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Job reference: 2025 enquiry 61

Address: **Change of use from a vacant former St Patricks Catholic club (F1f use) to form mixed use open planned foodcourt units (Eb use) on ground floor (which can be subdivided in smaller units to suit); sky restaurant (Eb use); 60 bed hotel (C1 use) with external alterations including an extension to roof to provide upper floors, single storey ground floor extension, and other alterations (within a Conservation Area).**

Date: 7-10-2026

Extra notes: **Planning report**

1. INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the comprehensive regeneration and reuse of the former St Patrick's Catholic Club in Huddersfield. The proposal seeks to transform the presently underused and economically unsustainable premises into an integrated mixed-use destination to be known as the Octa Hub.

The Octa Hub concept is founded upon four complementary elements:

SHOPPING – EATING – MEETING – SLEEPING

The proposal incorporates a combination of food and drink, hospitality, meeting and social spaces, together with boutique hotel accommodation and a rooftop restaurant.

The development is intended to create a vibrant, attractive and economically sustainable destination which will contribute to the regeneration and continued vitality of Huddersfield town centre. The proposal represents the reuse and regeneration of an existing disused urban building, rather than the development of a greenfield site. It therefore accords strongly with the Government's current emphasis on making effective use of existing brownfield land or existing building, supporting urban regeneration, encouraging town-centre vitality and securing sustainable patterns of development. The application is accompanied by the technical information necessary to assess the proposal, including the relevant transport, noise, fire, heritage/design, drainage, ecological and other specialist matters as appropriate.

This Planning Statement considers:

- the statutory planning framework;
- the adopted Kirklees Local Plan;
- relevant supplementary planning guidance;

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- the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework;
- the new national decision-making policies which embody the Government's proposed National Development Management Policy approach;
- the principle of the proposed mixed-use regeneration;
- town-centre vitality and economic regeneration;
- design and placemaking;
- sustainable transport and accessibility;
- health and community benefits;
- crime prevention and public safety;
- environmental considerations;
- heritage considerations;
- residential and neighbouring amenity; and
- the overall planning balance.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to the former St Patrick's Catholic Club, Huddersfield. The building was an established urban premises which has historically provided an important social, community and leisure function within Huddersfield. The former use has, however, become economically unsustainable. The closure of the facility demonstrates the difficulties faced by traditional large-format community/social buildings in the current economic climate.

The application therefore presents an opportunity to secure a viable long-term future for the premises through its comprehensive regeneration and diversification. The proposal does not seek to create an isolated development outside the urban area. It seeks to bring an existing building back into productive use within Huddersfield Town Centre. This is particularly important in the context of the current national planning framework, which places substantial emphasis upon the efficient use and reuse of land and buildings.

3. THE PROPOSED OCTA HUB

The Octa Hub has been conceived as a multi-functional destination rather than a single-purpose building.

The principal components comprise:

3.1 Eating

The proposal includes a range of food and drink opportunities, including a principal rooftop restaurant and associated food and social spaces. The variety of food and

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drink uses will encourage the building to operate throughout the day and into the evening rather than relying upon a single period of activity.

3.2 Meeting

The building will provide opportunities for meeting, social interaction, events and complementary commercial/community activity. This element is particularly important because the Octa Hub is intended to provide a destination which is accessible to both local residents and visitors.

3.3 Sleeping

The proposal includes a boutique hotel element of approx. 60 bedrooms. The hotel will provide accommodation supporting the wider economic function of Octa Hub, enabling visitors to stay within the town centre and supporting the restaurant, leisure, cultural and commercial elements of the development and complement the Town's existing uses as well.

3.4 Shopping and complementary uses

The scheme allows for complementary commercial activity which supports the overall destination function. The individual elements are deliberately interrelated. The hotel supports the restaurant and visitor economy; the restaurant supports evening activity; meeting uses support daytime activity; and the overall combination creates a more resilient commercial proposition than a single isolated use.

4. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Statutory development plan

The Kirklees Development Plan currently comprises the adopted Kirklees Local Plan, adopted on 27 February 2019, together with any applicable neighbourhood plan policies. Kirklees Council confirms that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The principal Local Plan policies considered relevant to the Octa Hub include:

LP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP2 – Place Shaping

LP3 – Location of New Development

LP4 – Providing Infrastructure

LP7 – Efficient and Effective Use of Land and Buildings

LP9 – Supporting Skilled and Flexible Communities and Workforce

LP13 – Town Centre Uses

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LP16 – Food and Drink Uses and the Evening Economy
LP17 – Huddersfield Town Centre
LP20 – Sustainable Travel
LP21 – Highways and Access
LP22 – Parking
LP24 – Design
LP25 – Advertisements and Shop Fronts
LP26 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
LP27 – Flood Risk
LP28 – Drainage
LP30 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP32 – Landscape
LP35 – Historic Environment
LP47 – Healthy, Active and Safe Lifestyles
LP48 – Community Facilities and Services
LP51 – Protection and Improvement of Local Air Quality
LP52 – Protection and Improvement of Environmental Quality
LP53 – Contaminated and Unstable Land
LP63 – New Open Space, where applicable.

These policies have been identified as relevant to town-centre and mixed-use proposals in recent Kirklees planning material.

5. EMERGING KIRKLEES LOCAL PLAN

Kirklees Council has commenced preparation of a new Local Plan which will ultimately replace the adopted 2019 Local Plan. The Council's current emerging plan process is at the scoping consultation stage, with the consultation having taken place between 13 August and 11 September 2026. The emerging plan is intended to provide the planning framework for Kirklees through to 2043.

Given its current stage of preparation, the emerging plan does not carry the same weight as the adopted development plan. Nevertheless, the emerging policy direction is relevant as a material consideration insofar as it demonstrates the Council's continuing objectives of supporting regeneration, making effective use of land, strengthening town centres, delivering sustainable development and responding to changing economic and social circumstances.

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6. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) – AUGUST 2026

The NPPF 2026 was published on 17 August 2026 and replaces the previous Framework. The current Framework contains separate plan-making and national decision-making policies and applies to decisions on planning applications.

The Framework is particularly significant to the Octa Hub because its policy structure strongly supports:

- appropriate development within settlements;
- effective use of land;
- regeneration and redevelopment;
- economic growth;
- town-centre vitality;
- mixed-use development;
- high-quality design;
- sustainable transport;
- healthy communities; and
- the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings.

7. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY / NATIONAL DECISION-MAKING POLICY

The Government's 2026 reforms were intended to establish a comprehensive suite of national development management policies. However, the Government expressly decided not to designate statutory NDMPs at this stage under the powers contained within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Instead, the Government incorporated the intended NDMP approach into the 2026 NPPF through a comprehensive set of national decision-making policies. The Government states that these policies are intended to operate immediately and that inconsistent local policies should be given very limited weight.

Accordingly, this Planning Statement assesses the proposal against the relevant 2026 national decision-making policies, including:

S3 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

S4 – Principle of Development within Settlements

E2 – Meeting the Need for Business Land and Premises

TC2 – Development in Town Centres

TC3 – Main Town Centre Uses Outside Town Centres

TC4 – Assessing the Impact of Development on Town Centres

L2 – Making Effective Use of Land

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L3 – Achieving Appropriate Densities
DP3 – Key Principles for Well-Designed Places
DP4 – The Design Process
TR3 – Locating Development in Sustainable Locations
TR4 – Street Design, Access and Parking
TR6 – Assessing Transport Impacts
HC3 – Community Facilities and Public Service Infrastructure Serving New Development
HC4 – Development Providing Public Health Benefits
HC6 – Retention of Key Community Facilities and Public Service Infrastructure
P2 – Ground Conditions
P3 – Living Conditions and Pollution
P4 – Impact of Development on Existing Activities
P5 – Maintaining Public Safety and Security relevant climate change, biodiversity, drainage and heritage policies.

8. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Development within the settlement

The Octa Hub is located within the established urban area of Huddersfield. The new NPPF Policy S4 – Principle of Development within Settlements establishes that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies.

The proposal therefore benefits from a strong locational policy position. It involves the regeneration and reuse of an existing urban building and does not represent an encroachment into the countryside.

8.2 Effective use of land and buildings

The proposal accords strongly with Policy LP7, which encourages the efficient and effective use of land and buildings. This is reinforced by NPPF Policy L2, which places substantial weight upon the benefits associated with making effective use of land.

The 2026 Framework expressly promotes the reuse and intensification of suitable land within settlements. The Octa Hub is therefore a direct example of the type of urban regeneration promoted by current national policy.

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9. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

9.1 Kirklees Local Plan

Policies LP13, LP16 and LP17 are particularly relevant. LP13 supports appropriate town-centre uses, while LP16 addresses food, drink and the evening economy. LP17 provides the specific policy framework for Huddersfield Town Centre. The Octa Hub combines these uses in a manner which reinforces rather than competes with the wider role of Huddersfield town centre.

9.2 National Planning policy Framework (NPPF)

NPPF Policy TC2 – Development in Town Centres states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of supporting the vitality and viability of town centres, including through diversification of uses, intensification and provision of residential accommodation where appropriate. This is directly relevant to the proposal. The Octa Hub provides a diversified destination which can attract people into the town centre during different periods of the day and week.

The combination of:

- hospitality;
- food and drink;
- hotel accommodation;
- meeting space;
- leisure/social activity; and
- complementary commercial uses will create a broader customer base and increase the resilience of the building.

The development should consequently be regarded as a town-centre regeneration project, rather than simply a change of use.

10. ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The proposal will generate significant economic benefits through:

- construction expenditure;
- employment during the construction period;
- permanent employment;
- hotel-related employment;
- restaurant and hospitality employment;
- increased visitor expenditure;
- increased footfall;
- expenditure within the wider town centre;
- support for local suppliers and service providers;

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- increased evening and weekend activity; and
- bringing a currently underused building back into productive economic use.

The 2026 NPPF gives substantial emphasis to supporting business investment, employment and economic growth. Policy E1 requires development plans to provide a clear economic vision and support sustainable economic growth, while Policy E2 gives substantial weight to business growth and the conversion of existing buildings. The Octa Hub directly contributes to these objectives.

11. FOOD, DRINK AND EVENING ECONOMY

Policy LP16 specifically recognises the role of food and drink uses and the evening economy. The proposal is deliberately designed to provide activity across the day rather than creating a single-period destination. The rooftop restaurant and associated food and social uses will form an important component of Octa Hub's evening economy.

The operation will nevertheless be controlled through appropriate management arrangements, including hours of operation, noise management, servicing and security measures where necessary. The accompanying noise assessment will provide the detailed evidence required to demonstrate that the proposal can operate without unacceptable effects upon surrounding uses.

12. HOTEL ACCOMMODATION AND VISITOR ECONOMY

The proposed boutique hotel is an important component of the overall regeneration strategy.

Hotel accommodation within a town-centre location can:

- support tourism;
- accommodate visitors attending local businesses and events;
- support the evening economy;
- increase visitor expenditure;
- reduce the need for visitors to travel outside the town;
- support the restaurant and other Octa Hub uses; and
- contribute to the wider regeneration of Huddersfield.

The hotel should therefore not be viewed in isolation. It forms part of the integrated mixed-use model which makes the regeneration of the existing building commercially viable.

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13. DESIGN AND PLACEMAKING

Policy LP24 – Design is central to the assessment of the proposal. The proposal has been developed as a comprehensive architectural intervention rather than a collection of unrelated internal alterations. The design seeks to establish a clear identity for the Octa Hub while responding positively to the existing building and the town-centre context. The 2026 NPPF Policy DP3 – Key Principles for Well-Designed Places requires development to respond to its context while allowing innovation and change where appropriate.

The policy identifies seven broad principles:

- liveability;
- climate;
- nature;
- movement;
- built form;
- public space; and
- identity.

It also gives substantial weight to outstanding or innovative design where it promotes sustainability and raises design standards, provided it remains consistent with the overall form and layout of its surroundings.

The Octa Hub has been designed around these principles.

The proposal will create:

- a distinctive identity;
- clear entrances and circulation;
- legible movement through the building;
- active and animated spaces;
- natural surveillance;
- appropriate accessibility;
- improved visitor experience; and
- a stronger relationship between the building and the wider town centre.

14. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Policies LP20, LP21 and LP22 are relevant to sustainable travel, highway access and parking. At national level, Policy TR3 requires development to be located so that it supports sustainable patterns of movement and makes effective use of existing transport infrastructure.

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Policy TR4 requires transport considerations to be integrated into the design of development and gives priority to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. The town-centre location of the Octa Hub is inherently advantageous in this respect.

The proposal provides an urban destination which can be accessed by:

- walking;
- cycling;
- public transport;
- taxi/private hire;
- private car; and
- other sustainable modes.

The development will therefore contribute to a reduction in the need for longer-distance travel and will support the Government's vision-led approach to transport. Any highway and parking matters will be addressed through the submitted Transport Statement/Transport Assessment and associated plans.

15. HEALTH AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Policy LP47 – Healthy, Active and Safe Lifestyles and Policy LP48 – Community Facilities and Services are relevant. The 2026 NPPF places particular emphasis upon creating healthy and inclusive places.

Policy HC4 states that substantial weight should be given where development provides new or improved community facilities or makes a demonstrable contribution towards promoting good health, preventing ill-health, reducing health inequalities or supporting social interaction.

The Octa Hub has significant potential to contribute to these objectives through:

- provision of meeting spaces;
- opportunities for social interaction;
- leisure and recreation;
- food and hospitality;
- improved accessibility;
- increased town-centre activity;
- improved natural surveillance; and
- provision of a destination capable of being used by a wide range of age groups.

The proposal therefore provides an important social dimension in addition to its economic role.

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16. CRIME PREVENTION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The proposal has been designed with crime prevention and public safety incorporated into the building layout. The previously prepared Crime Mitigation Strategy should be read alongside this Planning Statement.

Particular measures include:

- appropriate lighting;
- controlled building entrances;
- secure access arrangements;
- appropriate locking systems;
- PAS 24-compliant windows where applicable;
- controlled access to hotel accommodation;
- clear separation between public and private areas;
- CCTV and management measures where appropriate;
- natural surveillance;
- clear wayfinding; and
- managed access to upper-floor accommodation.

The arrangement of the hotel circulation is particularly beneficial. The principal stair and lift arrangements allow access to the relevant upper-floor circulation without requiring uncontrolled passage through the hotel bedroom areas. This reduces opportunities for unauthorised persons to tailgate into the hotel accommodation zone.

This approach is consistent with NPPF P5 – Maintaining Public Safety and Security, which specifically requires development proposals to anticipate and address safety and security risks, particularly where vulnerable groups or large numbers of people may be present. The policy expressly identifies hotels, restaurants and other venues attracting large numbers of people as locations where appropriate security considerations should be addressed.

17. AMENITY, NOISE AND AGENT OF CHANGE

The proposed restaurant, hotel and evening uses have the potential to interact with surrounding properties and uses. This has therefore been considered from the outset. The proposal will be supported by the appropriate noise assessment and, where necessary, management controls.

NPPF Policy P3 – Living Conditions and Pollution requires development proposals to be appropriate for their location, taking account of likely effects, including cumulative effects, of pollution upon health, living conditions and the natural environment. The

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proposal will incorporate appropriate mitigation to ensure that the operation of the Octa Hub does not result in unacceptable effects. Where necessary, conditions can control:

- hours of operation;
- external plant;
- extraction systems;
- deliveries;
- amplified music;
- servicing;
- waste collection; and
- noise management.

18. HERITAGE

The heritage implications of the proposal will be assessed having regard to LP35 – Historic Environment and the relevant 2026 NPPF heritage policies. The 2026 NPPF confirms that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and that they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Policy HE4 requires development to maintain or secure a use consistent with conservation and to avoid or minimise harm to heritage significance.

Where the building or its setting has heritage significance, the proposed reuse provides an important conservation benefit by securing a viable long-term future for the property. The detailed heritage assessment should therefore be read alongside this Statement.

19. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The proposal involves the reuse of an existing urban building and therefore inherently reduces the requirement for new land take. The relevant environmental considerations include:

- biodiversity;
- drainage;
- flood risk;
- air quality;
- noise;
- ground conditions;
- waste;
- energy efficiency; and
- climate change.

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These matters are addressed through the accompanying technical information. The approach is consistent with the 2026 NPPF's objective of making effective use of land while safeguarding environmental quality.

20. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The reuse of the existing building is itself an important sustainability measure. Retaining and adapting an existing structure avoids the embodied carbon associated with wholesale demolition and reconstruction and reduces the need for new land consumption.

The redevelopment will also provide an opportunity to improve:

- insulation;
- building services;
- lighting;
- heating and cooling systems;
- energy efficiency;
- water efficiency;
- waste management; and
- renewable/low-carbon energy generation where technically and commercially feasible.

The proposal therefore combines urban regeneration with sustainable reuse.

21. PLANNING BALANCE

The Octa Hub provides a substantial package of public and private benefits.

The principal benefits include:

Economic

- regeneration of an underused building;
- creation of employment;
- support for the hospitality and visitor economy;
- increased visitor expenditure;
- support for local businesses and suppliers;
- increased town-centre footfall; and
- strengthening of the evening economy.

Social

- new opportunities for meeting and social interaction;
- leisure and hospitality facilities;

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- improved accessibility;
- a safer and more active building;
- enhanced town-centre activity; and
- a destination capable of serving local residents and visitors.

Environmental

- reuse of an existing building;
- efficient use of previously developed urban land;
- reduced requirement for new land;
- opportunity for energy-efficiency improvements;
- improved building performance; and
- opportunity for environmental enhancement.

Regeneration

Most importantly, the proposal provides a credible and viable means of securing the long-term future of a substantial existing town-centre building. Without a viable new use, the building risks continued underuse, deterioration and further loss of economic and social value. The Octa Hub provides an alternative which is commercially realistic while remaining strongly aligned with the planning objectives for Huddersfield.

22. CONCLUSION

The proposed Octa Hub represents a comprehensive regeneration of an established building within Huddersfield.

The proposal accords with the fundamental principles of the Kirklees Local Plan by:

- making efficient use of an existing building;
- supporting employment and economic activity;
- contributing to town-centre vitality;
- supporting the evening economy;
- providing hospitality and visitor accommodation;
- encouraging social interaction;
- promoting sustainable travel;
- improving the quality and attractiveness of the building; and
- securing a viable long-term use.

The proposal also accords strongly with the direction of the August 2026 NPPF, particularly Policies S3 and S4 concerning sustainable development and

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development within settlements, L2 concerning effective use of land, TC2 concerning town-centre vitality, E1/E2 concerning economic growth, DP3 concerning design, TR3/TR4 concerning sustainable transport, HC4 concerning health and community benefits and P5 concerning public safety and security. The Government's 2026 reforms also place considerable emphasis upon clear national decision-making policies, which are intended to provide the national policy framework previously envisaged through NDMPs. The Octa Hub is well aligned with that national direction of travel.

Subject to the detailed technical assessments and appropriate mitigation secured through planning conditions or obligations where necessary, there are no overriding planning reasons why the proposed development should not be granted planning permission. The application should therefore be approved.

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