

Date: 21st December 2023

Our Ref: 23.190

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Town and County Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)
Proposed district heating pipework, substation GRP enclosure and fencing
Birley Field Campus, Manchester Metropolitan University
Planning Portal Ref: PP-12685641

Asbri Planning is appointed as planning agent to Manchester Metropolitan University and Vital Energi in respect of the above planning application for the proposed district heating pipework, substation GRP enclosure and fencing at Birley Field Campus.

The planning application has been submitted via Planning Portal and the submission documents are listed below.

Plans	Reference
Site Location Plan/Planning Application for Trenches and New GRP and Transformer	50744-VE-XX-XX-SI-M-5004
Existing Elevations and View	50744-VE-EC-00-S-M-5002 Rev P0.1
Proposed Elevations	50744-VE-EC-00-S-M-5003 Rev P0.1
Trench Details for District Heating and Borehole Piping	50744-VE-XX-XX-SI-M-5003 Rev P0.1
Substation HV RMU- Transformer Layout	50744-VE-EC-00-DR-E-6201 Rev P2
Baseline Arboricultural Impact Assessment Plan 1	D10100.001
Baseline Arboricultural Impact Assessment Plan 2	D10100.002
Baseline Arboricultural Impact Assessment Plan 3	D10100.003

Document name (reference where appropriate)	Prepared by
Planning application forms (1APP)	Asbri Planning
Cover Letter	Asbri Planning
Construction Phase Plan	Vital Energi

Background and Proposed Development

Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) comprises the integration of water and ground source heat pumps and electric boilers to their existing Energy Centre to aid in decarbonising the Birley Field Campus.

The proposed decarbonisation solution is to retrofit seven heat pumps and two electric boilers to the existing Energy Centre. The heat pumps shall provide the bulk of the Campus heating requirements throughout the year. The two electric boilers shall be used for the purposes of resilience and as contingency should heating demand occasionally exceed heat pump capacity.

The district heating pipework within the campus shall be renewed as the existing piping is nearing life expiry. The pumps are internally located within the Energy Centre and therefore do not require planning permission.

The Ground Source Heat Pumps (6 x 150 kW) shall use borehole water as their primary source of heat, whilst the water source heat pump (1 x 150 kW) shall take heat from the existing chilled water circuit thereby reducing the use of the existing roof mounted chillers.

Borehole water shall be obtained from one existing abstraction borehole and one new abstraction borehole. Borehole pumps forward the water via piping to the Energy centre for use by the ground source heat pumps. The water is then returned to the aquifer via two existing recharge boreholes and one new recharge borehole.

EA permission has been obtained for drilling and testing the abstraction and recharge boreholes. The new boreholes have been drilled and the testing process is due to complete in December 2023 where upon a submission shall be made to the EA for approval for the use of the borehole water scheme.

The heat pumps, electric boilers and associated equipment are to be retrofitted to the campus during 2024 with commissioning planned for late summer 2024.

The new borehole water piping and the new district heating piping shall be located underground and will require trenches to be dug to allow the piping to be positioned. Planning permission is sought for laying the associated district heating piping and borehole water piping.

The scheme will require a new substation GRP enclosure and transformer to be provided between the Energy Centre and the multi storey car park. New 2400mm palisade metallic fencing is also proposed in this area.

Planning Policy Context

National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. As such, it is a material consideration in planning decisions. As per the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interrelated. These are; an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective. As such, a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the core of the NPPF, in order to ensure that sustainable development is achieved in a way in which all three objectives are incorporated. For decision making, this means approving development proposals that are in accordance with an up-to-date development plan.

Paragraph 163 of NPPF states that when determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to significant cutting greenhouse gas emissions;

b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas; and

c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site, and approve the proposal if its impacts are or can be made acceptable.

Local

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The key Development Plan document in the Local Development Framework is the Manchester Core Strategy which was adopted by the Council in July 2012.

A review of the proposals map reveals that the site lies within Central Manchester to inform policies EC8 and H5. It is not subject to any other specific designations or allocations. The following policies contained within the Core Strategy are considered to be of relevance to the proposed development:

Policy Reference	In relation to
EC 8	Central Manchester
H 5	Central Manchester
EN 4	Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development
EN 7	Energy Infrastructure Opportunities
EN 8	Adaptation to Climate Change
EN 9	Green Infrastructure
DM 1	Development Management

Appraisal

As stated above, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section of the Planning Statement aims to identify the main issues of relevance to the determination of the Planning Application, and assess the scheme against the Development Plan.

The key material considerations of relevance in the determination of the application are as follows:

- The principle of development;
- The impact of the development on trees; and
- Access and traffic generation.

Principle of Development

When considering the principle of development, the key policies to be considered within the Core Strategy are EN 4 (Reducing CO₂ Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development) and EN 7 (Energy Infrastructure Opportunities).

Policy EN 4 notes that the Council will seek to reduce growth in CO₂ emissions and confirms that where possible, retrofit projects will be used as a mechanism to help improve energy efficiency and provide low and zero carbon energy supplies to existing buildings. The proposed development will assist Manchester Metropolitan University in decarbonising its Birley Field campus through providing new pipework that will connect boreholes to heat pumps located within the existing Energy Centre to create carbon free heating. The scheme comprises the replacement of existing pipework and retrofit of seven heat pumps. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is in accordance with Policy EN 4 (Reducing CO₂ Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development).

Policy EN 7 (Energy Infrastructure Opportunities) states that there will be a general presumption in favour of low and zero carbon decentralised energy schemes, subject to considerations which will be discussed in turn below:

That any new generating plant capable of producing heat and cooling as well as electricity should be located in a way that facilitates future connection to a local distributed energy system.

The proposed development will retrofit the existing system to aid in decarbonising the Birley Field campus and is therefore already connected to a local distributed energy system,

That any energy centre, including generating plant, standby/boiler plant and substations, shall be located and designed to a high quality so as to integrate with and contribute to the townscape.

The visible features of the proposed development will be limited given that the pipework will be below ground and the heat pumps are all situated inside the existing Energy Centre. The scheme will require a new substation GRP enclosure and fencing. Due to the operational needs of these elements, they are of a standard design but will be positioned between the Energy Centre and multi storey car park. Consequently, they will be primarily screened from the surroundings resulting in no harm to the visual amenity of the area.

Other considerations in the Policy relate to biofuel, the impact of developments on air quality and landscaping character and flood risk. Given the nature of the proposal, these considerations are not considered relevant to the development.

The application is therefore in accordance with Policy EN 7 (Energy Infrastructure Opportunities) of the adopted Core Strategy. In light of the above, the principle of development is firmly established.

Impact of the development on trees

There are a number of mature trees situated within the Birley Field Campus. The application is accompanied by tree constraints plans which demonstrate that the vast majority of these trees are category Bs and Cs. Notwithstanding, there are 4 no. trees of high quality within Category A located sporadically throughout the campus. Plan ref 50744-VE-XX-XX-SI-M-5003 has overlaid the pipework route onto the tree constraints plan and illustrates that the route has

been chosen to limit potential conflict with root protection areas of onsite trees. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the principles contained in Policy EN 9 (Green Infrastructure) of the adopted Core Strategy.

Access and Traffic Generation

The proposed development will result in an increase in traffic during construction but once operational, this will be limited to required maintenance. The application is accompanied by a Construction Phase Plan which sets delivery times and working hours of the construction stage to ensure that there will be no unacceptable impact on local amenity. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM 1 (Development Management) of the adopted Core Strategy.

I trust that the submitted documents allow the application to be validated and look forward to receiving details of the name of the case officer, application reference number and target determination date. If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'G. Jones', written over a horizontal line.

Geraint Jones

Senior Planner