

APPLICATION REPORT – FUL/354869/25
Planning Committee – 17th December 2025

Registration Date: 28th July 2025
Ward: Medlock Vale

Application Reference: FUL/354869/25

Type of Application: Full

Proposal: Erection of a residential development with associated access, parking, amenity spaces and landscaping.

Location: Land to the south of Rosary Road, Oldham, OL8 2RW

Case Officer: Stephen Gill
Applicant: Isla Brady – Vistry Group
Agent: N/A

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is referred to Planning Committee for determination as it a major development.
- 1.2 The site extends to approximately 2.5 hectares and is located approximately 2km south-east of Oldham town centre, on the outer urban fringe of Fitton Hill. The site boundary comprises an area of largely undeveloped semi-improved green space.
- 1.3 The site is bounded to the north and west by established residential development, which primarily consists of one and two-storey detached and semi-detached family housing. To the east lies land formerly associated with the school grounds (currently being developed for residential), while to the south the site adjoins further areas of open green space and wooded vegetation belts along parts of its eastern and southern boundaries.
- 1.4 Access is currently gained via Mills Farm Close to the west, which leads to an internal access road and a fenced compound containing United Utilities assets. A secondary gated access is present from Rosary Road to the north.
- 1.5 A Public Right of Way (Oldham Footpath 45) runs within the western and partly southern sections of the site, and the site lies within and adjacent to Bankfield Clough SBI and an area of Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat.

2. THE PROPOSAL & BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development seeks full planning permission for the erection of up to 72 affordable houses together with associated works, including new access arrangements, highways infrastructure, landscaping, and areas of public open space. Each dwelling benefits from a secure private garden and in-curtilage parking.
- 2.2 In terms of housing mix, the scheme proposes a mix of 2 and 3 bed properties as follows:

House Type	Bedrooms	No. of Units	% of Total
Atkins	2	37	51.4%
Hazel	3	16	22.2%
Asher	3	12	16.7%
Spruce	3	7	9.7%
Total		72	100%

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- PA/341663/18 - Temporary access road, turning head, fenced compound with kiosk and 2 no. pressure relief columns in association with an underground shaft. Granted – 27.07.2018
- PA/342237/18 - To increase perimeter area of 2 metre high boundary fencing surrounding control kiosk (approved as part of PA/341663/18) to encompass underground shaft access points. Granted - 24.10.2018
- FUL/347540/21 - The erection of up to 365 dwellings across Parcel A and Parcel B; together with other associated works including the laying out of road and footways, car parking, other infrastructure, public open space, footpaths and landscaping. Granted 07.04.2022

4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 4.1 The Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan and related documentation took effect and became part of the statutory development plan on 21 March 2024.
- 4.2 The PfE Plan must now be considered in the determination of planning applications, alongside Oldham's Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document (Local Plan), adopted November 2011, in accordance with the National

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

4.3 The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application:

Joint Development Plan Document (Oldham Core Strategy)

- Policy 1: Climate Change and Sustainable Development
- Policy 9: Local Environment
- Policy 10: Affordable Housing
- Policy 18: Energy
- Policy 19: Water and Flooding
- Policy 20: Design
- Policy 21: Protecting Natural Environmental Assets

Places for Everyone

- Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development
- Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy
- Policy JP-S3: Heat and Energy Networks
- Policy JP-S4: Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- Policy JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development
- Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing
- Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing
- Policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing
- Policy JP-G7: Trees and Woodland
- Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy JP-P1: Sustainable Places
- Policy JP-P2: Heritage
- Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills & Knowledge
- Policy JP-P6: Health
- Policy JP-C6: Walking and Cycling
- Policy JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development
- Policy JP-D2: Developer Contributions
- Policy JP Allocation 16: South of Rosary Road

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places

5. CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Health	No objections subject to conditions
Highway Engineer	Concerns over width of UU asset access and aspects of the parking provision, which are discussed in more detail in the report.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit	No objection subject to conditions
Lead Local Flood Authority	No objection subject to conditions
Education	No objection subject to a contribution toward primary and secondary school
Growth Lancashire	Less than substantial harm will be caused to a designated heritage asset (Listed Building) to the south of the site. This is discussed in detail within the Committee Report.
Transport for Greater Manchester	No objection
Greater Manchester Archeological Advisory Service	No objection
United Utilities	No objection subject to conditions
Active Travel	No comments.
Mining Remediation Authority	No objection.
Greater Manchester Fire Service	No comment received
Greater Manchester Police Design for Security	No comments received
Arboricultural Officer	Concerns raised on the relationship between the layout and protected trees on the northern boundary. This is discussed further in the report.

6. PUBLICITY AND THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the application has been advertised by neighbour notification letters.

6.2 In response 6 representations have been received, and the following is a summary of the matters raised:

Traffic, Highways & Access (discussed in Section 13 of the report)

- Concerns about increased congestion, particularly on Fitton Hill and Ashton Road during peak times.
- Limited entry and exit routes with no planned improvements.
- Perception that development will create “rat runs” through residential cul-de-sacs such as Mills Farm Close.
- Inadequate access, insufficient parking, and poor public transport links.
- Highway network already under strain from recent nearby developments.

Overdevelopment & Pressure on Infrastructure (discussed in Sections 8 & 10 of the report)

- The scale and density of the proposal are viewed as inappropriate for the area.
- Seen as part of a pattern of cumulative overdevelopment, adding pressure on:
 - Schools
 - GP surgeries and healthcare
 - Community facilities and parking

Ecology, Green Space & Environmental Impact (discussed in Sections 14 & 18 of the report)

- Objections to the loss of one of the last open green fields in the area.
- Land provides natural drainage, ecological buffer, and contributes to local air quality.
- Wildlife frequently reported on site, including deer, foxes, badgers, hedgehogs, bats, and a variety of bird species.
- Objections to loss of dog walking routes, informal recreation space, and landscape character.

Residential Amenity, Privacy & Character (discussed in Sections 7 & 12 of the report)

- Residents object to being overlooked by new houses and loss of privacy.
- Development considered out of keeping with the low-density character of the existing neighbourhood.
- Loss of views, tranquillity, and green outlooks highly valued by residents.
- Noise, dust and disruption during construction identified as a concern.
- Anticipated negative effects on mental wellbeing and sense of place.
- The development conflicts with the local plan and planning principles for protecting open land.

- The irreversible loss of open space.

Flooding & drainage (addressed in Section 16 of the report)

- Concerns about increased surface water runoff and risk of localised flooding, and no clear measures identified to mitigate these risks.

Other Concerns (addressed in Section 18 of the report)

- Residents perceive the development to offer no tangible benefits to the existing community.
- Anticipated loss of property value and neighbourhood amenity.
- View that the scheme prioritises new housing numbers over quality of place

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

7. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, to the extent that development plan policies are material, planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This requirement is reiterated in Paragraph 2 of the NPPF.
- 7.2 Chapter 5 of the NPPF emphasises the Government's objective to significantly boost housing supply by ensuring a sufficient amount and variety of land is available where needed.
- 7.3 PfE was adopted on 21 March 2024. JP-H1 of PfE sets out Oldham's housing requirement for 2022 to 2039 (the PfE plan period).
- 7.4 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF sets out that Local Planning Authorities (LPA) should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.
- 7.5 Given PfE is less than five years old, JP-H1 continues to set out Oldham's housing requirement until 2029, and there is currently a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites in Oldham to meet the PfE housing requirement.
- 7.6 The site is allocated for housing within PfE under allocation reference JPA 16 (South of Rosary Road). An image of the site's allocation taken from PfE is below.



- 7.7 Given the sites allocation within PfE the principle of residential development on the site is not in question. There are some specific requirements within Policy JPA16 that need to be considered when bringing forward development on the site. These requirements will be discussed in detail within the report. Based on the above, the principle of residential development on the site is acceptable

8. INFRASTRUCTURE & VIABILITY

- 8.1 Policy JP-D2 requires developers to provide, or contribute towards, mitigation measures necessary to make development acceptable. These will be secured through appropriate mechanisms such as planning conditions, Section 106 agreements, Section 278 agreements or CIL (or any successor system). Where an applicant contends that a scheme is not viable, clear and transparent evidence must be submitted at the application stage. Where viability is relevant, the Council will determine the weight to be given to the assessment in the overall planning balance.
- 8.2 PfE Policy JPA16 states that applicants will be expected to make financial contributions towards off-site primary and/or secondary school provision in accordance with Policy JP-P5. The policy justification also emphasises that new development must not place undue pressure on existing social infrastructure and must address increased demand for open space, sport and recreation facilities, school places and health services. Any development is required to provide for new or improved facilities in line with Policies JP-P5, JP-P6 and relevant Local Plan policies.
- 8.3 Following consultation with the Council's Education and Spatial Planning teams, the following education and open space requirements have been identified.

Education Contributions

- 8.4 Education contributions must be calculated in line with the Education Interim Position Paper (September 2021). Using the per-pupil cost rates set out in the document, the contribution for a 72-home scheme is as follows:

Primary School:

- 72 homes \times 0.24 = 17.2 places $17.2 \times \text{£}9,416 = \text{£}161,955.20$ contribution

Secondary School:

- 72 homes \times 0.17 = 12.2 places $12.2 \times \text{£}23,775 = \text{£}290,055.00$ contribution

Total education contribution = £450,010.20

Off-Site Open Space Provision

- 8.5 Policy 23 of the Oldham Local Plan requires major residential schemes to contribute to new or enhanced open space unless this is demonstrated to be unviable or impracticable. This must be considered alongside any surpluses or deficiencies identified in the Council's Open Space Study (2022).
- 8.6 The Study identifies the site as accessible to all types of open space except parks and gardens. However, there are deficiencies within the ward in both the quantity of amenity greenspace and provision for children and young people, and several existing spaces fall below quality standards.
- 8.7 Areas failing to meet any of the quantity, quality or accessibility standards are classified as deficient. In such cases, contributions are required. On-site open space is proposed within the development (addressed in the layout section below). This section assesses off-site requirements.
- 8.8 Given the scale of the development and the deficiencies identified, Spatial Planning advise that an off-site contribution is required. Based on the Study and the bedspaces generated by the scheme, the contribution would be:
- Enhancement of existing provision: **£85,542.64 contribution**
 - Creation of new provision: **£388,968.39 contribution**

Total open space contribution = £447,511.03

Viability

- 8.9 The applicant has submitted a Financial Viability Assessment (FVA), prepared by Roger Hannah (October 2025), which seeks to demonstrate that the development cannot viably support the full range of planning contributions.
- 8.10 The FVA explains that the scheme is intended to be delivered as 100% affordable housing with support from Homes England grant funding. It states that, once benchmark land value, lower sales values for affordable homes, higher build costs and site-specific abnormal costs are taken into account, the scheme is financially constrained.
- 8.11 The applicant's appraisal shows that a fully policy-compliant scheme with all Section

106 contributions would generate a negative residual land value of –£1,744,786, significantly below the benchmark land value (BLV) of £812,000. Even with no Section 106 contributions, the residual land value would be £566,627, still £245,373 below the BLV. The FVA therefore concludes that the scheme cannot support planning contributions.

- 8.12 To ensure the findings were robust, the Council appointed Northern Land Agency (NLA) to carry out an independent review of the applicant's FVA.
- 8.13 NLA reviewed all key assumptions, including sales values, build and abnormal costs, fees, finance and developer profit and considered many of them reasonable. However, they adjusted several inputs, including higher market sales values, removal of some abnormal costs, reduced professional fees and a revised finance rate. They also adopted a BLV of £818,400, consistent with the Places for Everyone viability evidence and broadly in line with the applicant's BLV.
- 8.14 For completeness, NLA assessed both a 100% affordable scheme and a 100% market housing scheme.
- 8.15 NLA found that a market housing scheme on this site would remain wholly unviable, even if fully policy compliant, with a deficit of £1,716,479 and a total deficit against BLV of £2,534,879.
- 8.16 In contrast, for a 100% affordable scheme, NLA's revised appraisal shows a small surplus of approximately £45,600 above the BLV. The applicant has agreed to pay this amount as a Section 106 contribution. The contribution will be used to improve existing open space at St Martin's Park, located to the northeast of the site, where it will support the delivery of new play provision and enhance its function as a neighbourhood park.

9. AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSING MIX

- 9.1 PfE Policy JP-H2 (in summary) seeks to significantly improve access to housing that people can afford by increasing overall housing supply (in line with JP-H1) to help moderate price and rent pressures, and by maximising the delivery of affordable homes for sale and rent.
- 9.2 Oldham Local Plan Policy 10 states in summary that a residential development of 15 dwellings and above, in line with national guidance, will be required to provide an appropriate level of affordable housing provision. The current target is for 7.5% of the total development sales value to go towards the delivery of affordable housing. The Housing Delivery Interim Position Paper (HDIPP) 2025 amended the threshold for affordable housing provision to 10 to be in line with paragraph 65 of NPPF and the evidence set out in the Local Housing Needs Assessment 2024 (LHNA).
- 9.3 In relation to housing mix, PfE Policy JP-H3 states that residential developments should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes reflecting local plan policies, and relevant local evidence. Local Plan Policy 11 states that all residential

developments must deliver a mix of appropriate housing types, sizes and tenures that meet the needs and demands of the borough's urban and rural communities. The mix of houses that we will secure will be based on local evidence. The HDIPP recommends the following mix based on current evidence:

Table 1 Summary of Overall Dwelling Type/ Size and Mix by Tenure⁸

Dwelling type/size	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
Overall % split	80%	12%	8%	100%
Dwelling type				
House	70-75%	35-40%	65-70%	60-65%
Flat	2-5%	30-35%	15-20%	10-15%
Bungalow/level-access	25-30%	30-35%	15-20%	25-30%
Size (bedrooms)				
1-2	30-35%	70-75%	35-40%	40-45%
3	40-45%	20-25%	40-45%	35-40%
4+	25-30%	5-10%	20-25%	20-25%

Affordable Housing

9.4 As set out above, the proposal is for a 100% affordable housing scheme. Vistry is an established and credible deliverer of affordable housing, and while they will construct the development, the tenure mix and long-term management will be undertaken by a partner Registered Provider (RP). Based on the applicant's submission, the proposed tenure split is as follows:

- 46 Social Rent homes (64%)
- 26 Rent to Buy homes (36%)

9.5 The applicant confirms that the affordable housing will be part-funded through the Homes England Affordable Homes Programme 2021–2026 (Strategic Partnership 2), or through the forthcoming successor programme from April 2026. The partnering Registered Provider will assume ownership of the homes and undertake their long-term management, including the maintenance of communal areas.

9.6 While indicative information has been submitted, further detail will be required on the arrangements for the transfer of the affordable homes to the Registered Provider, the mechanisms to ensure the homes remain affordable for both first and subsequent occupiers, and the occupancy criteria and enforcement measures that will apply.

Housing Mix

9.7 The proposed housing mix is as follows:

- 2 bed properties = 51.4% of the scheme
- 3 bed properties = 48.6% of the scheme

- 9.8 This represents a balanced mix of 2 and 3-bedroom properties. The detailed allocation of affordable tenures between the 2 and 3-bed units has not yet been provided, but as stated above, this can be controlled by condition.
- 9.9 The Council's Strategic Housing Team has confirmed a significant and growing need for affordable housing across the borough, across all tenure and house types. Discussions with the applicant and their RP partner indicate that they have a detailed understanding of local need. This, combined with the applicant's track record in delivering affordable homes, provides confidence that the proposed mix will align with local housing requirements.

Conclusion on housing mix and affordable housing

- 9.10 The development would deliver 100% affordable housing, making a significant contribution to meeting the borough's identified need across a range of tenure types. The proposed tenure mixes and management arrangements will be secured through condition to ensure the homes remain genuinely affordable for both first and future occupiers. The scheme provides a balanced mix of 2 and 3 bedroom properties, and both the applicant and their Registered Provider partner have demonstrated a strong understanding of local housing needs. The Council's Strategic Housing Team is supportive of the approach. Overall, the affordable housing offer is considered a major public benefit and accords with the objectives of Local Plan Policy 10, PfE Policy JP-H4 and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

10. DESIGN, HERITAGE & LANDSCAPE

- 10.1 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to give *special regard* to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings, and any features of special architectural or historic interest.
- 10.2 Local Plan Policy 24 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings as key components of local character and identity.
- 10.3 PfE Policy JP-P2 requires proposals affecting heritage assets or their settings to be assessed in line with national policy. PfE Policy JPA16 specifically requires development within the allocation to take appropriate account of relevant heritage assets, including the setting of Bank Top Farmhouse to the south.
- 10.4 NPPF paragraph 210 requires decision-makers to consider the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the positive role heritage plays in sustainable communities and economic vitality, and the contribution that new development should make to local character and distinctiveness.
- 10.5 Under paragraph 215 of the NPPF, where development results in "less than substantial harm", this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 10.6 In design terms, NPPF paragraph 135, Local Plan Policy 9 and PfE Policy JP-P1

require visually attractive development, achieved through good architecture, layout and landscaping, which is sympathetic to local character.

- 10.7 PfE Policy JPA16 also requires development to respond to the Incised Urban Fringe Valleys landscape character type; strengthen the Green Belt boundary; and make provision for compensatory improvements to the quality and accessibility of Green Belt land, in accordance with Policies JP-G1 and JP-G2.

Assessment of Design & Heritage

- 10.8 While JPA16 identifies a notional capacity of 60 dwellings, this is indicative rather than a maximum. Higher densities may be acceptable where supported by evidence demonstrating that constraints are addressed, and high-quality design is achieved.

Appearance & Scale

- 10.9 The development comprises four principal two-storey house types (Asher, Atkins, Hazel, Spruce), designed in a contemporary vernacular style consistent with a modern suburban character. Their scale, massing and gabled roof profiles provide a coherent streetscape without dominating the surroundings.
- 10.10 The Asher and Hazel (three-bedroom semi-detached) are arranged across primary and secondary streets and private drives. The Atkins (two-bedroom terrace) has the smallest footprint and is the most frequently used type, distributed across the site to provide visual variety. The Spruce (three-bedroom detached) is used more sparingly and positioned on prominent corners, benefitting from articulated frontages and gable treatments that reinforce legibility.
- 10.11 In terms of materials, the development incorporates a palette of three facing brick types in order to provide variety and visual interest across the site. These comprise Wienerberger Oakwood Multi, Wienerberger Crofters Medley, and Wienerberger Yellow Multi Gilt, which are distributed throughout the layout to create contrast and avoid monotony in the street scene. The arrangement of these materials ensures that no single frontage is overly uniform, and that the development achieves a balanced appearance. A single roof material is proposed across all dwellings, namely the Wienerberger Sandtoft Dual Calderdale Dark Grey roof tile. The consistent use of this tile provides a unifying element across the site and supports a cohesive overall character.
- 10.12 In relation to boundary treatments, there are a combination of walls, close-boarded fencing and stock-proof fencing across the site, with each boundary type used according to its context. Rear garden boundaries that abut public streets or prominent areas of open space are proposed to be formed using 1.8 metre-high brick walls, providing a robust and visually appropriate treatment in publicly visible locations. Elsewhere within the development, particularly between private rear gardens, 1.8 metre-high close-board fences are proposed, together with matching close-boarded gates where access is required.

- 10.13 Along the edges of the public open space and the landscape buffer adjoining Bankfield Clough SBI and the woodland, boundaries are to be defined by 1.1-metre-high timber stock-proof fencing with hedge planting. This softer, rural-style treatment is considered appropriate in these edge-of-site locations and helps integrate the development into the surrounding landscape.
- 10.14 The house types, scale and appearance in terms of materials and boundary treatments are considered appropriate to the site and surrounding area and comply with Local Plan Policy 9, PfE JP-P1 and NPPF Chapter 12.

Layout

- 10.15 The layout is structured to ensure active frontages, natural surveillance and integration with the adjacent Parcel A development to the east. The shared applicant across both parcels enables a seamless transition in street hierarchy and design approach.
- 10.16 Properties front streets and open spaces, avoiding blank gables and preventing rear boundaries from facing the public realm, contributing to a coherent and attractive street environment.
- 10.17 Main vehicular access is provided via the extension of the approved road from Parcel A, connecting to Rosary Road. Secondary access to the west via Mills Farm Close is reserved for emergency and utility vehicles and for pedestrian and cycle movement, controlled by demountable bollards.
- 10.18 The layout protects United Utilities (UU) infrastructure through a dedicated maintenance corridor and by avoiding built development within easements, including that associated with the public sewer crossing the site. While the Highway Engineer considers the corridor to be wider than necessary, its width is required to allow access for a UU tanker for maintenance purposes. These comments are noted; however, sufficient space must be maintained to ensure UU can adequately service its asset.
- 10.19 Public Right of Way (Oldham Footpath 45) will be diverted and upgraded to a surfaced, meandering route through enhanced public open space, with a landscaped buffer to maintain amenity, prevent enclosure and improve the user experience. The Public Rights of Way Officer has reviewed the proposals and raises no objection in principle.
- 10.20 Parking provision is acceptable, with all dwellings benefitting from on-plot parking—typically two spaces, with a small number of plots providing one or three spaces. All spaces meet the required dimensions. Parking is provided through a mix of tandem spaces and frontage parking. To mitigate the visual impact of frontage parking, spaces will be surfaced in buff concrete flags to distinguish them from the adopted highway and add visual interest. The Highway Engineer has raised concerns regarding the positioning of parking spaces 21, 22 and 23 and suggested that these be brought forward to align with the kerb edge. The applicant does not consider this necessary. On balance, and considering the layout as a whole, the positioning of these spaces is acceptable

- 10.21 Approximately 0.95ha of amenity green space is proposed, excluding the attenuation basin. Usable open space areas are distributed toward the east, south and west, with properties oriented to face these areas, ensuring natural surveillance. As previously established, off-site open space contributions remain necessary.
- 10.22 Proposed finished levels broadly follow the existing topography, which falls from north to south and west to east. Respecting existing levels avoids abrupt changes that could lead to amenity impacts or poor integration. Along the northern boundary, the levels between the development and existing dwellings remain comparable. Levels along Mills Farm Close and the eastern parcel are also compatible. A steeper fall exists southwards toward Bankfield Clough; however, this occurs outside the red line and creates no adverse design or amenity implications. Overall, levels are acceptable. The layout therefore accords with Local Plan Policy 9 and NPPF Chapter 12.

Landscape & Green Belt

- 10.23 JPA16 requires development to respond to the Incised Urban Fringe Valleys landscape character and establish a strengthened, permanent Green Belt boundary to the south.
- 10.24 The Landscape Strategy Plan sets out a robust landscape framework that achieves these aims. Native woodland edge and scrub planting along the southern boundary (oak, alder, birch, hazel, hawthorn, holly, willow, with bramble/bracken understorey) provides a naturalistic transition to the open valley landscape. This establishes a visually soft, recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary and reinforces existing vegetation associated with Bankfield Clough SBI. The strategy reflects the Incised Urban Fringe Valleys character through a topography-responsive layout, species-rich grassland and wet meadow areas, adding visual and ecological diversity. It also reinforces the Green Belt boundary by creating a continuous native landscape edge, improving long-term defensibility.



- 10.25 The Council's Arboricultural Officer supports the proposed planting and raises no objections. The scheme complies with PfE Policy JPA16.

Heritage Impacts

- 10.26 Bank Top Farmhouse (Grade II) is located approximately 110m south of the site. The two areas are separated by pasture, with modern farm buildings and a converted barn in the farmhouse's immediate setting.
- 10.27 Growth Lancashire (GL) consider that the site forms part of the wider rural setting of the listed farmhouse. Although this landscape has already been partly eroded by modern development to the north, northeast and southwest, the open field between the farmhouse and the allocation maintains some rural character. GL conclude that introducing further built form would reduce the openness of the setting, resulting in a degree of harm.
- 10.28 GL note that the magnitude of harm would be *limited* due to retained pasture between the development and the farmhouse, and the screening effect of modern farm buildings. Additional planting was requested along the southern boundary; the applicant has incorporated this into an updated landscape plan. While this strengthens screening, GL advise that it does not entirely remove harm, which remains at the "low level" end of "less than substantial harm". As established in *Forge Field Society v Sevenoaks District Council* [2014] EWHC 1895 (Admin), such harm must be given significant weight in the planning balance.
- 10.29 Public benefits include:
- A strong contribution to housing delivery in the borough on a site allocated for housing. This site will deliver new opportunities for people to own their own home
 - The delivery of much needed affordable housing in the borough
 - Economic and social benefits such as the creation of construction jobs, and increased household expenditure once the properties are occupied.
- 10.30 GL acknowledge that the harm is limited. When weighed against the substantial public benefits, particularly the delivery of affordable housing and contribution to housing supply, officers consider that these benefits clearly outweigh the low level of harm.
- 10.31 Effects on heritage assets have therefore been assessed in accordance with PfE Policies JPA16 and JP-P2. While the scheme does not preserve the setting of the listed building as required under Section 66(1) and Local Plan Policy 24, the low level of less than substantial harm is outweighed by the public benefits in accordance with NPPF paragraph 215.

Summary on Design Landscape & Heritage

- 10.32 The proposed development delivers an appropriate scale, appearance and layout that integrates well with the adjoining Parcel A scheme and reflects the character of the surrounding area. The house types, materials and street structure create a coherent and attractive residential environment, with active frontages, natural surveillance and clear pedestrian links. Levels have been sensitively handled to ensure suitable

relationships with existing properties, and the layout provides accessible open space, an upgraded diverted Public Right of Way and protection of United Utilities infrastructure.

- 10.33 The landscape strategy responds positively to the Incised Urban Fringe Valleys character, delivering extensive native planting and a robust, permanent and defensible Green Belt boundary along the southern edge of the site. The Council's Arboricultural Officer supports the proposed landscape approach.
- 10.34 In heritage terms, the development would result in a low level of "less than substantial harm" to the setting of the Grade II listed Bank Top Farmhouse. This is due to the introduction of built form into part of its wider rural setting. However, the harm is limited by existing screening, intervening pasture and enhanced planting now proposed along the southern boundary. When weighed against the significant public benefits including housing delivery, affordable housing and economic uplift the harm is considered to be outweighed in accordance with NPPF paragraph 215.
- 10.35 Overall, the proposal is considered to achieve a high standard of design, an appropriate landscape response and an acceptable heritage outcome, and accords with the requirements of Local Plan Policy 9, Policy 24, PfE Policies JP-P1, JP-P2, JPA16 and relevant sections of the NPPF.

11. ARCHAEOLOGY

- 11.1 PfE Policy JP-P2 requires development to protect key elements of the historic environment, including areas of archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic value. Oldham Local Plan Policy 24 states that development affecting significant archaeological remains or locally significant heritage assets will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the public benefits outweigh any harm.
- 11.2 The application is supported by a Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (HEDBA), prepared by GHC Archaeology and Heritage Ltd (June 2025) and reviewed by the Greater Manchester Archaeology Advisory Service (GMAAS).
- 11.3 GMAAS concurs with the HEDBA's conclusions that the site has a low archaeological potential. This reflects the absence of known or suspected heritage assets within the boundary, the lack of discernible archaeological earthworks identified during the site walkover, and the generally low distribution of archaeological sites within the wider 1km study area. GMAAS raises no objections and does not consider archaeological conditions necessary.
- 11.4 Accordingly, the proposal is considered compliant with PfE Policy JP-P2, Oldham Local Plan Policy 24 and the provisions of NPPF Chapter 16 relating to archaeology.

12. AMENITY

- 12.1 Local Plan Policy 9 requires development to safeguard the amenity of existing and future occupants, including in respect of privacy, safety, noise, security, visual appearance and access to daylight. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF also requires development to secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 12.2 PfE Policy JP-H3 requires all new dwellings to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards and be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard set out in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site constraints make this impracticable.

Separation Distances and Layout

- 12.3 Adequate separation distances are an important indicator of acceptable residential amenity. As a general guideline, a distance of around 21 metres between facing habitable room windows, and 10–12 metres between habitable room windows and non-habitable or blank gable elevations, is typically considered to provide good levels of privacy and outlook. These distances are not policy requirements, but they offer a useful benchmark when assessing the relationships between dwellings.
- 12.4 Relationships between first-floor habitable room windows and blank or non-habitable elevations are acceptable, against the guidelines set out above.
- 12.5 There are no unacceptable relationships identified in terms of back-to-back relationships. The interface between the eastern plots and the dwellings proposed on the neighbouring parcel under construction also achieves adequate levels of separation, as does the interface with existing properties on Mills Farm Close. Properties facing Foxton Close are predominantly gable-to-gable. While Plots 21–23 are rear-facing, they would not directly overlook existing dwellings, and no amenity concerns arise.
- 12.6 Front-to-front distances are considered appropriate. In smaller mews courts and shared-surface streets, distances are slightly reduced, but this is acceptable due to the presence of intervening public realm and the active frontage created.
- 12.7 All proposed house types comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards and will be constructed to Part M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards, in accordance with PfE Policy JP-H3.

Construction Management

- 12.8 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted. It outlines measures to minimise impacts during construction, including controls on working hours, dust, noise and air quality. Environmental Health officers have reviewed the CEMP and require further clarity in relation to working hours and piling detail. This information can be secured by way of condition.

Air Quality

- 12.9 An Air Quality Assessment (AQA) was submitted to assess the effects of the development during construction and operation. The construction phase assessment identified the potential for dust emissions; however, the CEMP includes adequate dust control measures, which Environmental Health consider satisfactory.
- 12.10 For the operational phase, dispersion modelling, verified against local monitoring data, indicates that the development would lead to negligible changes in air quality at all assessed receptors. The AQA concludes that air quality does not constrain the proposed development, and Environmental Health agree with this conclusion.

Noise

- 12.11 A Noise Assessment was undertaken to evaluate the potential effects of road traffic, substation noise and nearby agricultural activity. This included a 24-hour road traffic noise survey and attended measurements of other noise sources, supported by a detailed 3D noise model assessing predicted levels across the site.
- 12.12 The assessment applied daytime and night-time criteria from BS 8233:2014+A1:2019, alongside Noise Rating Curves and low-frequency analysis for substation noise. The results indicate that standard glazing specifications are sufficient for all dwellings and that none would exceed Approved Document O criteria with windows open.
- 12.13 The assessment therefore concludes that no adverse noise impacts are predicted and that the site is suitable for residential development *without the need for specialist acoustic mitigation*.

Conclusion on Amenity

- 12.14 The proposed development provides appropriate separation distances, complies with the Nationally Described Space Standards and Part M4(2) accessibility requirements, and safeguards the amenity of both existing and future residents in accordance with Local Plan Policy 9, PfE Policy JP-H3 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF. The submitted CEMP demonstrates that construction impacts can be effectively managed, while the Air Quality and Noise Assessments confirm that the development would not give rise to unacceptable operational impacts. Environmental Health officers raise no objections. Overall, the scheme is considered acceptable with respect to residential amenity, air quality and noise.

13. HIGHWAYS

- 13.1 PfE Policy JP-C8 requires new development to be designed and located in a way that promotes walking, cycling, and public transport use, reducing reliance on private cars and supporting the creation of sustainable, accessible, and attractive communities. Developments must provide safe, direct, and inclusive access for all users, prioritising pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport in line with the user hierarchy. Proposals

should also ensure strong connectivity to local facilities and transport links. Adequate and well-integrated parking should be provided, including for disabled users, alongside secure and convenient cycle parking.

- 13.2 NPPF paragraph 116 states 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.
- 13.3 Policy JPA16 states that provision for appropriate access points to and from the site will be made in liaison with the local highway authority. The Policy also states that the main point of access to the site will be through the neighbouring former Centre for Professional Development site and onto Rosary Road. The policy also states that provision for new and improved sustainable transport and highways infrastructure will be made having regard to the indicative transport interventions set out in Appendix D in accordance with policy JP-C8. Appendix D sets out the following transport interventions:

Necessary

- Active travel improvements including PRow connections to Bardsey Bridleway
- Minor traffic management improvements to address local highway concerns

Supporting

- Rochdale-Oldham-Ashton Quality Bus Transit corridor

Highway Impact

- 13.4 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted with the application, which has been reviewed by the Highway Engineer and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).
- 13.5 The TA includes an appraisal of traffic impacts, with particular focus on Springwood Hall Road. The TA observes that, even with vehicles parked on-street, sufficient carriageway width remains for vehicles to pass safely, and forward visibility is adequate. The assessment finds that parked vehicles act as informal traffic calming, and given the low traffic flows on this road, no capacity or safety issues arise.
- 13.6 In terms of trip generation, the TA indicates that the scheme would generate approximately 32 two-way vehicle trips during the weekday morning peak hour (8:00–9:00), comprising 8 arrivals and 24 departures, and around 30 two-way trips during the evening peak hour (17:00–18:00), comprising 19 arrivals and 11 departures. Across a typical 12-hour day (07:00–19:00), total vehicular movements associated with the development are forecast to be in the order of 270–280 two-way trips. The TA concludes that these levels of traffic are modest and can be safely accommodated on the surrounding road network.
- 13.7 Capacity assessments in the TA also confirm that both the Rosary Road / Springwood Hall Road / development access junction and the western Rosary Road junction would operate well within capacity with negligible delay and no queuing.

- 13.8 Based on the above, the TA concludes that no minor traffic management improvements are deemed necessary, and no developer contribution is required in this regard. The Highway Engineer and TfGM have not raised any concerns in relation to the conclusions.

Access Arrangements

- 13.9 In terms of access into the site, this would be via an extension of the new road through the adjoining development currently under construction from the east of the site, which then links into Rosary Road. The TA concludes that this is appropriate in design, safety and operational terms. An access arrangement is proposed from the west via Mills Farm Close, and would be retained for United Utilities' operational access, and would also function as an emergency access and pedestrian/cycle route, this would be demarcated by bollards to ensure that the access is not used as a through route. No objections have been raised by either TfGM or the Highway Engineer in relation to the proposed access arrangements

Sustainable Travel & Improvements

- 13.10 The layout incorporates new footways linking into the adjacent under-construction development to the east and to Mills Farm Close to the west, which would ensure continuity with the wider pedestrian network. As set out above, PRoW Footpath 45, situated on the western boundary, would be diverted and enhanced to form a more attractive, surfaced, meandering route through the proposed public open space. Internal access roads would support cycle movements, with cyclists also able to utilise links to Rosary Road and Mills Farm Close. On this basis, the TA concludes that the scheme delivers the active travel improvements envisaged by PfE Policy JPA 16 and Appendix D, including improved connections towards the Bardsey Bridleway to the south of the site through the enhancements proposed to PRoW footpath 45. Therefore, the TA concludes that no further off-site pedestrian or cycle works are considered necessary.
- 13.11 In relation to the above, TfGM emphasise the importance of establishing sustainable travel patterns from the outset of the development. In this context, TfGM recommended improvements to the local pedestrian environment, including the resurfacing and renewal of existing footways where necessary; the installation of tactile paving and dropped kerbs on both sides of all access points and nearby junctions; and the provision of continuous footways with a minimum width of 2 metres within and surrounding the development, where practicable. They also advise that walking and cycling directional signage should be provided within the site to promote connectivity with local destinations and existing active travel routes.
- 13.12 In a response submitted in relation to the above, the applicant notes that footway resurfacing, and renewal works are already being carried out along Rosary Road as part of the adjoining development, which is currently being constructed to the east (app number FUL/347540/21). On this basis, the applicants Highway Engineer concludes that no additional resurfacing or renewal works are considered necessary as part of

this application.

- 13.13 The applicant's Highway Engineer also concludes that tactile paving and dropped kerbs are to be provided on both sides of the access from Rosary Road as part of the development to the east, and it is therefore considered that no further provision is required in relation to this proposal. Furthermore, continuous 2-metre-wide footways are included within the layout and are also being provided within the adjoining scheme to the east. While not all existing footways in the surrounding area achieve a full 2-metre width, those on Rosary Road and neighbouring streets are separated from the carriageway by grass verges and provide a safe and suitable environment for pedestrians. TfGM have reviewed these latest submissions from the applicant and have not raised any concerns and do not have any further comments.
- 13.14 The TA concludes that the site is well located for sustainable travel. Walking is considered a realistic alternative to the private car for many daily trips, including access to education, local amenities and employment areas. The site also benefits from convenient access to the local bus network. Cycling is similarly viable for most trip purposes, with Oldham town centre within approximately 3km. The Highway Engineer and TfGM both concur with these comments.

Conclusions on Highways

- 13.15 The TA demonstrates that the development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the surrounding network, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 116. Traffic generated by the scheme can be safely accommodated, and all assessed junctions would operate within capacity. The proposed primary access via the adjoining development, together with the emergency access from Mills Farm Close, is acceptable and raises no objections from the Highway Engineer or TfGM.
- 13.16 The scheme provides walking and cycling connections through new footways linking to Rosary Road and Mills Farm Close, alongside the upgrading and diversion of PRow Footpath 45. These works deliver the active travel enhancements identified in PfE Policy JPA16 and Appendix D, and adequate internal pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is also incorporated.
- 13.17 Overall, the development offers suitable and sustainable access and complies with Policies JP-C8 and JPA16 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the relevant provisions of NPPF Chapter 9. It is therefore considered acceptable in highways and transport terms.

14. ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 14.1 Local Plan Policy 21 requires new development to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity, geodiversity, landscapes and Green Infrastructure. The policy seeks to ensure growth is balanced with environmental protection and the provision of new or enhanced Green Infrastructure.

- 14.2 PfE Policy JPA16 requires development of the allocation to incorporate Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), including the provision of a suitable landscaping buffer between the proposed housing and the adjoining Bankfield Clough Site of Biological Importance (SBI) and its associated Deciduous Woodland habitat. The purpose is to mitigate environmental impacts, minimise visual intrusion and enhance connectivity with neighbouring communities and the wider countryside.
- 14.3 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) have been submitted to establish the ecological baseline. The site comprises unmanaged neutral grassland bordered by residential development to the north and west and by priority deciduous woodland associated with Bankfield Clough SBI to the east and south. A tributary of the River Medlock runs through the woodland at the eastern boundary.
- 14.4 The site lies within the wider influence of several statutory designations, including:
- Glodwick Lows LNR,
 - Rocher Vale LNR,
 - Lowside Brickworks SSSI and
 - the Rochdale Canal SAC.
- 14.5 The PEA concludes that, given the scale of the proposal, separation distances and intervening built form, no significant adverse effects on these designations are anticipated.
- 14.6 The PEA identifies potential for a range of protected and notable species. Four ponds lie within 500m of the site; therefore, a Great Crested Newt (GCN) Survey was undertaken. Environmental DNA testing confirmed the absence of GCN.
- 14.7 The grassland, scrub and woodland edge habitats offer opportunities for common amphibians, while the adjoining woodland provides potential for badger sett creation, although no setts were recorded. Most trees were assessed as having negligible bat roost potential, and overall bat foraging value was low, with more optimal habitat within the SBI to the south. Suitable nesting habitat is present for common bird species. Himalayan balsam, an invasive non-native species, was also recorded within the woodland.
- 14.8 The PEA recommends a range of safeguards to be secured through a detailed Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). These include protection measures for nesting birds, bats, amphibians, reptiles and badger, as well as pollution and sediment controls to safeguard Bankfield Clough and the River Medlock, and measures to avoid disturbance to adjacent habitats. Additional recommendations include pre-commencement badger checks within three months of works, bat roost inspections of any trees requiring works within eight weeks of commencement, and a specialist invasive species survey and method statement for Himalayan Balsam. These matters can be appropriately secured by condition.

- 14.9 The PEA also identifies a series of ecological enhancement measures to be incorporated into the development. These include the installation of bat and bird boxes on buildings or retained trees, the provision of log piles, bug hotels and other invertebrate features, the creation of hibernacula and refuges for amphibians and reptiles using site-won materials, and the incorporation of hedgehog highways within garden boundaries to maintain permeability. Collectively, these enhancements would contribute positively to biodiversity. These enhancements can be conditioned.
- 14.10 GMEU confirm that the PEA is acceptable and that no further survey work is required prior to determination. Direct impacts on Bankfield Clough SBI are expected to be minimal due to the proposed landscape buffer between the housing and the woodland edge. However, GMEU highlight the potential for indirect impacts arising from informal access, recreational pressure and general disturbance within the buffer zone and proposed open space.
- 14.11 To address these risks, GMEU recommend that direct access from the development into the SBI is discouraged, and that a detailed Landscape Plan is secured by condition to demonstrate how unrestricted access to the woodland will be deterred. They also advise that robust temporary protective fencing be installed along the woodland boundary during construction, consistent with the submitted Tree Protection Plan.
- 14.12 GMEU raise no objection to the development subject to the conditions outlined above. With these safeguards and enhancements in place, the proposal is considered acceptable in ecological terms and compliant with Local Plan Policy 21 and PfE Policy JPA16.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 14.13 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a statutory requirement for new development and seeks to ensure that the natural environment is left in a measurably better state than before. Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, qualifying developments must deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity value.
- 14.14 The proposed development does not fall within any of the exemption categories and must therefore achieve the mandatory 10% BNG. This can be delivered through one or more of the following routes:
1. On-site delivery – creating or enhancing habitats within the site boundary;
 2. A combination of on-site and off-site delivery – including the purchase of biodiversity units from an approved provider;
 3. Statutory biodiversity credits – purchased from government, but only where on-site and off-site options cannot deliver the required uplift.
- 14.15 A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report has been submitted with the application. It identifies that the development would result in a net loss of 4.78 area habitat units (-37.70%), alongside a net gain of 2.50 hedgerow units and 0.65 watercourse units (+26.93%). The report confirms that trading rules have not been met for area habitats,

specifically medium distinctiveness “other neutral grassland” and high distinctiveness lowland mixed deciduous woodland. It concludes that on-site opportunities have been maximised but are insufficient to meet the statutory 10% BNG requirement; therefore, an additional 6.15 area habitat units must be secured off-site.

- 14.16 GMEU have reviewed the submitted BNG information and consider the assessment acceptable. As the development results in an overall net loss of biodiversity and the site cannot accommodate the required habitat creation, the necessary uplift will need to be delivered off-site, either through the purchase of habitat units from an approved habitat bank, or, as a last resort, through statutory biodiversity credits. Given that the habitat types required are relatively common locally, GMEU are satisfied that off-site delivery can be achieved.
- 14.17 The statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition will apply to any permission granted and will require the submission and approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to commencement. This Plan must set out full details of how and where the required off-site biodiversity units will be delivered and secured.

15. TREES

- 15.1 PfE Policy JP-G7 (in summary) supports the Greater Manchester Tree and Woodland Strategy by promoting increased tree cover, protection of existing woodland, and improved public access to nature. The Policy also states that development must replace lost trees on a 2-for-1 basis, preferably on-site, and protect existing trees during construction.
- 15.2 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been submitted with the application. The AIA confirms that seven individual trees, two groups and one woodland area were surveyed, comprising two Category A trees and a Category A woodland, one Category B tree, three Category C trees, two Category C groups and one Category U tree. In addition, whilst there are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) currently in effect within the site, there is a TPO (TPO/516/08) in effect directly adjacent to the northern site boundary, affording statutory protection to surveyed trees T4 and T5.
- 15.3 The AIA considers that the Category A features, together with Trees T1, T4, T5 and woodland W7, are identified as making the strongest contribution to visual amenity. The AIA identifies that a limited number of removals are required to facilitate the development. These comprise a peripheral section of the Category A woodland (W7) to accommodate the attenuation basin to the south of the site and the removal T6, which is a low-quality Category C tree. Tree T8, which is a Category U tree would be reduced to a 3-metre standing stump to retain deadwood habitat. The AIA concludes that these losses will have a negligible effect on wider landscape character and can be fully mitigated through a landscaping scheme and new tree planting. Some minor access-facilitation pruning will be required to off-site trees T1, T3, T4 (protected tree) and T5 (protected tree), however, the AIA concludes that this will be limited in extent.
- 15.4 The AIA sets out detailed measures to ensure that all other retained trees, groups and

woodland are adequately protected during construction. Tree protection fencing will be installed prior to the commencement of works and maintained throughout the build, with some phased repositioning required as work progresses. Temporary ground protection will be used in areas of RPA encroachment, and boundary treatments located within RPAs will be installed using hand-dug techniques to avoid damage to significant roots.

- 15.5 Several plots (Plots 4, 5, 21, 22 and 23) require specialist engineered or piled foundation solutions, implemented under arboricultural supervision. Areas of new hard surfacing within the RPAs of Trees T1, T3, T4 (protected tree) and T5 (protected tree) will be constructed using no-dig cellular confinement systems, and no significant changes in ground levels are proposed within those RPAs.
- 15.6 The Arboricultural Officer has raised concerns that no site-specific evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed no-dig construction methods are feasible. Although cellular confinement details have been submitted, these are considered generic, and more bespoke, site-specific information is required. The applicant's arboricultural consultant is aware of this and is currently preparing the necessary details. Given that the scheme relies on Homes England funding, and that the applicant requires planning permission to progress that process, it is considered reasonable in this instance to secure the detailed no-dig construction methodology by condition. Subject to this and other recommended conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with PfE Policy JP-G7.

16. FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 16.1 PfE Policy JP-S4 expects developments to manage surface water runoff using sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as close to the source as possible, aiming to achieve greenfield runoff rates unless demonstrated to be impracticable.

Flood Risk

- 16.2 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted with the application. The FRA confirms that the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 in terms of fluvial flooding, which is an area that has low flood risk. There is therefore no identified risk of river flooding to the proposed development.
- 16.3 Environment Agency (EA) surface water mapping shows isolated low-spot areas at the southern boundary where shallow ponding could occur during intense rainfall events. The FRA attributes this to minor depressions in the topography rather than drainage issues. These localised risks are fully addressed through the surface water drainage strategy, which is discussed further below.
- 16.4 The FRA identifies no evidence of groundwater flooding. Similarly, there are no records of sewer flooding affecting the site. The site is also not located near any reservoirs, canals or other artificial impounded water bodies, and is not downstream of any flood control structures that could pose a residual risk.

- 16.5 Overall, the FRA concludes that the development is at low risk of flooding from all potential sources, including fluvial, surface water, groundwater, and sewer related infrastructure.
- 16.6 The LLFA have reviewed the content and conclusions set out in the FRA and do not object or have any concern.

Drainage

- 16.7 A Drainage Strategy has been submitted with the application. It proposes that surface water from the development will discharge to the small watercourse along the southern site boundary, following attenuation and flow control. Approximately 450m³ of attenuation storage is provided within the drainage system, with a restricted discharge rate of 21 litres per second.
- 16.8 The Strategy assesses drainage options in line with the SuDS hierarchy. Infiltration-based solutions were discounted due to clay-dominated soils, site geology and percolation testing, all of which confirm that infiltration is not feasible. Consequently, the Drainage Strategy states that SuDS components reliant on infiltration, such as swales, infiltration basins and filter drains, were considered unsuitable. In accordance with the next preferred option in the hierarchy, surface water will therefore be discharged to the adjacent watercourse.
- 16.9 The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the submission and raises no objection in principle to the drainage strategy. However, they consider that further work is required regarding the integration of SuDS within the scheme. No allowance has been made for non-potable water reuse or rainwater harvesting, and the sustainable drainage approach therefore requires refinement. Clarification is also needed as to whether urban creep has been factored into the design.
- 16.10 Although swales, filter drains and other above-ground features were discounted due to infiltration constraints, the LLFA advise that these components can function as conveyance features rather than infiltration devices. They consider that such features should be revisited, particularly as there is sufficient open space along site boundaries where they could be accommodated effectively.
- 16.11 Further clarification is also required regarding the proposed outfall to the watercourse, as the exact discharge point and downstream connectivity remain unclear and must be confirmed before the drainage strategy can be accepted. Whilst there are no objections to the overall approach, the LLFA is satisfied that the outstanding matters can be addressed through appropriately worded conditions. Therefore, subject to conditions, the development will comply with the requirements of PfE Policy JP-S4.

17. ENERGY

- 17.1 An Energy Statement has been submitted with the application. The Energy Statement

states that the development has been designed with a strong emphasis on sustainable construction. The fabric-first approach results in construction specifications that exceed the minimum standards required under current Building Regulations, which seek to minimise energy demand.

- 17.2 Efficient heating and hot water systems, controlled ventilation, low-energy lighting, water-efficient fixtures, and the use of renewable technologies such as photovoltaic panels have been selected.
- 17.3 The Statement concludes that the development meets, and in many cases surpasses, the requirements of Policy 18 of the Oldham Joint Core Strategy, which seeks carbon reductions over and above earlier versions of Part L. As the scheme has been designed to comply with the 2021 Building Regulations, representing up to a 30% improvement over previous standards, the submitted SAP evidence demonstrates performance comfortably exceeding the relevant energy, emissions, and fabric efficiency targets.

18. OTHER MATTERS

- 18.1 In response to representations suggesting that the development would offer no tangible benefits, it is important to note that the scheme delivers 100% affordable housing. This provides local residents with the opportunity to access discounted home ownership or rented accommodation, which represents a significant public benefit. The development may also generate economic benefits, including the creation of jobs during the construction phase.
- 18.2 Concerns have been raised that the scheme prioritises housing numbers over quality of place. As set out earlier in this report, the site is allocated for residential development with an indicative capacity of 60 dwellings. This is not a maximum figure. The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed layout and housing numbers can be achieved while still meeting the relevant policy requirements relating to design, heritage and residential amenity. Officers are therefore satisfied that the scheme achieves an appropriate balance between capacity and placemaking.
- 18.3 Concerns regarding the potential impact on property values are noted; however, this is not a material planning consideration and cannot be taken into account in the decision-making process.

19. CONCLUSION

- 19.1 The development represents an acceptable residential scheme on a site allocated for housing in the PfE. It would make a significant contribution to the borough's housing supply and deliver a substantial proportion of affordable housing, which constitutes a major public benefit addressing an identified local need. The layout, scale, appearance and landscape strategy are considered acceptable for the reasons set out above and would provide a coherent and attractive extension to the adjoining development to the east.

- 19.2 The scheme would result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Grade II listed Bank Top Farmhouse. This harm carries significant weight; however, it is limited in extent, and when balanced against the significant public benefits, including the delivery of affordable housing, economic uplift and the regeneration of an allocated site, it is considered to be outweighed in this instance.
- 19.3 Technical matters relating to highways, drainage, ecology, biodiversity net gain, noise, air quality and residential amenity have been fully assessed. No fundamental objections have been raised, and any outstanding issues can be satisfactorily addressed by planning conditions or through a Section 106 Agreement, including off-site open space contributions, biodiversity units and affordable housing obligations.
- 19.4 Overall, the development accords with the principles of the Oldham Core Strategy and PfE when read as a whole, and the identified benefits clearly outweigh the limited heritage harm. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable and is recommended for approval, subject to conditions and completion of the required Section 106 Agreement.

20. RECOMMENDATION

- 20.1 The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to a Section 106 Agreement, and the following conditions set out below:
1. The development must be begun not later than the expiry of THREE years beginning with the date of this permission. REASON - To comply with the provisions of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
 2. The development hereby approved shall be fully implemented in accordance with the Approved Details Schedule list on this decision notice. REASON - For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and specifications.
 3. No development shall commence unless and until a site investigation and assessment to identify the extent of land contamination has been carried out and the consultant's report and recommendations have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Written approval from the Local Planning Authority will be required for any necessary programmed remedial measures and, on receipt of a satisfactory completion report, to discharge the condition. REASON - Prior approval of such details is necessary as they are fundamental to the initial site preparation works and in order to protect public safety as the site is located within 250 metres of a former landfill site having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
 4. No above ground works shall take place until a scheme that how the affordable housing provision will be implemented on the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The affordable housing shall

meet the definition of affordable housing in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (or any future, equivalent guidance that replaces it) and shall include details of:

- a) the type, and tenure of the affordable housing
- b) the arrangements for the transfer of the affordable housing to a registered affordable housing provider
- c) the arrangements to ensure that such provision is affordable for both the first and subsequent occupiers of the affordable housing; and
- d) the occupancy criteria to be used for determining the identity of occupiers of the affordable housing and the means by which such occupancy shall be enforced.

The affordable housing shall thereafter be provided in full accordance with the details, contained within the duly approved scheme. This condition shall not be binding on a mortgagee or chargee (or any receiver including an administrative receiver) appointed by such mortgagee or chargee or any other person appointed under any security documentation to enable such mortgagee or chargee to realise its security or any administrator (howsoever appointed) including a housing administrator (each a Receiver) of the whole or any part of the affordable dwellings or any persons or bodies deriving title through such mortgagee or chargee or Receiver.

REASON - To ensure that the affordable housing is delivered on the site in an appropriate manner which meets local need and to ensure that any affordable housing remains affordable in perpetuity in accordance with the requirements of Places for Everyone Policy JP-H3, and the National Planning Policy Framework

5. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a scheme in the form of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details for controlling the following: piling (if this is proposed), hours of working, construction routes, and methods for monitoring traffic, noise, dust and vibration impacts. The approved scheme shall be implemented to the full written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority before the construction works are commenced, which shall be maintained for the duration of the construction works. Reason - Prior approval of such details is necessary since they are fundamental to the initial site preparation works and to safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
6. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby approved, including site clearance, excavation or construction works or the entry of vehicles or plant into the site, all existing retained trees and hedges on and adjacent to the site, other than those indicated for removal on the approved plans, shall be physically protected from damage by plant, equipment, vehicles, excavation, deposit of excavated material and any other cause. This shall be achieved by the erection of 2m high fencing using vertical and horizontal scaffolding poles, or other stout fencing to Local Authority approval with the uprights driven well into the

ground, erected in accordance with BS5837:2005, outside the canopy. The fencing shall be maintained for the duration of the development operations and no operations or storage whatsoever shall take place within the fenced protection areas. Reason - To protect existing trees and hedges having regard to Policy JP-G7 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (adopted 21 March 2024).

7. Prior to any construction taking place on the northern boundary of the development, details of cellular confinement solutions proposed in relation to the protection of trees as referenced in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment as T1, T3, T4 & T5 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed scheme shall be implemented in full during the construction phase of the development. REASON: To ensure that trees are afforded adequate protection during the construction phase of the development in accordance with Places for Everyone Policy JP-G7.
8. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby approved, details of the method of surface water drainage from the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. As part of any scheme the following information shall also be submitted:
 - A Pre-Development Watercourse Survey that includes:
 - a. A full topographical and condition survey, including photographs, of the existing on-site and adjacent watercourse to establish baseline capacity, condition, and connectivity.
 - b. Identification of any obstructions, structural defects, or maintenance issues that may affect surface water conveyance.

The approved details shall be implemented in full prior to first occupation of the approved development and shall be maintained thereafter. Reason - Prior approval of such details is necessary since they are fundamental to the initial site preparation works and to ensure that the site is satisfactorily drained having regard to PfE Policy JP-S4

9. Prior to first occupation a further watercourse survey shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, following the completion of all drainage works agreed under Condition 8. The survey should demonstrate that the watercourse remains in a condition suitable to accommodate approved surface water discharges without increasing flood risk on or off site. REASON: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily drained having regard to PfE Policy JP-S4
10. No construction shall commence until details of the means of ensuring the public sewer that is laid within the site boundary is protected from damage as a result of the development, have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The details shall outline the potential impacts from construction activities and the impacts post completion of the development on the sewer that crosses the site and identify mitigation measures to protect and prevent any damage to the pipeline both during construction and post completion of the

development. Any mitigation measures shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details. Reason: In the interest of public health and safety and to ensure protection of essential services.

11. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan L_PL_001 Rev PL_5 prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the programme approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter any trees or shrubs which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of five years from the completion of the development shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size, number and species to comply with the approved plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason - To ensure that the landscaping scheme is carried out and protected in the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the future appearance of the area having regard to Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (adopted 21 March 2024).
12. No dwellings hereby approved shall be first occupied until a scheme for the future management and maintenance of the areas of public open space within the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The open space shall be provided in accordance with the approved scheme and shall be retained thereafter. REASON - To ensure satisfactory retention of the amenity spaces having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan.
13. The development shall be built to the accessible and adaptable standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is first demonstrated to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority that the specific site conditions make this impractical. Reason: Having regard to the requirements of Policy JP-H3 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (adopted 21 March 2024).
14. No works to trees or shrubs shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the LPA. Reason - To ensure the protection of bird habitats, which are protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan.
15. Prior to any site clearance taking place, a reasonable avoidance measures statement for bats, badgers and amphibians during site clearance and construction will be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA. Reason: In order to ensure the protection and enhancement of features and species of ecological interest having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan, and JP-G8 of Places for Everyone.
16. Prior to any earthworks taking place, a method statement detailing eradication and/or control for Himalayan balsam should be supplied to and agreed in writing to the LPA. The agreed method statement shall be adhered to and implemented in full. To ensure that invasive species are managed accordingly in line with the

requirements of Policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (adopted 21 March 2024).

17. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved a travel plan for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Following acceptance of the plan, the occupier shall submit their travel plan to the Local Planning Authority for approval and the approved plans shall thereafter be implemented within 3 months of first occupation of the dwellings. Reason - To ensure the development accords with sustainable transport policies having regard to Places for Everyone Policy JP-C8
18. No dwelling shall be occupied until the access to the site and car parking space for that dwelling has been provided in accordance with the approved plan ref: SKPMCE26-PL-01 Revision D and the details of construction, levels and drainage, which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the construction of the access and parking spaces. Thereafter the parking spaces and turning area shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles. REASON - To ensure adequate off-street parking facilities are provided and remain available for the development so that parking does not take place on the highway to the detriment of highway safety having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
19. Prior to the commencement of above-ground works, an Energy and Low Carbon Proforma for major residential developments shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details. REASON: To ensure the development complies with the carbon and energy requirements of Places for Everyone Policy JP-S2.
20. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions set out in the Crime Impact Statement (V.10 June 2025) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. REASON: To ensure that the development incorporates appropriate crime-prevention measures and achieves a safe and secure environment for future occupiers, in accordance with Policy 9 of the Oldham Core Strategy

SITE LOCATION PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)

