

Planning

Growth & Development

File Note for Planning Application

Application no. 139986/FO/2024

Proposal: Demolition of existing part vacant buildings and erection of a part 10 storey, part 27, part 28 storey residential development comprising 359 homes (Use Class C3) with supporting amenity spaces, and associated highways works, landscaping, plant areas, and other associated works

Address: Sparkle Street, Manchester, M1 2NJ

Introduction

Planning and Highways Committee considered this application at their meeting on 21 November 2024 and were minded to approve it, subject to a legal agreement for a review mechanism for a financial contribution towards off site affordable housing and for off-site bio-diversity mitigation. Since this resolution, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 12 December 2024 and the Net Zero Design Guidance was issued by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to support the implementation of the adopted policies in the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE). This note considers the implications of the new NPPF and the Net Zero Design Guidance for the proposed development, considering any relevant updates that specifically relate to the proposal.

Revised NPPF – Relevant Updates

1. Paragraph 11 d) (relating to the presumption in favour of sustainable development).

For decision-taking this means:

C) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies **for the supply of land**, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a **strong** reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, **having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.**

[amendments highlighted in bold]

2. Paragraph 125 c):

Planning policies and decisions should:

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be **regarded as acceptable in principle approved unless substantial harm would be caused**, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

[amendments highlighted in bold]

Net Zero Design Guidance March 2025

This introduces guidance documents for applicants on how to design to achieve Net Zero Carbon Buildings and how to deliver heating systems which are low carbon, cost effective and affordable for residents. It also includes submission guidance for PfE policies JP-S2 and JP-S3.

Consideration of Proposed Development Against Updated Policies and New Guidance

The updates to the NPPF reflect the Government's overarching objective to re-build the economy and deliver more homes. The updates to Paragraph 11d) create a stronger presumption in favour of development in sustainable locations. The amendment to Paragraph 125c) gives additional strength to the presumption in favour of the redevelopment of brownfield land, providing that development should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused.

There is no change to paragraph 11c) of the NPPF, which provides that decision takers should approve proposals that accord with up-to-date development plans without delay.

The Local Planning Authority has made a full assessment of the proposed development, as set out in the Committee Report of 21 November 2024, and concludes that the proposed development is in accordance with the Development Plan as a whole. This conclusion was endorsed by Planning and Highways Committee on 21 November 2024. The development would be in a highly sustainable location, on brownfield land, close to amenities, employment and public transport.

In terms of the amendments to paragraph 125c) of the NPPF, the proposed development would result in the redevelopment of a long-term under-utilised City Centre brownfield site to deliver a high quality scheme including 359 homes. The principle of housing development in this location is supported by the long-standing aspiration of the City Council, to create a high-quality city centre living supported by Core Strategy Policies CC3, CC6, EC3 and H1

It is considered that the application submission meets the Net Zero Design Guidance and the requirements of PfE policies JP-S2 Carbon and Energy and JP-S3 (Heat and Energy Networks). The application site is located within a Heat and Energy Network Opportunity Area, although there are no planned heat networks within the immediate vicinity of the scheme. The building would be all electric with Air Source Heat Pumps and PV's generating some low carbon heating and hot water. The infrastructure would allow the scheme to become zero carbon over time as the grid decarbonises. Energy efficiency measures have been incorporated into the design to meet the demand of the building, including:

- Electric Panel, Convector, or radiant heaters
- Thermostats and programmer
- Heat recovery to the accommodation mechanical ventilation systems
- High efficiency LED lighting throughout
- Air source heat pumps to generate low carbon heating and hot water for the development.

Whole life embodied carbon reduction measures are embedded within the construction and future operation of the proposed development including optimising material usage, use of low carbon materials, reducing construction waste and using fewer finish materials (for wall, floor, ceiling, façade)

It is considered that the proposed energy strategy and construction methodology would take into account embodied carbon impacts and would deliver effective solutions for minimising operational energy intensity and reducing carbon dioxide emissions, which aligns with the requirements of PfE Policies JP-S2 – Carbon and Energy and JP-S3 – Heat and Energy Networks.

Conclusion

Overall, the updates to the NPPF further bolster and support the case for the proposed development and the application is in line with the Net Zero Design Guidance and PfE policies JP-S2 and JP-S3.

It is considered therefore that the updates to the NPPF and the introduction of the Net Zero Design Guidance do not provide such new or altered material planning considerations that would have altered the Planning Officer's recommendation, led Members to make a different decision or changed the outcome of the application.

