

APPLICATION NUMBER: 24/00267/FUL

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
24/00267/FUL	Nick Brookman	2 January 2025

DETERMINATION DATE (EXTENSION OF TIME)

10 January 2025

Address: Moto Birch Eastbound Services, M62 Between Junctions 18 & 19
Heywood

Proposal: Retention of electric vehicle charging hub consisting of 12no. EVC points and associated equipment (Retrospective).

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	N/A

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

RECOMMENDATION	Refuse
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: LA DATE: 02.01.25

SITE

This application relates to the Eastbound Moto Birch M62 services.

The site is located to the east of Junction 18 (M60) of the M62, two miles from the M60 Manchester Ring Road, and a similar distance beyond Junction 19 (A6046). The site is located to the North of the M62 on the Eastbound carriageway. Access to the site is off the dedicated slip road from the M62 Eastbound and is bordered to the South by the M62 and farmland beyond, to the West and South by Whittle Lane, and by farmland to the East.

The site is contained to a space to the west of the main service station building which was formally a piece of part existing hardstanding and partly a cluster of semi-mature trees located to the area between the car park and M62 motorway.



Above: The application site captured on Google Street View date approx. August 2018.

The application site and wider Eastbound service station site has recently been released from the Green Belt as outlined in the newly adopted sub-regional planning policy document, the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE).

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought in retrospect for the installation of twelve vehicle charging points and associated equipment, infrastructure and hardstanding.

The planning statement submitted alongside this application explains that development commenced at the site in October 2023 'in order to meet the Government strategy for charging at motorway service areas and avoid operational delays'.

As constructed, the EV Hub provides 6no. charging bays, including 1no. oversized bay which caters for users needing additional space to manoeuvre around their vehicle. The associated equipment comprises 6no. high power charging upstands along with power cabinets, substations and communications & meter housing.

Plans submitted highlight an excavation to a depth of approximately 0.6m to facilitate new infrastructure below ground and 6no. power cabinets and 6no. charging posts sited to the front of each bay.



Above: The application site captured from Officer site visit dated April 2024.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

Policy JP Allocation 1.1 Heywood / Pilsworth (Northern Gateway)

Policy JP-S1 Sustainable Development

Policy JP-G7 Trees and Woodland

Policy JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

P3	Improving design of new development
G6	Enhancing green infrastructure

G7	Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
G9	Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
T2	Improving accessibility
DM1	General Development requirements

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

20/00683/FUL - Installation of 16 no. electric vehicle charging parking spaces on perimeter of existing car parking area – Approved 26/08/2020

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways and Engineering

No objection.

United Utilities

No comments received.

GMEU (Ecology)

Objection - GMEU commented that they are not satisfied because there has been a permanent loss of broadleaved plantation to hardstanding and less urban trees proposed in mitigation. When the original replacement plan is ran through a metric a net loss is achieved. They subsequently recommended that between 30-40 urban trees are required to achieve net gain.

REPRESENTATIONS

A notice was posted in the vicinity of the site and no responses were received.

ANALYSIS

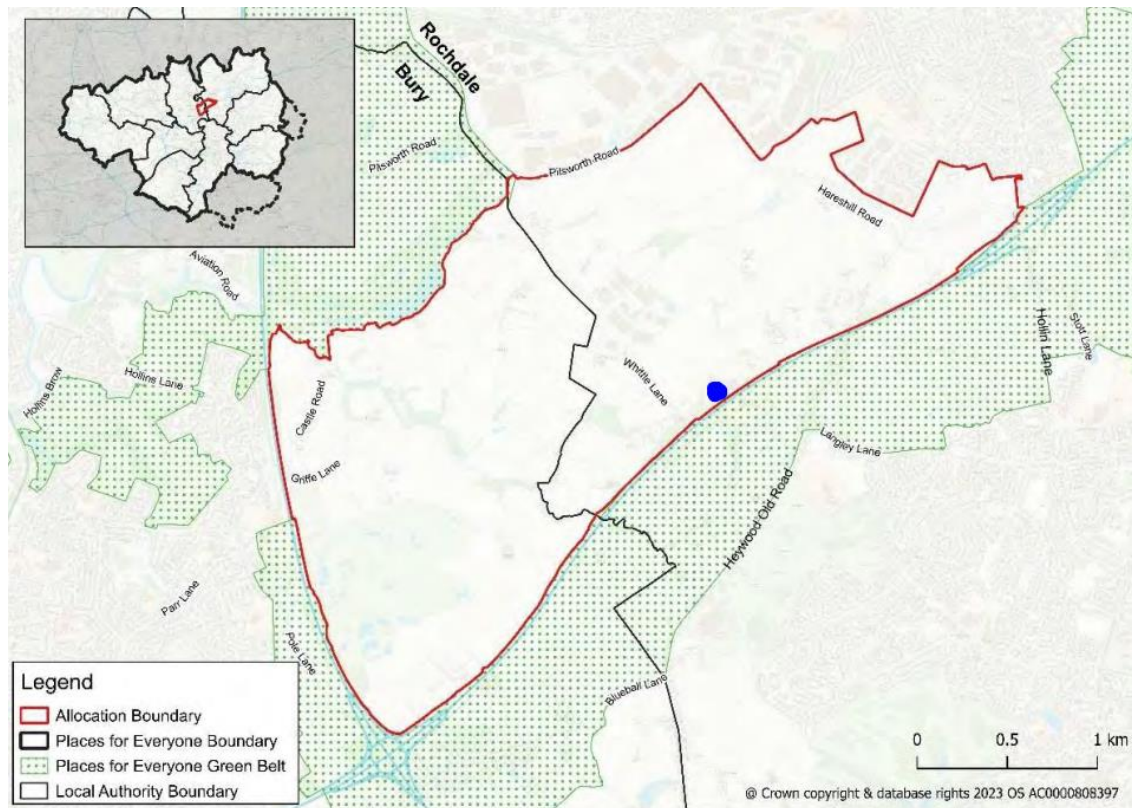
Principle of Development

From a land designation perspective, the site was formerly located within the Green Belt as designated under Policy G/D/2 of the Unitary Development Plan. However, following the adoption of PfE, several areas of Green Belt were removed across Greater Manchester.

In this instance, the application site now forms part of a much wider land allocation under PfE which is referred to as Policy JP Allocation 1.1 (Heywood / Pilsworth Northern Gateway).

Impact on PfE Policy JPA 1.1 (Heywood / Pilsworth Northern Gateway).

The application site sits on the southern edge of the PfE Policy JPA 1.1 Allocation as approximately shown by the blue dot below.



The site allocation seeks to deliver a total of around 1,200,00 sqm of industrial and warehousing space as well as delivering around 1,000 additional homes along with a new primary school in the eastern part of the allocation to support the early delivery of the infrastructure and provide a buffer between existing housing and the new employment development.

Therefore, in principle, regard must be had as to whether the development subject to this application would have any prejudicial impact on the Northern Gateway allocation coming forward in the future.

The development in this instance is in retrospect and is sited well within the limits of the existing service station consisting of the existing buildings, signage, alternative EV charging facilities and existing hardstanding.

To that effect, Officers consider that given the exceptionally small nature of the application site and it being located within an existing service station, it is not considered by officers that if the development were approved, it would prejudice any significant development or infrastructure intended for the purpose of the allocation coming forward in the future.

Having considered the above and the placement of the development in the context of the existing forms of development at this location, it is considered that the development put forward is acceptable in principle and it therefore accords with the requirements of Policies DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Ecological Impacts

Core Strategy Policy G6 expects development proposals affecting green infrastructure to avoid the loss of existing features such as trees unless suitable alternative provision is made or they have limited value. The replacement should be at a ratio of 2:1.

Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. CS Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

PfE Policy JP-G8 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity resources through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021), the NPPF and supporting guidance documents.

Paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications and so the proposed development should achieve net gains for biodiversity via species enhancement as guided by NPPF paragraph 187d. This application was submitted before Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory for Minor Applications on 2nd April 2024 and for that reason the proposed development is exempt from providing 10% BNG.

The application in question seeks permission in retrospect and the development as constructed required the removal of a cluster of trees. While not protected, the removal of these trees represents a loss of an existing provision. To compensate for their loss and to conform to policy requirements, the development proposes a planting plan of 14 new trees within the application site.

Despite the proposed replacement replanting scheme, the mitigation measures proposed are insufficient and unacceptable in addressing the loss of trees that were removed to give way for the development. GMEU were consulted on this application and they are not satisfied given the permanent loss of the former broadleaved plantation. GMEU requested the submission of an amended planting plan proposed between 30 and 40 urban trees which would be required to achieve a net gain and to therefore compensate for the biodiversity that has been permanently lost. Since originally requesting this information, no such information has been provided.

When determining planning applications paragraph 193 of the NPPF sets out that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Accordingly, owing to the biodiversity net loss and insufficient mitigation measures proposed, the development subject to this application is contrary to Core Strategy Policy G6 and G7, PfE Policy JP-G8 and the NPPF.

Impact on Visual Amenity, Character and Appearance

Policies DM1, P1, P2 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy require development proposals to demonstrate high quality design. In addition, paragraphs 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 135 goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

The overall design is acceptable in the context of the existing built environment and existing neighbouring land uses at this location which remains very much commercial in nature with the adjacent Tesla chargers and wider service station site. As such, it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant policies in PfE.

Highways

Core Strategy Policy T2 seeks a satisfactory level of accessibility and parking, requiring that in all circumstances, the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live in an area will have priority. The Council's Highways team were consulted on this application and they have no objection to the proposal.

The provision of a net addition to parking at this location is supported and no highway safety concerns are presented with the proposal sited within the area of the existing car park utilising existing access arrangements. Moreover the proposal will increase the EV charging provision at this strategic location and is considered to be in accordance with Core Strategy Policy T2 and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

1. The application proposes a biodiversity net loss and insufficient mitigation measures have been proposed to compensate for this loss. The development is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policy G6 and G7, PfE Policy JP-G9 and the NPPF.

Procedure Statement

The development does not comply with the development plan and therefore does not comprise sustainable development. There were no amendments to the scheme, or conditions which could reasonably have been imposed, which could have made the development acceptable and it was therefore not possible to approve the application.

Report Author Nick Brookman