

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0284
Location: ASTRA CENTRE, ROYLE BARN ROAD, ROCHDALE, OL11 3DT
Proposal: Section 73 application to vary conditions 1 (Plans) and 2 (Drainage) of planning permission 24/00253/VRCON
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Tom Hiles

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application relates to an existing permission ref 24/00253/VRCON which was a s73 approval relating to an earlier permission ref 21/01098/FUL, for development of an energy storage system on land at Royal Barn Road in Rochdale. The s73 granted approval for changes to approved details including approved plans, planting details, acoustic fencing, as well as approval of surface water drainage arrangements, which had been left to condition on the original approval.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks approval of a further amendment to the scheme as amended under 24/00253/VRCON, comprising changes to the approved surface water drainage scheme. The changes are set out on the following updated submitted documents and drawings:

- Royal Barn Stormwater Drainage Strategy rev 4
- 1248769- Royle Barn Road-GA-07 Rev I
- 1248769- Royle Barn Road-GA-08 Rev G

The application sets out that the proposed changes are necessary due to existing conditions which were not previously identified which has meant that infiltration drainage on the site is less suitable (due to the nature of the proposed development meaning that inundation of the scheme is undesirable) and which require the addition of an attenuation tank to properly address. The application also notes that these changes have been discussed with the Council's drainage officer prior to submission, which the drainage officer has confirmed in his consultation response.

RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

21/01098/FUL - Construction of 40MW energy storage facility (with an operational limit of 35MW), with associated control and auxiliary equipment, parking, boundaries, and

landscaping. Creation of associated vehicular access on to Royle Barn Road. Approved with conditions, 10/02/2022

24/00253/VRCON - Section 73 application to vary conditions 2 (Plans), 3 (Drainage Pre-Commencement), 5 (Planting) and 7 (Acoustic Fencing) of planning permission 21/01098/FUL to amend the site layout and infrastructure amendments. Approved with conditions, 27/08/2024

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) 2024:

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SD1 Delivering sustainable development

DM1 General development requirements

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P1 Improving image

P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

G3 Renewable and low carbon energy developments

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

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: 30.04.2026

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: 02.04.2026

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

None recieved

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

RBC Drainage /LLFA Officer - the amended drainage arrangements have been discussed prior to submission of the MMA application and are acceptable.

ASSESSMENT

Design and Appearance

The NPPF states achieving good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and decisions should ensure developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. This is reflected in PfE Policy JP-P1 and CS Policies DM1 and P3, which require development to respect local context with regard to siting, size, scale, massing, height and materials.

The proposed alterations would result in a minor change to the appearance of the development, in that grasscrete - previously proposed to be installed around and between the energy storage batteries as part of the surface water drainage arrangements - will be replaced with tarmac. Given the nature of the proposed development and it's context in an area of industrial and warehousing premises, it is considered that this change would be acceptable in design terms. The design of the proposal is therefore acceptable and accords with CS Policies DM1 and P3, PfE Policy JP-P1, the SPD and the NPPF.

Drainage and Flood Risk

Policy G8 sets out the Council's approach to managing water resources and flood risk in new development. The Council's drainage officer has reviewed the amended drainage arrangements and discussed the reasons for the changes to the scheme with the applicant's drainage designer. They have advised that while the use of an attenuation tank is not preferred in terms of the hierarchy of sustainable drainage, this is acceptable in this case due to the particular circumstances, as noted above, and have accepted the proposed changes. On the basis of this advice the amended scheme is considered to be acceptable in terms of flood risk and sustainable drainage.

Other Matters

The proposed amendments are not considered to give rise to any considerations in terms of any other material planning considerations, including impacts on residential amenity and highways safety.

RECOMMENDATION - Grant subject to the following conditions

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

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.

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. In particular, Article 6 (1), of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation civil rights and a fair hearing; Article 8 of the ECHR in relation to the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR in relation to the protection of property have all been taken into account.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers are satisfied that the application material and the officer's assessment has taken into account these issues.

The application has been considered in accordance with the Rochdale Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy – Embracing All Voices (2024-2026), which seeks to promote a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion that benefit the community as a whole.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (8)

- 1 This permission relates to the following plans and reports:-

- Location Plan (ref: 23191-0201 rev P1)
- MAS008-PL-01 - Royle Barn Road site layout plan Rev P5 (1:1000)
- MAS008-PL-02 - Royle Barn Road site layout plan Rev P1 (1:500)
- 001 - TX + MV Skid
- 002 - Auxiliary Transformer Elevation
- 003 - Envision Liquid-Cooled BESS DC Side
- 004 - DNO Control Room Elevation
- 005 - BESS Switchroom + Control Room
- 006 - Battery Cabinet Elevation
- 007- Fence
- 008 - Welfare
- 009 - Battery Inverter
- 010 - Gate
- 1330/01 Rev B (09/08/24) - Landscape Proposals
- 1248769- Royle Barn Road-GA-07 Rev I - Proposed Site Drainage
- 1248769- Royle Barn Road-GA-08 Rev G - Proposed Access Road Drainage
- SD-01 3m Acoustic Fence
- Royal Barn Stormwater Drainage Strategy Revision 3 dated 02/12/2025
- Battery Energy Storage Site, Royle Barn Road, Rochdale - Noise

and the development shall be carried out in complete accordance with these drawings and the report 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.

- 2 The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the drainage details indicated in approved drawings.

- 1248769- Royle Barn Road-GA-07 Rev I - Proposed Site Drainage
- 1248769- Royle Barn Road-GA-08 Rev G - Proposed Access Road Drainage
- Royal Barn Stormwater Drainage Strategy Revision 3 dated 02/12/2025

Reason: To prevent an increased risk of flooding as a result of the development and to ensure satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site in accordance with the requirements of Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the recommendations contained within the Construction Management Plan (ref: SHF.349.013 dated July 2021) approved under the original planning permission ref 21/01098/FUL.

Reason: To minimise detrimental effects to neighbouring amenities, the amenities of the area in general, detriment to the natural environment through the risks of pollution and dangers to highway safety, during the construction phase in accordance with Policies DM1, P3, T2, G8 and G9 of the emerging Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4 The development hereby permitted shall not be brought in to use until the planting shown on the Landscape Proposals (ref: 1330/01 Rev B dated 09/08/24) has been implemented in full, including the installation and the positioning of the bird boxes. 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 policies P3, DM1 and G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5 The development hereby permitted shall not be brought in to use until the boundary treatments shown on the approved plans have been erected in accordance with the approved details. Notwithstanding any detail shown on the approved plans, the palisade fencing shall be colour treated Green (RAL 6005) upon installation and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in compliance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6 The acoustic fencing shall be erected in full accordance with drawing titled Figure 1 - Site Layout contained within the submitted Enzygo technical note dated 7th March 2024 and as shown on the approved drawing ref SD-01 3m Acoustic Fence prior to first use or operation of the facility hereby permitted and retained as such at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in compliance with Policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7 Other than lighting shown on the approved plans, no external lighting shall be installed on the building or elsewhere on the site unless a scheme for such lighting has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall thereafter be fully implemented and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in compliance with Policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 8 No works, including any demolition works and the clearance of trees and shrubs, shall take place during the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive) unless an ecological survey has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to establish whether the site is utilised for bird nesting. Should the survey reveal the presence of any nesting species, then no development shall take place during the period specified above.

Reason: In order to prevent any habitat disturbance to nesting birds in accordance with the requirements of Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy 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.