

05 May 2026

Planning Department
Rochdale Borough Council
Number One Riverside
Smith Street
Rochdale
OL16 1XU

Electronic Copy Only

Dear Planning Department

Rochdale Community Fire Station – Planning Application for Air Source Heat Pumps

Please find enclosed an application for the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) at Rochdale Community Fire Station, Rochdale. This intends to reduce reliance on natural gas and aligns with the decarbonisation strategy for the Fire Station.

The applicant is the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Context

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has set an overarching target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038 as part of their Environmental Sustainability Policy. The Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service Sustainability Strategy (2014 – 2020) outlines an overall target of being carbon positive by 2050.

A major part of the achieving this includes the decarbonisation of the estate, by:

- Reducing energy waste through energy efficient technologies in buildings
- Redeveloping fire stations with an emphasis on carbon reduction and no longer installing fossil fuel heating systems
- Install renewable generation across the estate
- Produce annual carbon footprint reports tracking progress against targets.

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Proposed Development

The Fire Station sits to the east of Halifax Road, close to the junction of Halifax Road and Hamer Lane. It is an operational building housing the fire services.

The only gas being used on site is serving the boilers. The proposals are to remove these boilers in order to replace them with heat pump technology, reducing the carbon footprint for the station. Upgrading from gas-fired boilers to heat pump technology triples the efficiency for space and water heating, and also provides an all-electric solution which provides the potential for the building to become net-zero as the grid decarbonises. The impact of grid decarbonisation encourages the consideration of electrical solutions such as heat pumps to future-proof the carbon footprint of the development.

The existing boilers are proposed to be stripped out from site and replaced with a 2-stage cascade system consisting of air source heat pumps as well as a water source heat pump to meet the temperature requirements of the existing system. Other equipment is also required such as buffer vessels, secondary pumps and pressurisation units, plus ancillary equipment such as air/dirt separators, dosing pots and expansion vessels to be supplied as a package.

The new low temperature hot water (LTHW) provision from the heat pump system is to connect into the existing header in the plantroom and building distribution is to remain as existing. The new plant items will be connected to the BMS system in order to provide control, monitoring, energy consumption monitoring and analytics.

The planning history relevant to the site is set out below:

- 10/D53168 – Prior Approval For The Demolition Of 4 Blocks Of Bungalows (14 Dwellings, 1-14 Cliff Street) – Approved 18 Jun 2010.
- 11/D54082 – Erection Of A Single Storey 3 Bay Community Fire Station With Associated Facilities And Erection Of 2M High Boundary Fencing – Approved 29 Mar 2011.
- 11/D54557 – Proposed Minor Material Amendment To (Application D54082) To Amend The Finished Floor Levels At The 3 Bay Community Fire Station. – Approved 22 Aug 2011.
- 11/D54920 – Erection Of A Single Storey 3 Bay Community Fire Station With Associated Facilities And Erection Of 2M High Boundary Fencing (Resubmission Of D54082) – Approved 22 Dec 2011.
- 13/00555/ANM – Application for non-material amendment to 11/D54920 for amendment to Drill Tower Layout – Approved 2 Jul 2013.
- 13/00622/AM – Minor material amendment to planning permission 11/D54082 for the installation of solar panels to roof of new fire station – Approved 10 Sep 2013.
- 13/01175/ADV – Non-illuminated double sided panel sign – Approved 11 Nov 2013.



There are no Listed Buildings on Site, and the Site sits within Maclure Road Conservation Area.

The Site lies within Flood Zone 1, indicating a low probability of flooding. Some areas of potential surface water accumulation are identified around the operational building, but these are minor and can continue to drain without increasing flood risk.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined against the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Planning Policy

The Local Development Plan for Rochdale consists of the adopted Core Strategy (2016), Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Joint Waste Plans (2013 and 2012 respectively) and Places for Everyone (2024).

The most relevant policies from the adopted Core Strategy are:

- Strategic Objective SO4 – To promote a greener environment
- Policy G1 – Tackling and adapting to climate change
- Policy G2 – Energy and new development
- Policy G3 – Renewable and low carbon energy developments
- Policy P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

Consultation on the initial draft of the emerging Local Plan ended in February 2026. Due to the early stage of the Emerging plan, it is considered to carry little material weight in the decision making process.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies of England and how these should be applied. The NPPF was first published in 2012 and has received several updates and revisions since. The latest version was published in February 2025. The following sections of the NPPF are considered to be the most relevant:

- Section 2- Achieving sustainable development
- Section 8- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 11- Making effective use of land



- Section 12– Achieving well-designed places
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Planning Appraisal

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act confirms planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan for the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this instance the adopted Development Plan is the Local Plan. This section assesses the main considerations associated with the proposed development against national and local planning policy, and material considerations.

Principle of Development

The proposed development is of a small scale, consisting of a small additional plant space to the rear of the station. The area proposed is hardstanding and currently is laid out for three car parking spaces.

The proposal consists of two metal ASHP's, connected to the existing plant room by duct work.

Due to the existing layout of the station, there will be limited view of the additional plant / machinery from outside of the Site. The proposed location of the ASHPs is set back from the road and pavement, and also the residential properties to the north.

The reduction of reliance on natural gas and promotion of decarbonisation directly support Policy G1, G2 and G3, without any loss of amenity, impact upon listed buildings or green belt, or, health and safety risk.

Although the site lies within the Maclure Road Conservation Area, the nature of the works is small-scale and involves plant replacement with minimal external visual impact. As such, the proposal is not considered to harm the character or appearance of the conservation area, and therefore aligns with Policy P2 of the Core Strategy and Section 16 of the NPPF. The principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Sustainable Development

The aim of the development is to reduce reliance on natural gas, and instead use the more sustainable option of Air Source Heat Pumps. This aligns with both national and local policy that prescribes the requirement for improvements to buildings to mitigate against climate change.

Summary

In summary, an assessment of the proposals has been undertaken against planning policy at all levels as set out within the body of this letter. Taking all of this into account, it can be concluded



that the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the aims and objectives of the Development Plan taken as a whole.

It is further supported by the assessment of other material considerations including the NPPF and it has been demonstrated that the proposed development will deliver the overarching economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development. As such, the proposed development merits of the support of the Local Planning Authority and the grant of planning permission.

The following documents are submitted in support of the application.

- Planning Application form, prepared by Pegasus Group
- This covering letter, prepared by Pegasus Group
- Mechanical Services Specification
- Scope of Works
- GMFRS-ROC-PARR-XX-OO-DR-A-9001 Location Plan
- GMFRS-ROC-PARR-XX-OO-DR-ME-5001 – Proposed Strip Out Schematic
- GMFRS-ROC-PARR-XX-OO-DR-ME-5002 – LTHW System – Proposed Schematic
- GMFRS-ROC-PARR-XX-OO-DR-ME-5003 – Proposed M&E Layouts
- GMFRS-ROC-PARR-XX-OO-DR-ME-5004 – Typical M&E Installation Details
- GMFRS-ROC-PARR-XX-OO-DR-ME-5005 – Proposed M&E Elevations
- GMFRS-ROC-PARR-XX-OO-DR-ME-7001 – Proposed Electrical Schematic

A fee of £701 has been paid to Rochdale Metropolitan Council to support the processing and validation of this application. The planning portal reference number is PP-14460649.

Yours Sincerely

Rachel Harrison MRTPI

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