

Report to PLANNING COMMITTEE

Consultation from Rochdale Borough Council on Planning Application 23/00650/HYBR

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Elaine Taylor, Cabinet Member for Housing and
Licensing

Officer Contact: Head of Planning

Report Author: Peter Richards, Head of Planning
Ext. 1917

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Reason for Decision

The recommendation is to object to the above planning application, and the Council's Constitution (Part 3, section 4.2 (g)) delegates such decisions to Planning Committee.

Recommendations

That an objection to planning application 23/00650/HYBR is submitted to Rochdale Borough Council as per section 3 of this report.

Consultation from Rochdale Borough Council on Planning Application 23/00650/HYBR**1 Background**

- 1.1 The planning application is for “a garden village at land at Stakehill comprising outline application (access only) for a major mixed use development comprising up to 1147 dwellings (Class C3), local centre, extension to St Johns Primary School and MUGA together with associated access from Thornham New Road, landscaping, open space, drainage, ecological enhancements, cycleway and footpath linkages, infrastructure and other ancillary works thereto and full planning application for the 233 dwellings including landscaping, SUDS pond, sub-station, footpaths and access from A664 Manchester Road” at land at Stakehill, off Rochdale Road between Middleton and Castleton.
- 1.2 The application has been submitted by Redrow Homes. Full details of the application, and all the documents submitted for it, can be viewed by searching for the application reference number (23/00650/HYBR) at:
<https://publicaccess.rochdale.gov.uk/online-applications/> .
- 1.3 The application site comprises most of the northern part of the proposed Stakehill allocation in the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE). The Stakehill allocation is a cross-boundary allocation covering parts of both Rochdale and Oldham boroughs and is a mixed-use allocation, with residential development proposed solely in Rochdale to the north of the existing Stakehill industrial estate (and primarily to the north of Thornham Lane), and employment development proposed in both boroughs to the south and east of the existing Stakehill industrial estate, effectively expanding the existing employment area.
- 1.4 The Stakehill allocation in PfE is covered by proposed policy “JP Allocation 2 Stakehill” (JPA2). PfE is currently at examination stage but has reached a point where the Inspectors examining the Plan have proposed a series of main modifications to the Plan that they consider are necessary to make the Plan “sound”. These main modifications include some amendments on specific matters to the proposed policy wording for JPA2, but not to the allocation itself or the mixture of development across the allocation.
- 1.5 As such, whilst PfE has not yet been adopted, the examination has reached a stage where PfE is a significant material consideration and a substantial amount of weight should be given to the policies as proposed to be modified by the Inspectors, including JPA2, when making planning application decisions. The composite version of PfE (incorporating the modifications) can be found at:
https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/8437/composite-pfe-plan_sep2023-reduced-file-size.pdf .
- 1.6 Given the application site is wholly in Rochdale and is primarily for residential development (with associated infrastructure improvements directly related to that residential development), Rochdale Council are best placed to assess the application against the majority of criteria within JPA2. However, a few of the criteria apply to the whole of the allocation and can't just be applied individually to an application site covering only part of the allocation, like this application. These are criteria 3, 8 and 13 in particular, which cover matters of masterplanning, design codes, the infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy, sustainable transport and highways infrastructure – for the whole of the allocation and managing the interaction between the residential and employment elements of the allocation.

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- 1.7 It is these matters that any comment from Oldham Council on the application should therefore focus on. Concerns around these matters are discussed further in section 3 below.

2 Options/Alternatives

- 2.1 There are three options open to the Council in this decision:

- 1) To not make any comment on the application;
- 2) To make a comment in support of, or neutral about, the application; or
- 3) To make a comment of objection to the application.

- 2.2 Given the concerns raised in section 3 below, it is recommended that option 3 is taken forward, and that Oldham Council objects to the application, but the Planning Committee is able to make alternative resolutions either to not make any comment on the application (option 1) or to make a comment that supports or is neutral on the application (option 2) if they so wish. The content of any comments of support can be outlined by members of the Planning Committee for consideration at the Committee meeting, if that alternative is put forward by members of the Committee.

3 Proposed consultation response

- 3.1 Oldham Council objects to application 23/00650/HYBR, submitted by Redrow Homes, on the basis that it does not comply with proposed policy “JP Allocation 2 Stakehill” of the modified Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (to be referred to as Policy JPA2 hereafter).

- 3.2 Policy JPA2 includes several criteria to be used when assessing planning applications within the allocation boundary. Whilst many of the criteria are of a detailed, application site-based nature which Rochdale Borough Council will assess, three in particular are of a more strategic basis that affect the whole allocation (and so Oldham borough) and that Oldham Council are concerned are not being properly addressed by the submitted application. These are:

- Criterion 3: “Achieve excellent design and sustainability through masterplanning and the use of design codes for the whole site to ensure comprehensive development. This will include the need for an infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy in accordance with policy JP-D1. The scale of the residential development on the northern part of the allocation provides an opportunity to adopt a 'garden village' approach to create a locally distinctive residential offer;”
- Criterion 8: “Make provision for new and improved sustainable transport and highways infrastructure having regard to the indicative transport interventions set out in Appendix D in accordance with policy JP-C7;”
- Criterion 13: “Improve access arrangements in and around Stakehill Industrial Estate to assist in the separation of residential and employment traffic as much as possible and to make appropriate provision for lorry parking;”

- 3.3 Ultimately, the application from Redrow Homes has been submitted not merely before Places for Everyone has even been adopted, but before any masterplanning and infrastructure planning for the whole allocation has been undertaken. As a result, no design code has been agreed for the whole allocation, no phasing or delivery strategy has been prepared and insufficient work has been undertaken to fully understand the sustainable

transport and highways implications of the combined development across the allocation, and what improvements are needed to manage those implications.

- 3.4 Given this site is part of the Atom Valley innovation cluster, it is not appropriate that an application has been submitted for such a large number of homes without first considering the wider implications for the whole allocation, and it runs the risk of this key development allocation coming forward without the necessary infrastructure improvements and without the planning and phasing of those improvements. Instead, the application focuses solely on the application site in isolation.
- 3.5 This approach therefore undermines Places for Everyone at the outset by failing to address three key criteria in Policy JPA2 and, in doing so, potentially has significant implications for the delivery of the remainder of the allocation, including 150,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace.
- 3.6 Therefore, Oldham Council objects to this planning application due to the harm it will have on the wider Stakehill allocation and Atom Valley innovation cluster, and calls on Redrow Homes to withdraw their application and instead focus their efforts on collaborating with Rochdale and Oldham Councils, the other landowners within the allocation and key partners to develop a masterplan, design code and infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy for the whole Stakehill allocation under JPA2 that their development can then fit within and contribute to.

4 Background Papers

- 4.1 All documentation associated with the planning application can be viewed by typing the application reference number (23/00650/HYBR) into the search box at: <https://publicaccess.rochdale.gov.uk/online-applications/>
- 4.2 The composite version of the Places for Everyone Joint Plan (incorporating the modifications) can be viewed at: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/8437/composite-pfe-plan_sep2023-reduced-file-size.pdf .

5 Appendices

- 5.1 Consultation Letter from Rochdale Borough Council on planning application 23/00650/HYBR