

APPLICATION NUMBER: 24/00384/FUL

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

24/00384/FUL

CASE OFFICER

Rachel Carney

DETERMINATION DATE 26.11.2024 EXT OF TIME

Address: Hopwood Hall College, Middleton Campus Rochdale Road Middleton
M24 6XH

Proposal: Installation of air source heat pumps, thermal storage and battery storage
to replace the existing carbon based heat network

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	y	Site notice expired?	y
	Neighbour letters expired?	y	Press Notice expired?	y

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	n	Contrary to national policy?	n
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	n	Contrary to previous decision?	n
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	n	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	n

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	n
	Neighbour comments received?	n

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	n
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	n
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	n/a

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE

CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: LA DATE: 25.11.24

SITE

The application relates to part of the Middleton Campus of Hopwood Hall College with the specific development site located adjacent the southwest of the boundary of college campus and to the immediate west of a college sports pitch. Land to the west of the site is outside of the college campus and the immediately adjacent development appears to comprise a minage, although no planning history exists for equestrian development, with the only planning history relating to agricultural development.

The application site is close to the Grade II* Hopwood Hall and Grade II Hopwood Hall Chapel and is located within the Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

The application proposes the installation of air source heat pumps, thermal storage and battery storage to replace the existing carbon based heat network.

The development would comprise four air source heatpumps, a thermal store, a pump enclosure and a BESS (battery energy storage system) that will be sited on a concrete slab of 22m by 7.76m and be enclosed by a 2m high wooden noise attenuation fence. Also on the concrete slab would be a transformer that will be enclosed by a separate 3.0m high security fence.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP-S1 Sustainable Development
JP-S2 Carbon and Energy
JP-S4 Flood risk and the water environment
JP-G2 Green infrastructure network
JP-G7 Trees and woodland
JP-G8 A net enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity
JP-G9 The Green Belt
JP-P2 Heritage
JP-P5 Education, skills and knowledge

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

C7 Delivering education facilities
P1 Improving image

- P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 Improving design of new development
- G4 Protecting Green Belt
- G6 Enhancing green infrastructure
- G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
- G8 Managing water resources and flood risk
- G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
- T2 Improving accessibility
- DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

- G/D/2 Green Belt
- G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change
- G2 Energy and new development
- G3 Renewable and low carbon energy developments
- D/5 Infilling at Major Existing Developed Sites in the Green Belt

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

82/D14155 – Student Accommodation Block - Approved
 96/D33017 – Erection of 2 Sports Rebound Walls - Approved
 01/D38531 - Demolition Of Existing 2 Storey Residences, Construction Of New Roundabout, Erection Of New Sports Centre, Refurbishment Of Existing Changing Block And Widening Of Adjacent Car Park - Approved
 18/00234/FUL - Installation of replacement 3G synthetic turf pitch including new 4m high perimeter fencing to replace existing 3m high fencing – Approved
 21/00511/FUL - Alterations to existing elevations and the extension of the Technology Centre and Annex building to form an enlarged specialist education facility for Construction, Engineering and Advanced Technologies, and the erection of a recycling centre and associated hard and soft landscaping - Approved
 22/00062/ANM - Application for a non-material amendment to planning permission
 21/00511/FUL - alterations to include: changes to style and position of windows; removal and reduction in size of rooflights; rearrangement of internal layout; increase in height of recycling centre boundary and change to boundary materials; and, reduction footprint of northern annex at ground floor level only.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Conservation And Design

The proposal would have a neutral impact on the significance of the designated heritage assets (Hopwood Hall and Hopwood Hall Chapel) and the non-designated heritage assets (Littleborough and Ashworth Buildings). No objections raised.

Joint Committee Of National Amenity Societies

No comments received to date

Historic England

Confirmed no offering advice on this application.

Highways And Engineering

No objections

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No objections subject to a condition requiring that the noise from the heat pumps does not exceed 34dB(A) between 07:00-23:00 and 30 dB(A) between 23:00-07:00 when measured 1m from the façade of noise sensitive properties.

GM Fire Service

No comments received to date

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised with a site notice, press notice and neighbour notification letters. No representations have been received.

ANALYSIS

The application site is located within the Green Belt as allocated under the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. The National Planning Policy Framework, states that 'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence'.

The NPPF lists the five purposes of the Green Belt:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Paragraph 154 states that Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets one of the listed exceptions:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Under paragraph 155 of the NPPF certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of

including land within it. These are:

- a) mineral extraction;
- b) engineering operations;
- c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
- f) development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Saved UDP policy D5 is also relevant to the application with the site allocated as a major existing site within the Green Belt. This policy sets out that limited infilling within the major existing developed sites within the green belt will be permitted provided that the development:

- a) Is related to the continuing use of the site
- b) Is contained within the boundary shown on the proposals map
- c) Has no greater impact upon the purposes of including land in the green belt than the existing development
- d) Does not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site; and
- e) Does not exceed the height of the existing buildings on site.

The proposed development does not clearly fall under the exceptions to inappropriate development in the green belt as set out in the NPPF. Nonetheless, the Design and Access Statement clearly demonstrates that the proposal relates to the existing use of the college site, with the aim that the development will provide an energy efficient means to heat and cool the college buildings, while reducing their reliance on fossil fuels. The development includes air source heat pumps and the battery storage also aims to complement a future for solar panels, providing further green energy for the college. It is also anticipated that the battery system will actively participate in grid balancing by absorbing excess electricity during period of high solar generation and inject power back into the grid with the colleges output exceeds demand.

Considering the above, it is considered that the development is related to the continuing use of the site, allowing it to function in a more energy sustainable manner. It would also be fully contained within the policy D5 boundary.

In regards the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, it is considered that the proposal would have no greater impact than the existing college development. The development is clearly within the existing college site and appropriately located adjacent existing sport facilities towards the southern site boundary. By staying within an existing cluster of development the impacts on the wider Green Belt would be acceptable and the scale of the proposal would also not lead to any major increase in the developed proportion of the site. The application would also meet the last criteria of policy D5, by not exceeding the height of existing buildings within the site.

The application would comply with the requirements of policy D5 and within the context of Green Belt policy, the proposals are acceptable.

Heritage and design

One of the primary considerations of development at Hopwood Hall College is the impact on heritage assets. The college includes the Grade II listed Hopwood Hall Chapel and it is also encompasses the site of the Grade II* listed Hopwood Hall. The

Littleborough and Ashworth Buildings within the site are also considered to be non-designated heritage assets.

NPPF paragraph 206 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

In accordance with NPPF paragraph 208, where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Places for Everyone (PfE) policy JP-P2 and Rochdale CS policy P2 also apply.

A Heritage Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application and consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Conservation Officer who has advised that the development would be seen largely in the context of the existing single storey structures in the vicinity of the site. The Conservation Officer has also noted that the development would be sited towards the south of the site.

Given the scale and siting of the development the Conservation Officer has advised that the proposal would not materially affect the setting of the identified designated and non-designated heritage assets and that it would have a neutral impact on its setting. As such there are considered to be no heritage concerns with the application.

In respect of design of the proposal, it is accepted that the design is functional and would not meet the criteria of "high quality". Nonetheless, within the proposed setting it is considered that the functional design would be viewed as an acceptable and operational addition that would provide an acceptable form of development for the larger educational use of the site. As such it is considered that there are no design concerns with the application and the proposal would comply with the requirements of policy P1, P2 and P3 of the Core Strategy and policy JP-P1 of PfE.

Neighbour and occupier amenity

Although the site is within the grounds of the college, it is close to the border with Woodside Farm, with the dwelling house located approximately 60m from the application site. Policy G9 of the adopted Core Strategy requires that development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution.

Consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Environmental Services who have raised no objections to the development. However, they have recommended that a condition be attached to any approval requiring maximum noise limits for the development. This is considered to be acceptable and it would ensure the protection of neighbouring occupiers from any adverse noise impacts associated with the development.

Given the proposed scale of the development and its siting it is considered that there are no other occupier amenity concerns associated with the development and subject to inclusion of the recommended noise condition, the application is considered acceptable in this regard and in accordance with the requirements of policy G9 of the Core Strategy.

Highway Safety

Policy T2 of the Core Strategy requires that development comply with the Council's car parking standards and policy DM1 requires that development provides satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring and serving arrangements, taking into account the proposed use and location.

Highway Services have reviewed the application and confirmed no objections to the application. It is noted by the case officer that the development will not result in any permanent additional traffic movements, nor would it interfere with the existing highway layout or parking provision for the site. The application would therefore result in no undue harm to highway safety and is acceptable in this regard, in accordance with policies T2 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

Other considerations

There are no ecological concerns with the application, the development would be sited on existing hardstanding and would not impact on any existing habitat, nor would it be sited on a protected land allocation. The proposal would also not impact on existing drainage for the site. It is noted that the site access is located along the route of MidRupp177. It is clear however from the route of the PROW, that the application would not directly impact on the right of way, interfere with or block its use or enjoyment. The application is therefore acceptable in this regard and in accordance with the requirements of policy DM1 of the Core Strategy.

Summary

Further to the above, the application result in the provision of renewable energy technology at the site, in accordance with the requirements of policies G1, G2 and G3 of the Core Strategy and policy JP-S2 of PfE. It would also comprise appropriate development in the Green Belt, in accordance with the requirements of saved UDP policy D5 and would have a neutral impact on the nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets. The recommendation is approval, subject to appropriate conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE

1. The development must be begun within three years of the date of this decision notice

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following application plans and documents:

- Location Plan – Drawing no. 211
- Existing & Proposed Site Plan – Drawing no. 273
- Energy Centre – General Arrangement – Drawing no. 0187

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Noise emitted from the heat pumps hereby approved shall not exceed 34 dB(A) between 07:00 and 23:00 and 30 dB(A) between 23:00 and 07:00, when measured 1m from the dwellinghouse of Woodside Farm.

Reason: To protect the amenity of residents at the nearest property from excessive noise and disturbance and to accord with the requirements of policy G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Procedure Statement

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay

Report Author Rachel Carney