

APPLICATION NUMBER: 25/00893/FUL

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.
25/00893/FUL

CASE OFFICER
Nick Brookman

DATE
7 October 2025

DETERMINATION DATE

4 November 2025

Address: Moto Birch Westbound Services, M62 Junction 18-19, Heywood, OL10 2QH

Proposal: Retrospective application for the retention of 6 no EVC power cabinets and associated works

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	GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 20/10/2025

SITE

This application relates to the Westbound 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 South of the M62 on the Westbound carriageway. Access to the site is off the dedicated slip road from the M62 Westbound and is bordered to the North 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 south of the main car park which was formally a piece of part existing hardstanding, part green space with a cluster of semi-mature trees located to the edge of where the newly constructed charging infrastructure has been built.



Above: The application site captured on Google Street View date approx. June 2021.

The application site and wider westbound service station site is located in the Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

The planning statement submitted alongside this application explains that this application seeks planning permission for the retention of electrical infrastructure and associated works.

The infrastructure is required to support a further expansion to provide further charging facilities in addition to those previously consented under planning permission (Ref 23/01320/FUL) that was granted in 2024.

The development includes the provision of a further 6 power cabinets and a very small tarmac surface to facilitate the provision of the cabinets.

This additional charging facility will further aid in the decarbonisation of transport. The proposed electrical infrastructure are power cabinet units that are required to

support the operation of the T175/350 Chargers. The T175/350 chargers have been delivered under permitted development. The substations, communications and meter housing previously consented for Phase 1 will also provide power for Phase 2.



Above: The application site captured by the Planning Officer on 12th September 2025.

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-S1 Sustainable Development
Policy JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy JP-G9 The Green Belt
Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

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
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

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

23/01320/FUL - Retrospective application for the retention of electric vehicle charging hub consisting of 6no. EVC points and associated equipment. – Approved 31 October 2024.

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

Eastbound Site:

24/00267/FUL - Retention of electric vehicle charging hub consisting of 12no. EVC points and associated equipment. – Refused.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways and Engineering

No objection.

GMEU (Ecology)

No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

A notice was posted in the vicinity of the site on the 12th September 2025 and no responses were received.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The application site lies within the Green Belt. Policy G/D/2 states that the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in order to satisfy the purposes and objectives for Green Belt set out in the NPPF, and in particular to maintain the framework of open land separating and surrounding urban areas of the Borough.

The Core Strategy Policy G4 was to be read alongside policy G/D/2. However, Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) was recently adopted by Rochdale Council. Policy JP-G9, supersedes Policy G4 of the adopted Core Strategy in doing so has made amendments to the green belt boundary within Rochdale. It is

noted that the application site in this instance however is retained within the Green Belt. As such policy JP-G9 of the PfE is therefore relevant to any applications on the site. As stated in Policy JP-G9 of the PfE and the NPPF states that the green belt serves five purposes which are to:

- 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.

Para 142 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to the Green Belt. 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 their permanence.

It is stated in paragraphs 153 and 154 of the NPPF that inappropriate development in the Green Belt is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF explicitly states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the listed exceptions applies. The proposed development would comprise transport infrastructure (being ancillary to the use of the motorway network) and requires a greenbelt location due to the existing services being wholly located within the green belt.

Notwithstanding the above aforementioned Green Belt policy, the development as proposed is sited well within the limits of the existing service station consisting of the existing buildings, signage, alternative and existing EV charging facilities and existing hardstanding. Owing to the surrounding built environment and site context, the development does not harmfully impact on the openness of the Green Belt in this location.

Having considered the placement of the proposal in the context of the existing forms of development at this location, it is not considered that the development would be considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The proposals are considered to be acceptable in principle and therefore accord with the requirements of Policies DM1 and G4 of the adopted Core Strategy.

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 of the development 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 existing EV chargers and associated power units and wider service station site as a whole.

The electrical infrastructure is appropriately designed in appearance and massing and is not an obtrusive addition to the locality. 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

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.

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 this is considered to be in accordance with Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Ecological Impacts

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-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. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications but in this instance, given that the application is retrospective, Statutory BNG will automatically not apply. In any case however, the submitted BNG exemption statement demonstrates that less than 25 sqm of habitat will be impacted by the development and therefore the application would be exempt from BNG under the 'de minimis' exemption. The habitat to be impacted is also shown to comprise poor quality modified grassland, and it is highly unlikely that any protected species will have been impacted by the works. As such, the GMEU have no objection.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the statutory requirement to provide 10% BNG is applicable here. In any case, prior to the approval of application 23/01320/FUL, a

belt of trees were sited on the land and grass verge forming part of the application site. Following consultation with GMEU under application 23/01320/FUL, the applicant submitted a proposed planting plan (Landscape Mitigation Plan Drawing No MH9165-001 Rev A). This landscape mitigation plan is required to be carried out as approved by condition to mitigate for the trees lost in order to implement the EV charging facility in this location. The applicant is therefore reminded to adhere to this condition attached to application 23/01320/FUL.

Accordingly, in the determination of this application, the scheme is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Core Strategy Policy G6, PfE Policy JP-G8 and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to the following conditions:

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

- ② Location Plan Drawing 7928_930 rev B
- ② Block Plan and Elevations as Proposed Drawing 7928_933 Rev D
- ② Supporting Letter Dated 28th August 2025
- ② Smarter Mobility Terra HP high power charging leaflet
- ② BNG Exemption Statement Dated 8th September 2025

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings and documents hereby approved.

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.

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 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 Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain does not apply to retrospective planning applications.

Procedure Statement

The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.

Report Author Nick Brookman