 2010 Rev P07 – Temporary Station Site Plan

Drawing No: 3010 Rev P04 – Temporary Station Level 00 GA Plan

Drawing No: 3011 Rev P04 – Temporary Station Level 01 GA Plan

Drawing No: 3610 Rev P04 – Temporary Station GA Elevations

Temporary Fire Station Planning Statement

Transport Technical Note (5267.TNO1b) by BTG Eddisons

Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Tree Solutions, Ref: 26/AIA/ROCH/19, Date: June 2026

Received 3rd July 2026

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

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-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

JP-G7 Trees and Woodland

JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

Rochdale Core Strategy:

The following policies of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy are relevant:-

SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities

C8 Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities

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

G8 Managing water resources and flood risk

G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land stability

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

T2 Improving accessibility

DM1 General development requirements

Relevant saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development (June 2016).

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

80/D10170 - Temporary Garage Building To House 2 Fire Appliances And 1 Light Rescue Vehicle
Witlist Repairs Are Carried Out To The Main Fire Station Floor. Approved 06/03/1980.

12/D55420 - Construction Of Single Storey Vehicle Store. Approved 31/05/2012.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Environment Agency

Summary: No objection in principle subject to a condition requiring the submission and validation of a detailed land contamination management strategy for unsuspected contamination.

United Utilities

Summary: The drainage proposals submitted are not acceptable as there is not enough robust evidence that the drainage hierarchy has been thoroughly investigated. A surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme condition is required.

Highways

Summary: No objection.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

Summary: The temporary fire station buildings appear to be proposed on existing hard standing which has no ecological value. Confirmation as to whether the trees at the front of the site are to be removed is required, if so, a ground level tree assessment to determine whether the trees hold bat roosting potential and a BNG assessment will be required.

Environmental Protection (Land)

Summary: No objection.

Drainage & Flooding Officer

Summary: The drainage proposals are acceptable in principle given that these are temporary works.

REPRESENTATIONS

Written notification letters were sent to occupiers of properties surrounding the development site. 1 letter of representation has been received raising the following concerns:

1. Noise and disturbance;
2. Health concerns;
3. Working from home;
4. Traffic and site activity

5. Loss of privacy and residential amenity
6. Potential delay in removing the temporary building;
7. Suggested planning conditions.

Matters which are relevant are covered within the assessment below.

ANALYSIS

Principle of development

The application site is located within the defined urban area as allocated under the saved UDP allocations plan. Saved Policy G/D/1 establishes the boundary of the urban area and ensures new development, wherever possible and appropriate, is concentrated within the urban area in order to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside. Policy C8 of the Core Strategy supports and promotes the provision of better community facilities and requires facilities to serve the borough as a whole and facilities intended to serve everyday needs of a community or neighbourhood

The site is already in use as a fire station and has been so for many years. The temporary building will enable the service to continue to operate whilst the existing building is demolished and a new building constructed. Given the existing land allocation, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy G/D/1 of the saved UDP, Policy C8 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Visual amenity and impact on the character and appearance of the area

Policy P1 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy seeks to require design which is of a high standard, demonstrating innovation and originality. Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough's identity and sense of place.

The temporary building will be located in the north east corner of the site at the rear of the existing building and adjacent to an existing garage. The building will comprise an appliance bay and the temporary station. The temporary station is of standard modular construction due to its temporary nature and is two storey in height with a flat roof. The building measures 6.9m in height and is 12m wide. The temporary appliance building has a pitched roof and is lower in height than the temporary station. An external staircase is for emergency escape purposes only.

The temporary buildings are set well back into the site and will be well screened from the road until the demolition of the existing building. In respect of the design, size and scale of the building, the development is considered acceptable in the context of the existing use of the site. The buildings are not designed as permanent buildings and are simple in design and appearance and they will be removed once the new fire station is complete (which will be secured by way of condition).

Due to the temporary nature of the buildings, the application is considered in accordance with Policies DM1, P1 and P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies G/D/1 of the saved UDP and the NPPF.

Residential amenity

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that planning decisions should always seek to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy requires that proposals do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. Also, impacts including noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution are required to be mitigated where necessary. Further to the above are the considerations of the Councils Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' which states that new developments 'should be carefully designed to protect the amenity of the occupants of adjoining properties.'

The temporary buildings will be located close to the rear boundaries of 11, 13, 15 and 17 Tangmere Road and they are relatively large structures. Officers acknowledge that the temporary buildings, in particular the fire station, will be highly prominent for the residents of these neighbouring properties. However, the proposed location of the temporary buildings is the only viable option in order for the continued operation of the site whilst the existing building is demolished and redeveloped and results in a limited level of harm that is clearly outweighed by the need for continuity of a critical public service.

To mitigate against any harmful impacts on the residents of neighbouring properties, conditions will be imposed to ensure the external staircase is only used for emergency access only and the four first-floor rear facing windows will be obscure glazed. This will ensure that neighbouring properties will not be overlooked, and their privacy will be maintained. A condition will also be secured to ensure once the new fire station has been completed and brought in to use, the temporary buildings will be removed from the site.

Due to the orientation of the buildings, there may be some overshadowing to the rear gardens later in the evening however, this is not considered sufficient to refuse the application and there are also existing trees along the rear boundary line which will shade areas of the rear gardens.

Concerns have been raised from a neighbouring resident in regard to noise and disturbance, health concerns and traffic and site activity which relate predominantly to the demolition of the existing building and the redevelopment of the site. There is likely to be some noise associated with the installation of the temporary buildings however, this is unavoidable and any disturbance should be short lived as the temporary buildings are already constructed and ready to be placed on the site.

It is acknowledged that the temporary buildings will be closer to neighbouring properties than the existing building however, in the context of the existing use of the site there will be no intensification of use and officers do not consider that the location, and use of the buildings, will create any additional noise and disturbance above and beyond that already experienced by neighbouring properties.

As such, the proposal would sufficiently protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers and the development would, in this regard, accord with Policies G9 and DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy, the SPD and the NPPF.

Highways

Policy T2 of the Core Strategy sets out that development and infrastructure proposals are required to satisfy the Council's accessibility hierarchy and, in all circumstances, the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area will have priority, while providing reliable journey times for those travelling through. Developments are required to provide parking in compliance with the Council's Maximum Car Parking Standards as set out in Appendix 5 of the Core Strategy. Policy JP-C8 of PfE states that 'we will require new development to be located and designed to 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. We will do this by.....8. Ensuring that car parking provision is well integrated and unobtrusive, so it supports the street scene; and where appropriate parking provision is flexible and can be adapted over time to reflect demand'.

Access to the site will remain as existing and the Council's Highways Officer has raised no objection to the temporary arrangement.

Taking the above matters into consideration, the proposed development is in accordance with policy T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and JP-C8 of PfE.

Drainage and Flooding

Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, seeks to promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution. The policy aims to prevent an increased risk of flooding as a result of the development and to ensure satisfactory disposal of surface water from development sites. JP-S4 of PfE states flood risk will be managed by '2. Working with natural processes and adopting a natural flood management approach to slow the speed of water drainage and intercept water pollutants'.

An Outline Drainage Strategy has been submitted with the application which has been reviewed by the Council's Drainage & Flooding Officer who has advised that the drainage proposals are acceptable in principle given that these are temporary works. The Drainage & Flooding Officer has however, advised that an estimate for the temporary status/duration should be provided and the permanent works should infer no assumptions from the temporary works and undertake a comprehensive assessment of the SuDS hierarchy. This can be dealt with by way of informative.

United Utilities have advised that all options for the sustainable management of surface water must be thoroughly investigated before they will accept any surface water connections from new development to the public sewer. United Utilities have stated that the submitted drainage proposals are not acceptable as not enough robust evidence has been provided to show that the drainage hierarchy has been thoroughly investigated. However, officers consider that as this is a temporary permission then a condition for the submission of a surface and foul water drainage scheme is not required for this temporary application.

The proposed development accords with Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S4 of PfE and the NPPF.

Ecology and Landscaping

Policy G6 establishes that development should protect and improve green spaces and where trees are to be removed they should be replaced at a ratio of 2:1. This is reinforced in Policy JP-G7 of PfE which states 'where development would result in the loss of existing trees, requiring

replacement on the basis of two new trees for each tree lost, or other measures that would also result in a net enhancement in the character and quality of the treescape and biodiversity value in the local area, with a preference for on-site provision'. Policy G7 of the Core Strategy requires developments to protect existing biodiversity including trees and vegetation. The NPPF also requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been submitted with the application that states five frontage trees will need to be removed to facilitate separate access and egress points for emergency vehicles. The AIA recognises that these trees contribute positively to local amenity however, their removal is considered necessary to meet the operational requirements of the development. In regard to the current planning application however, these trees are not proposed to be removed, and this will be carried out as part of a future planning application for the demolition of the existing building and the redevelopment of the site.

There are TPO trees to the north of the site and in the rear gardens of 11-13 Tangmere Avenue (TPO220). The trees in the rear gardens of Tangmere Avenue are located close to the temporary buildings. The AIA has stated that these trees are outside of the development footprint and will be retained although some minor crown reduction works to T1 and T2 will be required to provide operational clearance. No tree protection measures have been provided however, this matter can be dealt with by way of condition.

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the application and advised that as the temporary buildings are on existing hard standing there is no ecological value. Had the trees at the front of the site been removed under this current application, a Ground Level Tree Assessment would have been required to determine whether the trees hold bat roosting potential and to inform of any other survey or mitigation requirements, nesting birds would also need to be considered and a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment would need to be provided. As these trees are not for removal at the current time, these requirements are not required as part of this application.

Subject to the above condition, Officers are satisfied that the development accords with Policies G6 and G7 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of PfE and the NPPF.

Contamination and Land Stability

Policy G9 requires that any risks associated with contaminated land are identified and addressed prior to development. In addition, the borough has been subjected to past coal mining activity, which has left a legacy. It is therefore important that ground conditions are fully considered by developers as part of new development proposals and, where necessary, appropriate remedial measures must be set out and implemented to address any issues of unstable land and ensure safety and stability of new development.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability, and remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

The Council's Environmental Protection (Land) Officer has advised that it is unlikely that the proposal would necessitate any assessment of risks from contamination however, the Environment Agency has requested a condition relating to unexpected contamination. The reason for the condition is that 'the current use of the site may present an unacceptable risk of

contamination that could be mobilised during site works and construction, potentially leading to pollution of controlled water'. The Environment Agency have no objection in principle.

The development is therefore considered in accordance with Policy G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (6)

- 1 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and documents hereby approved:

- Location Plan
- Drawing No: 0100 Rev P1 – Site Location Plan
- Drawing No: 0100 Rev P01- Below Ground Drainage Outline Drainage Strategy
- Drawing No: 0101 Rev P1 – Site Location Plan Levels
- Drawing No: 0110 Rev P01 – External Works Plan
- Drawing No: 0410 Rev P2 – Proposed Site Sections Temporary Station
- Drawing No: 2010 Rev P07 – Temporary Station Site Plan
- Drawing No: 3010 Rev P04 – Temporary Station Level 00 GA Plan
- Drawing No: 3011 Rev P04 – Temporary Station Level 01 GA Plan
- Drawing No: 3610 Rev P04 – Temporary Station GA Elevations
- Received 3rd July 2026

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.

- 2 If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until further investigation and a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution from previously unidentified contamination sources at the development site. This is in line with Policy G9 of the Core Strategy and paragraphs 187 and 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The external staircase hereby approved shall only be used for emergency escape purposes only and shall not be used for day-to-day access, egress or operational activities.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy, the Council's SPD and the NPPF.

- 4 The permission hereby granted for the temporary buildings as shown on the approved plans is for a limited period only, expiring by 29th September 2028. The temporary buildings shall be discontinued and removed at the end of the said period or within 3 months of the occupation of the main fire station.

Reason: As the structures are only justifiable on a temporary basis and to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy, the Council's SPD and the NPPF.

- 5 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order) the first floor rear facing windows shown on the plans hereby approved shall not be openable below a height of 1.7 metres when measured from the floor level of the room within which it is located. The windows shall be glazed with obscure glass to a minimum of level 3 on the Pilkington Scale (where 1 is the lowest and 5 the greatest level of obscurity) before first occupation of the development hereby approved and shall be maintained as such at all times thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6 No development shall commence until, details of the protection of any retained tree or trees has been submitted to and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The tree protection measures as approved shall be installed prior to any equipment, machinery or materials being brought on to the site. Such protection shall be retained throughout the entire period of construction and until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. No materials, soil, rubbish or vehicles shall be deposited or stored in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and no fires shall be lit, and no raising or lowering of ground levels shall take place within this area. No drains, pits, ditches or trenches shall be dug in or run across the area protected by the fencing, at any time before, during and after the development of the site, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that retained trees are adequately protected, in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policies DM1, G6 and G7 of the Core Strategy, Policy JP-G7 of PpE and the NPPF.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 7 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)

- 1 The applicant is advised that the permanent works should infer no assumptions from temporary works and undertake a comprehensive assessment of the SuDS hierarchy.
- 2 The applicant is advised that the proposed tree works relate to trees within the curtilage of neighbouring properties and consultation should be undertaken with the relevant parties prior to any tree works being undertaken.
- 3 The Applicant is advised that where a site is affected by contamination responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner. Developers should follow the advice in the Environment Agency consultation letter which has been sent under separate cover.