

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 141425/VO/2024

Date registered valid: 7 November 2024

Proposal: City Council Development - Installation of air source heat pumps within compound to the rear together with 3m high acoustic fencing; and installation of solar Photovoltaic array to roof

Address: The Wells Centre, 101 North Road, Manchester, M11 4NE

Ward(s): Clayton & Openshaw Ward

Applicant: Martyn Joyce Manchester City Council

Agent (if any): Drees Sommer Drees & Sommer UK Ltd

Case officer: Ellie Knowles
Tel: 0161 219 6633
Email: ellie.knowles@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 28 May 2025

Application details

Type of application: Regulation 3 Consent

Development type: Minor Other

Date of site visit: 21 January 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 6 December 2024 Expired: 29 December 2024

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 12 November 2024 Expired: 3 December 2024

Site notice

No site notice has been produced

Press advert

No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building/area

The Wells Centre is a single storey brick-built property with tiled roof, situated at the junction of North Road and Clayton Street, in Clayton ward. The building comprises four octagonal elements interconnected by 5 pitched sections and internal courtyard. The main pedestrian entrance is sited at the junction corner. There is a carpark to the north of the application property.

The site features grass verges along the street frontages which include four existing trees. Boundary treatment is present in the form of mid-height green railings around the curtilage of the building and 2m green security mesh fencing/gates alongside trees/shrubs around the site car park north/northeastern boundary.

The building is in current use as a SureStart Children's Centre, which facilitates early education, childcare, health and family support to the local community. The neighbouring building operates under an ancillary use.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, with terraced dwellings situated to the North/Northeast/East of the site. Clayton Park is sited directly opposite the application property due south and Clayton Health Centre due west.



Figure.1 Site location of proposed ASHP compound



Figure.2 Site location of proposed photovoltaic roof array

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of development

Permission is sought for the City Council Development for the installation of 5no. floor mounted Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) within a compound to the northern elevation together with 3m high acoustic fencing; and installation of solar Photovoltaic array to roof.

A technical data book was provided for the proposed Samsung AE160CXYDEK/EU ASHP product.

The solar panels to be inserted to the two pitched roof slopes would be fixed to tiled roofing using proprietary frame and fixings. The solar panels would lay parallel with the existing roof pitch. The solar panel product would be a Trina Solar product (The Duomax; 455 watts model) and a VarioSole+ mounting system.

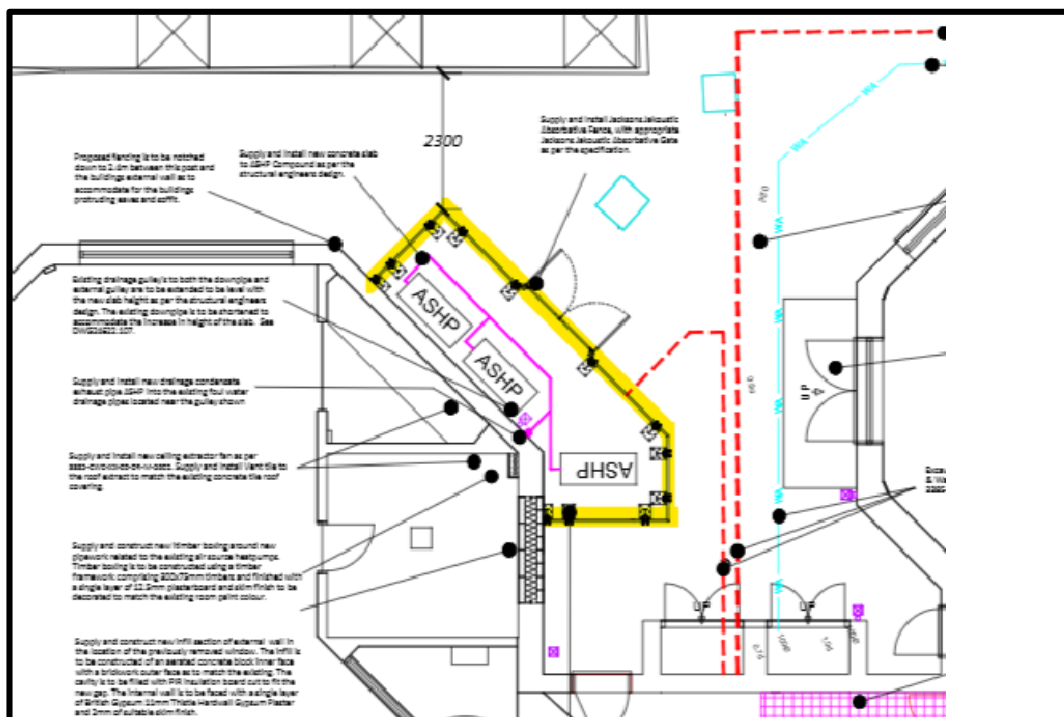


Figure.3 Site plan of proposed ASHP compound (24622.103 Rev D)

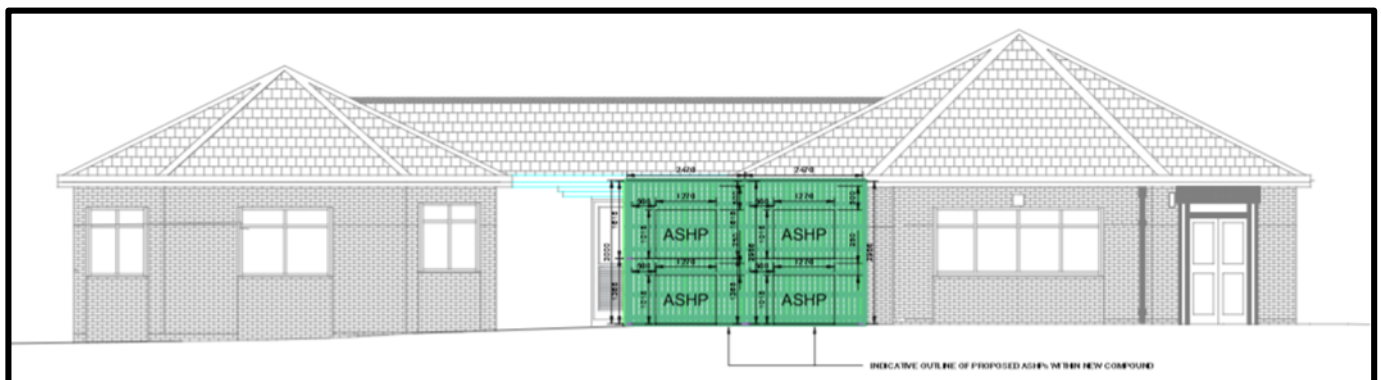


Figure.4 Proposed elevations of ASHP compound with Acoustic fencing (Rev T8)

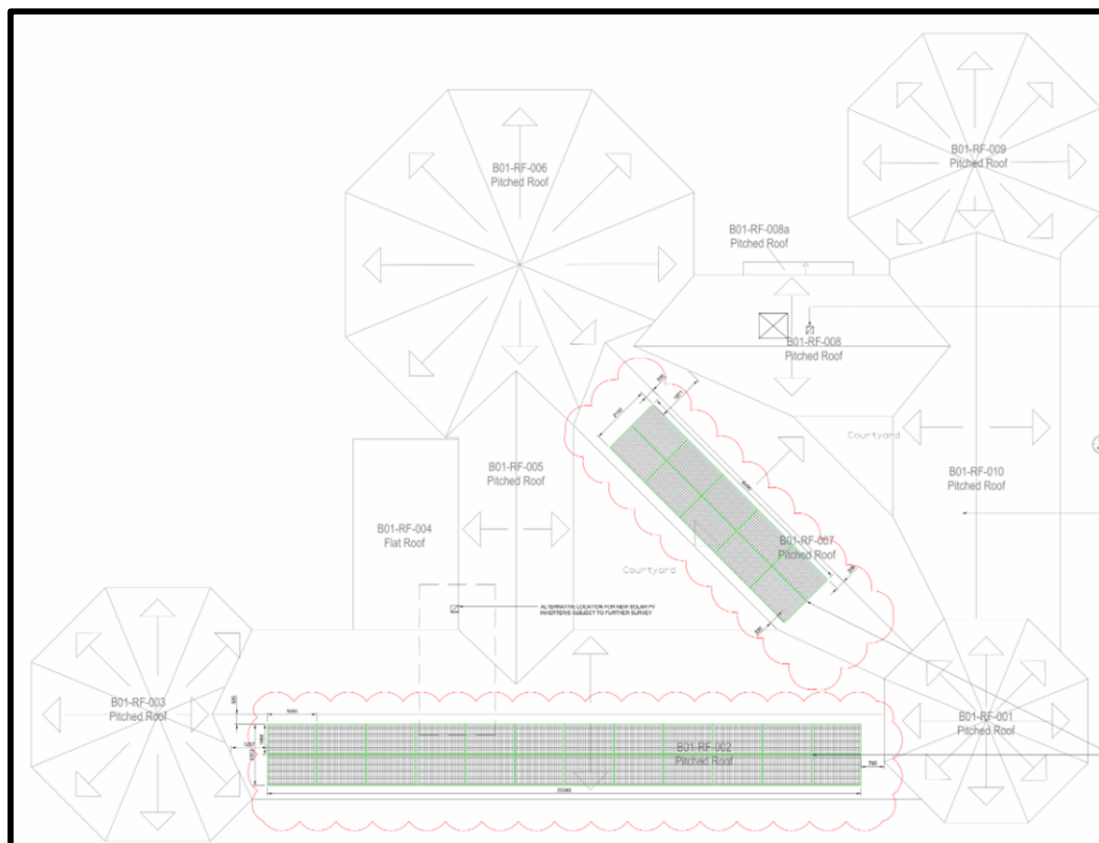


Figure.5 Site plan of proposed PV array

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local responses

None

Consultee responses

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit – No objections.

The application is accompanied by an Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds (Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, 2024) which found the application building to be impacted to have no bat roost suitability, and there to be no other significant ecological constraints on-site.

An assessment of the baseline habitats present on site has been provided within the ecology report. This shows that the site has a baseline value of 0.49 habitat units. Based on current plans, none of the existing habitat will be impacted as a result of the development. As such, the application will be exempt from mandatory BNG under the ‘de minimis’ exemption. However, if plans change and more than 25m² of habitat on site will be removed or degraded (which would include the removal of a single tree), the BNG condition will apply, and a 10% net gain will be required.

Environmental Health - No objections to revised NIA, subject to a noise verification condition being imposed.

Neighbourhood Team Leader (Arboriculture) – No objections. Please note, we would expect the AIA to be strictly adhered to, to ensure there is no adverse impact on the trees on site.

Relevant Planning History

At the application site –

087955/VO/2008/N2 – CITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT Relocation of entrance and installation of single gate to form new access. Approved 17.12.2008.

History of negotiations

The planning officer requested a revised Noise Impact Assessment to be submitted in order to assess the noise impact from the proposed revised installation of 5no. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) with compound and acoustic fencing.

A revised NIA was submitted 30/04/2025 and the application assessed accordingly.

Local Planning Policies

Places for Everyone (2022-2039) – Places for Everyone is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. It has been published by the GMCA on behalf of the nine districts and took effect and became part of the statutory development plan on March 21, 2024.

The PfE Plan and its policies are now a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The PfE Plan and its policies must therefore be given full weight in the planning balance.

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012-2027) - The Core Strategy was adopted on the 11 July 2012 and replaces a large number of policies in Manchester's Unitary Development Plan. Parts of the policies have been superseded by the Places for Everyone Plan.

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (1995) - The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester was adopted in 1995 and has largely been replaced with the policies contained within the Core Strategy. However, there are a number of policies that are extant.

The relevant **Places for Everyone** policies for this application are as follows:

JP-S1 – Sustainable Development
JP-S2 – Carbon and Energy
JP-P1 – Sustainable Places

The relevant **Core Strategy** policies for this application are as follows:

DM 1 – Development Management
SP 1 – Spatial Principles (partially superseded by PfE)
EN 4 – Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development (partially superseded by PfE)
EN 6 – Target Framework for CO2 reductions from low or zero carbon energy supplies (partially superseded by PfE)
EN 7 – Energy Infrastructure opportunities

EN 8 – Adaptation to Climate Change

EN 15 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (partially superseded by PfE)

EN 16 – Air Quality (partially superseded by PfE)

The relevant saved **UDP** policies for this application are:

DC26 – Development and Noise

The relevant supplementary planning guidance documents for this application are:

- The Guide to Development in Manchester SPD

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF (December 2024) sets out broad national policies on themes such as housing, historic environment, town centres, design, climate change and the Green Belt. Central to the broad policy direction contained within the NPPF is the notion of sustainable development; development which effectively balances economic, social and environmental factors. The Local Planning Authority consider the following sections relevant to this proposal.

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Paragraph 8 states *“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*

- a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

Paragraph 98 (d) states that development should *“ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community.”*

Paragraph 135 (f) states that developments *“create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future user and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

Paragraph 167 states *“significant weight [should be given] to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including*

through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights)."

Issues

Principle of development:

The submitted application seeks planning permission for City Council Development for installation of floor mounted air sourced heat pumps and acoustic timber fencing enclosure to the rear and the installation of solar PV panels to pitched roof slopes.

The current heating system would be changed to Air Source Heat and solar panels to the roof would also be installed to the building to further generate electricity for the Sure Start Centre. Both are considered energy efficient methods to heat buildings that would reduce dependence on fossil fuels to heat the building. The proposal would support the Authority in its ambitions to become a Zero Carbon city by 2038, reducing the carbon emissions associated with the operation of the building through the provision of on-site renewable electricity generation subject to the panels and ASHPs not compromising the levels of amenity within the surrounding area.

Given the above, the proposal is considered pursuant to policies JP-S1 and JP-S2 Places for Everyone, policies EN4, EN5, EN7 and EN8 of the Core Strategy (2012), and would help the Sure Start Centre achieve its energy targets. As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable. However, consideration must be given to the proposal's appearance, impact on the visual amenity of the area, impact on the neighbouring properties' residential amenity and issues raised by way of consultation from relevant interested parties.

Impact on visual amenity and the streetscene:

The development involves the installation of solar Photovoltaic array to roof and 5 no. air source heat pumps at a ground floor level, to the northern elevation of the host building together with 3m high acoustic timber fencing.

Given the siting of the ASHP compound, this area would afford limited views from the streetscape, notably Clayton Street (southbound). The proposed timber acoustic fencing enclosure would comprise a standard treated finish, measure 3m in total height and terminate at the eaves level of the application property, fully screening the proposed ASHPs from public view. The installation would involve the removal of a single high-level window, which would be infilled to match existing.

The solar Photovoltaic array is proposed to only two pitched roofs upon the host property at this time, the largest sited along the North Road elevation which would be readily visible from the streetscene and the second array centrally located which would afford glimpsed views.

Overall, the benefits of carbon reduction for the Wells Centre is considered to outweigh any harm to visual amenity as a result of the development. It is considered the proposed development is acceptable in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Places for Everyone policies JP-S1 and JP-S2 and Manchester's Core Strategy, including policies DM1, EN4, EN5, EN7 and EN8, and saved Unitary Development Plan policy DC26.

Impact on residential amenity:

Given the scale, nature and orientation (facing south/southwest) of the proposed solar Photovoltaic array, this element is not considered to give rise to amenity impacts upon neighbouring residential properties due north and east.

The proposed site is set circa 35-55m away from nearest residential occupiers on Flint Close and Clayton Street. The application site is currently in use as a SureStart Children's Centre, which facilitates care and educational facilities to the local families. The neighbouring building operates under an ancillary use.

A revised Noise Impact Assessment Report (rev C) accompanies the application and provides an assessment of atmospheric sound emissions from the proposed installations at the nearest noise sensitive receptor. The report confirms that any impact will be low, therefore achieving the Council's noise criteria requirements. Environmental Health concur the report findings.

The proposed equipment is to be located on the northern side of the existing building at low level. Directly to the north is the site carpark and to the northwest the ancillary Sure Start building and amenity spaces. It is therefore considered that given existing background noise levels and the surrounding environment, the proposed ASHP with acoustic fencing installation is appropriate within this context and would not give rise to any significant impact to the noise environment.

As a safeguard, a condition has been included to ensure a verification report is submitted and agreed in order to confirm the equipment meets with the Council's noise criteria, prior to its first operation.

On the basis, this proposal is considered compliant with saved policy DC26 of the UDP, Policies DM1, SP1 of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework which seek to protect amenity.

Impact on Highway Safety:

The proposed development would not interfere with existing parking arrangements.

These site alterations would enable retention of the pedestrian footpath (approx. 2.3m width) directly north of the proposed ASHP compound and maintain pedestrian access around the Wells Centre Sure Start Centre (see fig.3), as such is considered acceptable in this regard.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have

made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the agent in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1. 3 Year Time Limit

The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Specified drawings and documents

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the documents labelled:

- 'Proposed Photovoltaic Layout Drawing', numbered '3385-CWC-XX-EX-DR-E-6100 T3', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 06/01/2025.
- 'Proposed External Mechanical Services Layout, numbered '3385-CWC-XX-EX-DR-M-5001 T8', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 28/05/2025.
- 'Fencing Elevations', numbered '24622.112 REV A', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 19/05/2025.
- 'Window Block Up Elevation', numbered '24622.105', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 10/12/2024.
- 'Fence Elevation with Notch', numbered '24622.106', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 10/12/2024.
- 'Acoustic Fencing Sections', numbered '06 J7/04172', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 01/11/2024.
- 'Proposed Ground Floor Plan', numbered '24622.103 REV D', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 19/05/2025.
- 'Demolition Plan', numbered '24622.102 REV C', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 19/05/2025.

- Noise Impact Assessment, Ref. R2330-REP01C-JW REV C, (Prepared by Red Acoustics Limited; dated 30/04/2025; received 30/04/2025).

Reason - To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to Policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

3. External plant/equipment/servicing

- a) The scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the measures, as set out in the submitted Red Acoustics Limited, Noise Impact Assessment, Ref. R2330-REP01C-JW REV C, dated 30/04/2025, stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 30/04/2025.

The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development and thereafter retained and maintained in situ.

- b) Prior to the operation of the scheme a verification report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority to validate that the work undertaken throughout the development conforms to the recommendations and requirements in the approved acoustic report. The report shall also undertake post completion testing to confirm that the noise criteria have been met. Any instances of non-conformity with the recommendations in the report shall be detailed along with any measures required to ensure compliance with the agreed noise criteria.

Reason - To minimise the impact of the development and to prevent a general increase in pre-existing background noise levels around the site, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and saved policy DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Informatives:

1. The installation of additional PV arrays on this property would require subsequent planning permission.
2. Protected species can turn up in unexpected places and the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the laws which are in place to safeguard biodiversity. If any protected species is found or suspected on site, the applicant must cease development and seek ecological advice.
3. Planning policy encourages enhancements and net gains for biodiversity to be delivered through the planning system. Wherever possible measures to enhance the site for biodiversity should be secured as part of this planning application and could include integration of bat or bird boxes into the building as per Appendix II of the ecology report.
4. Construction/demolition works shall be confined to the following hours:

Monday - Friday: 7.30am - 6pm

Saturday: 8.30am - 2pm

Sunday / Bank holidays: No work

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
Environmental Health
Neighbourhood Team Leader (Arboriculture)

5 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
3 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
29 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
27 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
23 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
21 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
19 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
17 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
13 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
11 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
1 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
Clayton Health Centre, 89 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4EJ
20 Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
14 Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
9 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
31 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
25 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
15 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH
109 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4NE
Clayton Sure Start And Childrens Centre, Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
4 Mccall Walk, Manchester, M11 4EY
2 Mccall Walk, Manchester, M11 4EY
22 Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
24 Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
18 Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
16 Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
12 Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
10 Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA
7 Flint Close, Manchester, M11 4EH

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Area Team Boundary - Name: NORTH AREA