

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.
25/00724/FULCASE OFFICER
Nick BrookmanDATE
5th November 2025**DETERMINATION DATE (EXTENSION OF TIME)**10th November 2025**Address:** Asda Distribution Centre, Dig Gate Lane, Rochdale, OL16 4NR**Proposal:** Siting of a permanent tank for the storage of Liquefied Natural Gas

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/A
-----	--	-----

CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N/A
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT subject to conditions
----------------	-----------------------------

CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: AC

DATE: 05/11/25

SITE

The application site comprises a large warehouse building currently used as a ASDA Distribution Centre which forms part of the Kingsway Business Park and defined Urban Area as designated in Rochdale Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map.

The application site is located in the far south west corner of the Business Park and is bordered to the north by an empty plot, to the east by existing occupied units, to the south by the M62 Motorway and to the west by residential development.

Logistical HGV parking and loading areas and yards are sited both the north east and south west of the large warehouse with staff car parking in the north west corner. A second warehouse unit stands in the south west corner of the application site, HGV access is via the east with staff vehicular access of John Milne Avenue to the north.

PROPOSAL

In accordance with the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 and the Regulation 5 of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015, the application seeks express consent for the storage of Liquefied Natural Gas to be stored in a permanent tank that will be used to provide fuel for vehicles associated with the operation of the ASDA Distribution Centre.

This application is being jointly assessed alongside Hazardous Substance Consent application 25/00736/HAZ.

The application is accompanied by a Covering Letter which sets out that over the past 5 years, Asda has been transitioning to the use of LNG fuel sources for its HGV fleet across their distribution centres nationwide. This fuel source is much more environmentally sustainable as it reduces the carbon footprint of HGVs compared with diesel vehicles and it has the added benefit of reducing NOx emissions and noise as the HGVs are quieter running on this fuel.

Planning permission was granted in 2022 for the installation of a gas fuel station at the application site. There is however now a requirement to increase the storage capacity of the LNG on Site, in order to increase fuel security and operational resilience. Currently with only one source of supply from the Isle of Grain in the South-East of the country, fuel security is a real challenge which provides a risk to service to Asda's customers and business. By increasing the storage from the current 8 tonnes to 32 tonnes, it will require fewer fuel deliveries to re-fuel the Site's station and in doing so removes vehicle journeys in the process.

The application includes the installation and construction of:

1. A vertical LNG storage tank (32 tonnes).
2. A control room.
3. A LNG dispenser.

Access to the application site will be taken from the existing access point to the south east of the existing warehouse building.

The storage tank will stand vertically at a height of 16.64m and the control room will be 2.92m tall.

The new development will be surrounded by a steel welded security fence which will measure approximately 2m tall and is to be powder coated in grey. The proposed

control room will measure 2.92m high and approximately 2m wide and will be sited within the secure fencing and will be a steel insulated container painted white with 1 access door and an externally mounted climate cooler evaporator will be attached to it.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

Legislation

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

National Guidance

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

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

JP-S1 Sustainable Development
JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

E2 Increasing jobs and prosperity
P1 Improving image
P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3 Improving design of new development
G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change
G3 Renewable and low carbon energy developments
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):

EC/7 Kingsway Business Park

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

25/00736/HAZ - Hazardous Substances application for the Storage of Liquefied Natural Gas – Pending consideration but recommended for approval at the time of writing this report.

21/01572/FUL - Installation of a Gas Fuel Station for Distribution Vehicles incorporating LNG and LIN tanks and associated equipment. Approved with conditions 26th September 2022.

20/01286/FUL - Application for LIN and LNG storage tanks. Quashed by unilateral undertaking, September 2022.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Health and Safety Executive

The HSE were consulted on both this application and application 25/00736/HAZ. Their comments are only pertinent for application 25/00736/HAZ relating to the application for Hazardous Substance Consent. Nevertheless, HSE have no objection

to that application subject to condition but the applicant is reminded to review their comments for information purposes.

Environment Agency

The EA, acting as part of the COMAH Competent Authority, have confirmed that they have no concerns with the Hazardous substances consent application or the planning application (25/00724/FUL. Whilst LPG is a named COMAH dangerous substance, the qualifying quantity for lower tier establishments is 50 tonnes, however the capacity of the tanker in the application is 32 tonnes.

Highways and Engineering

No objection.

United Utilities

United Utilities requested the submission of a detailed drainage plan prior to the determination of the application but advised that should planning permission be granted without the provision of this information then a condition would suffice.

REPRESENTATIONS

The applicant has posted notices adjacent to the site and in the local press. Letters of notification were sent to surrounding neighbours. No comments were received.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The application is for a LNG storage tank to support the ongoing operation of the existing ASDA distribution site at Kingsway Business Park. The CS identifies the Kingsway Business Park as being a key component in the regeneration of Rochdale, attracting major investment and adding to Rochdale's reputation as a leading location for business. The CS also sets out that a component of the spatial vision for Rochdale is that Kingsway Business Park will be a nationally acclaimed success. CS Policies SP3/R, E2 and set out a requirement to continue to support growth and development associated with the Kingsway Business Park.

The proposed development will enable the refuelling of vehicles associated with the distribution centre with LNG. LNG is the cleanest fossil fuel. The CS identifies promoting a lower carbon economy as a key challenge, with strategic objective SO4 and policies E2, G1 and G3 providing support for low and zero carbon energy development.

The applicant has explained that the proposed development has been brought forward as part of a national strategy by ASDA improving the economic and environmental performance of its distribution centres. For these reasons, the general principle of the development is acceptable.

Design

In terms of design Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy require development proposals to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and

having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general.

In addition, paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states 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 of the NPPF 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 proposed development is located off the south elevation of the existing primary industrial warehouse and therefore within the existing service and delivery yard associated with the warehouse. The proposed development would remain entirely ancillary and subordinate to the primary use of the land associated with the warehouse and its design would remain wholly subservient. The proposed development would correspond well with the existing industrial character and appearance of the area.

The proposed fencing and control dispenser unit are an acceptable design and their construction and siting would be of a modern and contemporary appearance that would not harmfully impact upon the existing character and appearance of the wider industrial and employment area.

It is also recognised as a whole, the proposed development would be well screened by the existing built and natural environment as shown by the red area below:



Nevertheless, a condition will be attached to this permission to require that the development hereby approved is removed from the site once it is no longer operational, in order to protect the character of the area being harmed by derelict industrial infrastructure.

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.

Impact on Surrounding Land Uses & Residential Amenity

Core Strategy policy G9 sets out the Council's requirements approach to all forms of pollution including the risk of noise, as they relate to new development.

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF also states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.

PfE Policy JP-P6 set out planning expectations for the protection of residential amenity. The "Guidelines & Standards for Residential Development" SPD also sets out guidelines for reducing or omitting the impact of new development on the amenities of residential occupiers.

The site is located within an existing employment area but there are residential properties beyond the western boundary of the site. Nevertheless, the proposed development will be positioned close to the existing main building on the ASDA site and in a position which is set away from any boundaries of the wider business park. The closest dwellings would be at least 170m away, with existing or allocated business park plots within the intervening space.

The scale and intensity of use is minor relative to the existing operation of the associated ASDA site and even more so relative to the operation of the wider business park. The development would not create an excessively new noise generating use.

In this respect, the development is positioned in such a way that any potential external impacts will be adequately separated and/or screened from any sensitive uses. The development proposals thereby meet the aims of CS policies DM1 and G9.

Drainage and Flood Risk

Policy G8 of the Core Strategy sets out the Council's strategy for managing water resources and flood risk more effectively in the interests of public safety, protecting property and infrastructure and the conservation of the natural environment. Policy EM/7 of the saved UDP states that development will not be permitted in areas identified as flood plains, or other areas where development could contribute to increased flood risk. The NPPF also establishes that inappropriate development in areas at risk at flooding should be avoided and that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

It is noted that the proposed development will effectively replace development previously granted under planning permission 21/01572/FUL for the installation of a gas fuel station for distribution vehicles incorporating LNG and LIN tanks and associated equipment.

The application site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk of flooding (less than 1 in 1000 or 0.1% annual probability of river or sea flooding in any year).

United Utilities were not directly consulted on this application but they have provided comments requesting the submission of a detailed drainage plan in advance of determination. Alternatively, they have recommended imposing a condition if

permission is granted without the provision of such information in advance of determination.

However, in this regard and in response to the condition requested by UU, Planning Officers note that the proposed development is located on an existing concrete service yard and there will be no increase in the impermeable area draining into the existing system and as such there will be no detrimental impact on the existing surface water drainage network. The proposed development does not include the loss of any permeable surfaces and does not include any discharge or waste. The proposed infrastructure will have no material impact on the existing water management or flood risk on site or in the surrounding area.

The proposed development would not increase or re-direct surface water elsewhere and Officers consider that the proposed development would accord with policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S4 of PfE and the NPPF.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF 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 would be severe.' Paragraph 116 of the NPPF adds that applications for developments should:

- create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Policy DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy sets out the general development requirements and establishes that proposals should not adversely impact on highway safety. Additionally, it requires all development to provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking and manoeuvring arrangements provided. Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided and, in all circumstances, prioritises the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area. Additionally,

Highways were consulted on this application and they raised no objection. Accordingly, the proposed development is acceptable and would comply with DM1 and T2 of the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Ecology

Core Strategy Policy G7 sets out that 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-G9 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. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications but given the urban and built

environment on and around the application site, it is acknowledged that this site does not impact any biodiversity and the site has a completely sealed surface and therefore has a biodiversity value of zero.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the statutory requirement to provide 10% BNG is applicable here.

Health and Safety

The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015 requires consultation with the COMAH competent authority, which in this (and most) cases comprises the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency.

Paragraph 46 of the NPPF states that *“local planning authorities should consult the appropriate bodies when considering applications for the siting of, or changes to, major hazard sites, installations or pipelines, or for development around them.”*

In assessing application 25/00736/HAZ relating to the Hazardous Substance Consent application, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have assessed the risks to the current population in existing development surrounding the likely activities, resulting from the granting of Hazardous Substances Consent at Asda Distribution Centre, Dig Gate Lane, OL16 4NR. Application 25/00736/HAZ is for the storage of 32 tonnes of Liquified Natural Gas (Schedule 1 Part 2 Entry 18).

HSE have confirmed that only the risks from hazardous substances for which Consent is being sought has been assessed and substances in vehicles which are being loaded or unloaded. HSE has assessed the risk of harm from the maximum quantity of hazardous substances for which Consent is being sought. Risks which may arise from the presence of other substances have not been taken into account in this assessment

In considering this application for Consent, HSE has made the assumption that the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and all relevant statutory provisions, will be met at the establishment should Consent be granted. Accordingly, HSE advises that you should direct the applicant's attention to section 29 of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990. On this basis, HSE has concluded that the risks to the surrounding population arising from the proposed operation(s) are so small that there are no significant reasons, on safety grounds, for refusing Hazardous Substances Consent.

The Environment Agency, acting as part of the COMAH Competent Authority, have also confirmed that they have no concerns with the Hazardous substances consent application or the planning application (25/00724/FUL. Whilst LPG is a named COMAH dangerous substance, the qualifying quantity for lower tier establishments is 50 tonnes, however the capacity of the tanker in the application is 32 tonnes.

Having regard to the representations from the HSE and the EA it was therefore not considered that the proposal would result in any unacceptable risk to the public, surrounding land or the environment which would warrant refusal of the application. Application 25/00736/HAZ would be subject to an appropriately worded planning condition to control the quantities of the substances and their storage. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations (2015) and the NPPF.

Conclusion

The proposed development would support the sustainable and ongoing operations of a well-established business and the development would therefore be acceptable in

principle. The proposal is acceptable in terms of impacts on design, residential amenity, highways safety and access arrangements, flood risk and drainage arrangements, ecology and biodiversity. For these reasons the proposal would comprise sustainable development because it complies with the development plan, and accordingly the application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

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

2. This permission relates to the following plans and documents:

- ☐ Substance Location Plan Drawing No GPP/VB/ROCH/25/03 Rev 2
- ☐ Site Plan Drawing No GPP/VB/ROCH/25/04 Rev 2
- ☐ Proposed Elevations Drawing No 2.03
- ☐ Proposed Back Elevation Drawing No 2.03a
- ☐ Proposed Front Elevation With Dispenser / Photos and Text Drawing No 4.03b
- ☐ Proposed Side Elevation Tank End Drawing No 2.03c
- ☐ Proposed Side Elevation Control Room End Drawing No 2.03d

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings hereby approved unless otherwise required by the conditions below.

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, Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. If the use of the tank and associated infrastructure hereby approved ceases for a period exceeding 6 months, then the approved tanks and ancillary equipment will be removed from the site and the land restored to its former condition.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to prevent the proliferation of disused industrial structures in the local area, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy P2.

4. Any lighting attached to or used in conjunction with the proposed development subject to this permission should be designed and controlled and used so as not to illuminate any area beyond the boundaries of the site.

Reason: To protect the amenity of nearby residents in accordance with Policy G9 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is

deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- a) A Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority,
- and;
- b) The planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Rochdale Borough Council.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

- De minimis exemption.

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 Nick Brookman