

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0537
Location: Unit 7 Crown Business Park, Cowm Top Lane, Rochdale, OL11 2PU
Proposal: Construction of an Energy Storage System (known as a Battery Box)
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Luke Rigby

SITE

The application site relates to Unit 7 of the Crown Business Park in Rochdale. Unit 7 is an existing storage and distribution unit located within the wider Crown Business Park which is allocated for employment development.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of a 200kW energy storage system (known as a battery box).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

17/00728/FUL – Extension to existing storage and distribution warehouse (Use Class B8) including service area, turning area and parking area (Resubmission of 16/00705/FUL). Approved Subject to Conditions

16/00705/FUL – Extension to existing B8 storage and distribution warehouse including service area, turning area and parking area. Application Withdrawn

14/00471/FUL Erection of a B8 Storage & Distribution Warehouse including service areas, turning area and parking area. Granted July 2014.

06/D48452 – Erection of 13 industrial units and 6 office units with associated car parking, landscaping and construction of access road – resubmission of D48017. Granted Feb. 2007 06/D48017 – Erection of 13 industrial units for B2 General Industrial and B8 storage and distribution uses and 6 no. B1 office units, car parking and access road. Withdrawn

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-S1 Sustainable Development

JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

Local Guidance

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

EC/2 Primary Employment Zones

EC/8 Development Sites in Employment Zones

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

G2 Energy and New Development

P3 Improving Design of New Development

DM1 General Development Requirements

T2 Improving Accessibility

Appendix 5 Schedule of Parking Standards

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

None relevant

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: N/A

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: In accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, notification letters were sent to immediate neighbours.

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways Department

"This application seeks to make use of an unused area of Car Park within an existing storage and distribution centre.

The proposed battery storage site will not generate any significant volume of traffic once installed.

There is no changes to the highways network as a result of this proposal.

We have no new road safety concerns as a result of this proposal.

We have no concerns regarding servicing of this facility.

We have no highways objections to this proposal."

United Utilities

No objection

GMAAS

Thank you for consulting GMAAS on the above application.

Having reviewed the development proposals against our records, GMAAS is satisfied that the delivery of the proposed scheme will not damage any known or suspected remains of archaeological interest. As such, no further consideration of archaeological matters is warranted in this instance.

ASSESSMENT

Principle

Chapter 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework (henceforth, the Framework) is titled "Meeting the challenge of climate change" and states that the objectives of the Chapter are to support the transition to net zero by 2050.

Policy W3 of the Framework states that:

"In considering proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure, substantial weight should be given to:

a) The benefits for improving energy security, supporting economic development and/or the transition to a net zero future;

b) In the case of applications for the re-powering and life-extension of existing sites, the additional benefit of utilising an established site for this purpose; and

c) The contribution that small-scale and community-led renewable and low carbon energy projects can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, along with their associated economic and social benefits."

Paragraph 2 of the same goes on to state that applicants should not be required to demonstrate the need for renewable or low-carbon energy development or electricity network infrastructure.

Whilst battery energy storage systems do not generate renewable energy themselves, they are an important component of the transition to a low-carbon energy system. Energy storage infrastructure enables electricity generated from renewable sources, such as wind and solar power, to be stored and released when required, helping to balance supply and demand, improve grid stability, and reduce reliance on fossil fuel generation. As such, battery energy storage facilities are widely recognised as supporting renewable energy deployment and assisting in the delivery of net zero objectives.

In this regard, the proposed development accords with the aims of Policies CC1 and W3 of the Framework, which seeks to support the transition to a net zero future and the provision of renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure.

The proposal is also consistent with Policy JP-S2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, which seeks to deliver a carbon neutral Greater Manchester by 2038 through a positive approach to renewable and low-carbon energy development, and with Policy G2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, which supports low-carbon and renewable energy solutions.

Design, character and appearance

Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy requires all development proposals, including changes of use of land and buildings, extensions and alterations, to demonstrate that they are of a high-quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area. Policy P3 of the Core Strategy acknowledges that good design will improve the image and attractiveness of the borough as a place to live, work and visit, and can also improve health, safety and the environment and reduce long-term costs.

Furthermore, Policy DP1 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development proposals should respond to their context so that they integrate with, and enhance their surroundings. Paragraph 2(g) of DP1 goes on to state that development proposals should create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development to establish and maintain a strong sense of place and pride.

The proposal seeks to add a battery storage unit including installation of energy storage system (200kW) and electrical cabinet with 2.4m high paladin perimeter fencing. The development would be sited along the existing boundary treatment and fencing of the site and would therefore the associated fencing would not read as a new addition to the site, rather it would read as an extension to the existing fencing which would not appear significantly incongruous.

The proposal is small in scale and would not appear incongruous within the surrounding street scene. In light of the above, the proposals are considered to be of an appropriate standard of design and therefore accord with the requirements of Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Core Strategy.

Residential amenity

The application site relates to an industrial unit. The development itself would be sited to the north of Unit 7 specifically, and the closest residential dwellings are located adjacent across Cowm Top Lane.

Given the separation distances to the nearest residential dwellings, and siting in relation to Unit 7 itself, it is not considered that the proposed development would appear significantly overbearing or overshadowing for neighbouring occupiers.

The main issue, therefore, is the impact of noise on the amenity of neighbouring dwellings. The application submission includes a Noise Impact Assessment produced by SLR Consultants. The assessment concludes that there would be no impact from noise on the closest noise sensitive receptors. In the absence of an objection, or comment from the Council's Environmental Health Officer, the Local Planning Authority has no reason to doubt the findings of the report. Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposed development would be significantly detrimental to the amenity that neighbouring dwellings could reasonably expect to enjoy in relation to noise.

The development is therefore considered to accord with Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways and parking

The Council's Highways Department was consulted on the proposal and notes that once installed, the development would not generate significant additional traffic, and there are therefore no highways concerns associated with the proposal. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to accord with Policies T2 and Appendix 5 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.

Conclusion

Subject to the conditions set out below and taking into account the provisions of the development plan and all other material planning considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. No significant problems have arisen during the consideration of this application, and the application has been determined in a timely manner, in accordance with the policies with the Development Plan. [AC1]

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 Officers' 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) (2)

- 2 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).

- 3 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans hereby approved:

- 01 LOCATION PLAN Revision A
- 02 LAYOUT PLAN Revision A

- 04 ELEVATIONS Revision B

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.

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.