

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0246
Location: Land adjacent to 1 DOBFIELD ROAD, ROCHDALE, OL16 3AW
Proposal: Section 73 application to vary condition 2 (Plans) of planning permission 20/01093/FUL to include the installation of air source heat pumps
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Majid Mir

SITE

The application site is a 0.8ha parcel of land situated between Rochdale Canal & Dobfield Road, to the north east of Belfield on the outer urban fringe of Rochdale.

The site currently comprises 8 dwellings that were constructed under planning permission 20/01093/FUL.

The site is approximately 275m to the east of the A664 (Albert Royd Street) and it is accessed off Dobfield Road via Belfield Mill Lane.

The site is within the defined urban area and a greenspace corridor as set by the saved Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. To the east of the site lies open countryside which is designated as a green belt, whilst to the south of the site is designated as protected existing recreational open space. The adjacent Rochdale Canal benefits from a number of important environmental designations including SSSI and SAC status.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks to amend the approved plans in condition 2 of planning permission 20/01093/FUL to add air source heat pumps to each dwelling.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

Legislation

Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act makes provision for the amendment of extant planning permissions where minor material amendments are sought. This is in line with the options for flexible planning permissions as outlined in the National Planning Practice Guidance.

A Planning Permission granted under Section 73 takes effect as a new, independent permission to carry out the same development as previously permitted, subject to new or amended

conditions. The new Planning Permission sits alongside the original Planning Permission, which remains intact and un-amended. It is open to the applicant to decide whether to implement the new Planning Permission or that which was originally granted.

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Development Plan

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

The development plan for the proposal consists of the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan, Rochdale Core Strategy (CS), adopted 2016, saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies, and the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan April 2013. The Council also has an adopted series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) (2024)

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:

Sustainable and Resilient Places

JP-S1 Sustainable Development

JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

Places for Homes

JP-H1 Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development

JP-H2 Affordability of New Housing

JP-H3 Type, Size and Design and New Housing

JP-H4 Density of New Housing

Greener Places

JP-G1 Landscape Character

JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Places for People

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Connected Places

JP-C1 An Integrated Network

JP-C6 Walking and Cycling

JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

Rochdale Core Strategy (CS)

SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities

C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places

C6 Health and well-being

C8 Improving community, sport, leisure and community facilities

Improving design, image and quality of place

P1 Improving image

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a Greener Environment

G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change

G2 Energy and new development

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

G10 Managing mineral resources

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

T2 Improving accessibility

Managing delivery and monitoring progress

DM1 General Development requirements

SD1 Delivering sustainable development

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development'

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

19/01322/FUL - Residential development of 14 dwellings, hard and soft landscaping, car parking following dismantling of existing stables. Decision: Withdrawn.

20/01093/FUL - Residential development: erection of 8 dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping and car parking, following the demolition of existing stables. Decision: Approve subject to conditions.

23/00570/DOC - Submission of details to comply with conditions 3 (invasive species), 4 (tree retention plan), 8 (site investigation), 9 (coal mining), 11 (drainage scheme) and 13 (canal protection) on planning permission 20/01093/FUL. Decision: Request completed.

24/00675/DOC - Submission of details to comply with conditions 5 (landscape), 7 (bird and bat boxes), 10 (land stability) and 15 (refuse strategy) on planning permission 20/01093/FUL. Decision: Request completed.

24/01097/DOC - Submission of details to comply with condition 8 (site investigation) on planning permission 20/01093/FUL. Decision: Request completed.

CONSULTATION

Environmental Protection (Noise)

First response:

the submitted assessment demonstrates compliance with the MCS 020 criterion for Plot 3, the Environmental Protection Team considers that the assessment is limited in scope and does not provide sufficient information to fully assess the overall noise impact of the development.

Second response:

The Environmental Protection Team have reviewed the document reference noise impact assessment prepared by Murray Acoustics, Reference: 21072-RP-NIA-01, Dated: 19th May 2026. As previously discussed, the MCS 020 was undertaken for plot 3 and 4. However the Environmental Protection Team required the MCS data for the remaining 6 plots. Section 3.2, page 6 of the reports provides the summary of the 8 plots. The proposal meets the required noise standard, the assessment also concludes even in the worst case scenario with all 8 units

operating simultaneously the noise levels were still compliant. Therefore, no unacceptable noise impact is expected at the assessed locations.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification and site notices. 4 groups of objections were received. Multiple correspondence was received from the objectors. The representations have summarised below:

Principle

- Acknowledge that ASHPs are supported in principle as part of low-carbon development.

Officer comment: Discussed in the report below.

Appearance and Visual Amenity

- Concerns raised regarding the siting, arrangement and relationship between air source heat pumps.
- Consider relocating ASHPs.
- Visual amenity impact of ASHPs.

Officer comment: It is noted that discussions have been had between the occupiers of the dwellings and the developers about relocating the units. This application is assessed on the details provided. Any discussions between different parties are not a material planning consideration.

Amenity

- Impact of units facing each on the side of the dwellings (i.e. air discharge being directed towards opposing units and nearby boundaries)
- Noise impact of air source heat pumps.
- Cumulative amenity impact of air source heat pumps.
- Amenity impact on habitable rooms
- Request for site-specific acoustic assessment.
- Heat pump is not operating sufficiently in the cold climate due to poor installation and siting of the unit.
- The Acoustic Assessment is theoretical only/desk based. No site visits or measurements undertaken.
- Structure-Borne Noise and Internal Vibration Have Not Been Assessed.
- first-floor positioning is fundamentally unsuitable

- first-floor position creates unreasonable ongoing maintenance difficulties and costs

Officer comment: Where relevant, discussed in the amenity section of the report. It is noted additional information has been provided in regard to the units functionality, and efficiency, as well as installation guidance. These elements are not material planning considerations and cannot be considered as a part of this application. Concerns raised would be a private matter. Additionally, matters such as financial implications are also not a material planning consideration.

Other

- Consider whether Section 73 is the appropriate mechanism for this application. Consider full application with consideration given to relevant impacts.

Officer comments: A section 73 application does not allow for the change of a description of the development. The application does not seek to change the description of the development. Section 73 applications allow for modifications of application where it is considered to not be fundamental or substantial. An assessment is made of the modification as would be the case with a full application. Where a new planning permission is granted through a section 73 application, the planning permission will run alongside the original planning permission.

- Incomplete application.

- Missing plans for plot 4.

- Inaccurate plans - Plots 3 and 4 do not show the ASHPs in their current installed positions. They show proposed new positions that do not currently exist on the ground.

Officer comments: Plans required to determine the application have been submitted. Planning permission is sought as shown on the proposed plans. If planning permission is granted, the ASHPs will be required to installed in the approved locations.

- The proposed replacement Condition 2 substitutes these with eight individual plot elevation drawings. Concerns plans include other modifications.

Officer comments: Planning permission is sought for amendment to condition 2 to include the ASHPs.

- The Council should consider imposing conditions requiring post-installation noise monitoring, a specific assessment of structure-borne noise and vibration, a revised acoustic assessment addressing the additional receptor positions, assess the drainage implications of the proposed new unit position are assessed and confirmed as acceptable.

Officer comments: Where relevant, concerns are discussed below. A noise impact assessment has been provided. Drainage of the ASHPs would not be material planning consideration for such a proposal.

- Communications between occupiers and developers inaccurate.
- Developer has not properly consulted occupiers of the proposal.

Officer comments: The application has been submitted; letters of notification have been sent out and a site notice has been placed in the vicinity of the site. Given the level of response it is considered that publicity undertaken has been successful.

ASSESSMENT

The application is a variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 20/01093/FUL. As such, this variation of conditions application will assess the changes proposed and assess the relevant material planning considerations. It is noted that a number of other conditions attached to the permission are varied or deleted which is not reflected within the description of development, however these conditions are varied as a result of details having been discharged previously under separate applications, and the development having been implemented.

DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design.

Paragraph 140 of the NPPF states 'Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).'

The air source heat pumps of a standard design. Although there is a preference for the air source heat pumps to be sited to the rear and not visible the street scene. It is noted that the proposed air source heat pumps are located to the side elevations of the recently constructed dwellings. The air source heat pumps will be placed at first floor level other than on plot 8. The applicant noted that it was not possible to place the air source heat pumps at ground floor due to access reasons.

Other than plot 8, all the other air source heat pumps would be sandwiched in between the dwellings and therefore limiting views of the air source hear pumps. The development is clearly a modern housing development and is also gated. The air source heat pumps would not be overly prominent and would not be visible from public vantage points outside the development boundary.

The proposal would not materially affect the visual amenity of the development or upon adjacent neighbouring properties. The proposed amendments are considered acceptable and compliant with policies DM1, P1, P2 and P3 of the Core Strategy and relevant policies in the PfE and NPPF.

AMENITY

Policy G9 of the Core Strategy establishes that development should not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution. Policy DM1 also requires development proposals to mitigate against any impact due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution and requires that applications do not have an adverse impact on health.

The main consideration is whether the proposed air source heat pumps would result in an unacceptable level of noise disturbance for the residential properties. The report also states that 'the cumulative MCS 020 a) sound pressure level at every assessment position is below the 37.0 dB(A) threshold. The highest predicted level is 34.0 dB(A) at Plot 2 (Position 1), which sits 3.0 dB below the threshold. On this basis, the proposed ASHP positions comply with the MCS 020 a) noise criterion adopted for this assessment, including under cumulative operation of all eight units simultaneously.' As such, the submitted noise impact assessment establishes that the air source heat pumps in the proposed locations would have a noise level lower than the permitted development noise limit.

The Environmental Protection Team noted that the updated noise impact assessment which provides the summary of the 8 plots. The Environmental Protection Team considered that the proposal meets the required noise standards, and noted that the assessment also concludes even in the worst case scenario with all 8 units operating simultaneously the noise levels were still compliant. Therefore, the Environmental Protection Team concluded that no unacceptable noise impact is expected at the assessed locations.

As such, the Air source heat pumps in the proposed locations are acceptable in this regard and accords with policies G9 and DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Energy and Climate Change

PfE policy formally sets out Greater Manchester's ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2038. The air source heat pumps would support the reduction in the use of carbon energy sources for all units.

In this regard, the proposed development would align with the considerations of PfE and is therefore acceptable.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (5)

- 1 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents hereby approved:
 - Site Location Plan, Proposed & Existing Site Plans. Drawing number: 3220- CDA-ST- ST- DR- A- 0500. Revision: I
 - Elevations - HT 02 (Plot 01). Drawing number: 3220- CDA- 02- XX- DR- A- 0701. Revision: A
 - Elevations - HT01 (Plot 02). Drawing number: 3220- CDA- 02- XX- DR- A- 0702. Revision: A

- Elevations - HT 02 (Plot 03) Option 2. Drawing number: 3220- CDA- 02- XX- DR- A- 0703. Revision: A

- Elevations - HT 02 (Plot 04) Option 2. Drawing number: 3220- CDA- 02- XX- DR- A- 0704. Revision: A

- Elevations - HT01 (Plot 05). Drawing number: 3220- CDA- 01- XX- DR- A- 0705. Revision: A

- Elevations – HT01 (Plot 06). Drawing number: 3220- CDA- 01- XX- DR- A- 0706. Revision: A

- Elevations - HT01 (Plot 07). Drawing number: 3220- CDA- 01- XX- DR- A- 0707. Revision: A

- Elevations - HT 03 (Plot 08). Drawing number: 3220- CDA- 03- XX- DR- A- 0708. Revision: A

- House Type A – Plans. Drawing number: 1285/100. Revision: C

- House Type B – Plans. Drawing number: 1285/101. Revision: B

- House Type B1 – Plans. Drawing number: 1285/106. Revision: A

- Construction Environmental Management Plan (Rachel Hacking Ecology 2020)

- Crime Impact Statement (2019/1015/CIS/01)

- Bird and bat box specifications. Drawing no: YD2_DOB_LP00970.

- Proposed Landscape Plan, residential development site. Drawing no: YD2_COU_LP001.

- Proposed Drainage Plan. Drawing no: EBC01070 – 200. Rev: P8. Dated 24.01.2024.

- Proposed Drainage Details. Drawing no: EBC01070 – 201. Rev: P3. Dated 01.11.23.

- Habitats Regulations Preliminary Screening Assessment. Produced by Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Report Reference: CW20-1585 Report 001.

- Plot 8 - House Type 03 (B1): Plan & Cross-Section Adjacent Canal. Drawing no: EBC01070-100-4-PLT 8. Rev: P3.

- Plot 8 - House Type 03 (B1) Foundation General Arrangement Plan. Drawing no: EBC01070-100-1-PLT8. Rev: P2.

- Plot 8 - House Type 03 (B1) Foundation Sections Sheet 1 of 2. Drawing no: EBC01070-100-2-PLT8. Rev: P2.

- Plot 8 - House Type 03 (B1) Foundation Sections Sheet 2 of 2. Drawing no: EBC01070-100-3-PLT8. Rev: P2.

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

- 2 Within the first planting season following the final occupation of the development, landscaping works as identified in the following plan(s)/document(s) shall be fully implemented:

- Proposed Landscape Plan, residential development site. Drawing no: YD2_COU_LP001.

Any trees or shrubs planted or retained in accordance with this condition which are removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or become severely damaged or become seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily landscaped having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed development and in accordance with Core Strategy Policies G6 and G7, Policies JP-G6 and JP-G7 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) order 2015 Schedule 2 or any other order revoking or re-enacting that Order, no extensions, porches, garages, ancillary curtilage buildings, swimming pools, enclosures, fences or walls shall be constructed within 3 meters of the site boundary to the Rochdale Canal without prior planning permission being obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the potential impact of any such development on the structural integrity of the adjacent canal can be fully assessed in line with NPPF.

- 4 The collection of refuse from the site shall be undertaken in accordance with the refuse collection strategy as identified in the 'Site Refuse Strategy Plan' (Drawing no: 0520. Rev: B) .

Reason: In order to ensure adequate refuse collection from the site and to protect highway safety and in accordance with policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5 The Air Source Heat Pumps serving each dwelling hereby approved shall be installed in accordance with the approved plans and in accordance with details

identified in documents 'Ecodan R32. Monobloc Air Source Heat Pump (PUZ-WM85VAA(-BS))' and 'Noise Impact Assessment' (Ref: 21072-RP-NIA-01, dated: 19 May 2026, produced by: Murray Acoustics).

Reason: In the interests of sustainability, to safeguard the amenities of residents and in the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development, and in accordance with Policies G9, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-S2 and JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 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.

Informatives (1)

- 1 The applicant attention is drawn to the requirement that the detailed drainage scheme the site must be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved plans (condition 1), as well as the specific requirements detailed within the following documents:
 - SW Drainage Calculations by Elliot Bond. Rev A. Dated 29 May 2023.
 - Technical Note produced by JBA Consulting. Dated: 15 May 2024.