



MAP SCALE 1: 1000
CREATED DATE: 09/04/2024

COMMITTEE DATE 17/04/2024 **WARD** Greenwood and Summit

APP REF V/2023/0459

APPLICANT Paul Parkinson Ashfield District Council

PROPOSAL Increase solar panels on roof and installation of air source heat pump

LOCATION Ashfield District Council, Urban Road, Kirkby in Ashfield, Notts, NG17 8DA

WEB-LINK <https://www.google.com/maps/@53.1002096,-1.2500134,18.58z?entry=ttu>

BACKGROUND PAPERS A, B, E, K

App Registered 08/08/2023 Expiry Date 02/10/2023.

Consideration has been given to the Equalities Act 2010 in processing this application.

This application has been referred to Planning Committee as Ashfield District Council is the applicant.

The Application

This is an application to increase the amount of solar panels on the existing roof of the Council Offices building and the installation of an air source heat pump.

The application site comprises the existing Council Offices building with associated parking. To the north of the site is the Ashfield Community Hospital, to the east are 5 bungalows used by the NHS, to the south are residential properties as well as the Ada Lovelace building which has a number of businesses located within it and to the west is an Aldi supermarket and residential properties.

The solar panels will be located on roof slopes to the rear of the site facing the west and east.

The proposed air source heat pump will be located near the western boundary of the site and will consist of two main elements, firstly a packaged plant room measuring approximately 3.8m in width by 7.6m in length and 3.1m in height. New pipework is proposed to run from the plant room through a trench into the existing plantroom that forms part of the existing building. The pipework will run up the western side of the

building and will be boxed in. The second element is an evaporator which is proposed to be surrounded by fencing for safety. The fencing is proposed to be approximately 4.4m in width by 9.2m in length. When scaled it would appear that the approximate height is proposed to be 2.5m however it is detailed that the height will be 1.8m therefore due to the slight discrepancy it is recommended that a condition be appended to any favourable decision requiring full details of the fencing to be submitted, approved in writing and installed prior to the first use of the proposal. As part of the installation of the equipment the existing flue on the western elevation of the existing building will be removed.

Consultations

A site notice has been posted together with individual notification of surrounding residents.

ADC Environmental Health

- A sound impact assessment is supplied in support of this application and in the executive summary it is stated - The ASHP is expected to result in ambient noise levels incident on the nearest affected façade that are similar to those experienced from the existing heating plant. Noise break-in levels into the adjacent open plan office/reception are expected to be controlled to below typical design levels for this space. Whilst the ASHP may be audible, it is not expected to be intrusive.
- After considering the report and its conclusions it is agreed that the sound impact would be acceptable in the context of this application and recommend that the development as proposed is approved subject to the specifications indicated being met and maintained thereafter.

ADC Ecology

(1st Comments)

- Request that a suitably qualified ecologist be employed to conduct a Preliminary Roost Assessment on all roof sections likely to be affected by the proposed works to assess whether there is potential to impact any bat roosts.
- Also recommend that an assessment for the potential for nesting birds and roosting bats is conducted on the vegetation along the western edge of the car park, where they will likely need to be trimmed or removed to accommodate the proposals.

(2nd Comments)

- Satisfied that all the survey work was carried out in accordance with current best practice guidance. The surveys identified the presence of 2 single bat roosts below the boxed eaves on the southwest side of the building. However, we are satisfied that this area of the building will not be impacted by the proposed solar panel installation.
- Overall impacts to roosting bats are considered unlikely provided that the proposed works are carried out in accordance with the recommendations R1 and R2 in section 6 of the bat survey report prepared by Middlemarch dated

March 2024. Therefore, recommend a condition for the development to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations provided in the bat survey report.

Policy

Having regard to Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the main policy considerations are as follows:

Ashfield Local Plan Review (ALPR) (2002)

ST1 – Development

ST2 – Main Urban Area

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)

Part 2 - Achieving sustainable development.

Part 12 – Achieving well designed and beautiful places.

Part 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.

Relevant Planning History

V/1984/0292 – Use of Land for the Development of 5000m² of Office and 300 Parking Spaces – Conditional

V/1984/0393 – Use Site for Centralised Office Accommodation (5000m²) & 283 Car Parking Spaces – Conditional

V/1984/0664 – Erection of Offices and Associated External Works – Conditional

V/1989/0913 – Extension to Form File Storage Generator and Fuel Storage – Conditional

V/2003/0362 – Installation and Mounting of Roof Array Photovoltaic Cells to Provide Renewable Energy and Green Electricity – Conditional

V/2009/0223 – Solar Panels – Conditional

V/2011/0432 – Installation of Photovoltaic Panels on the South Facing Pitches of the Roof of the Ashfield District Council's Central Offices – Conditional

V/2016/0544 – New Entrance Door and Alterations to External Appearance of Building – Conditional

Main Considerations

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are considered to be:

- Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity

- Highway Safety
- Ecology

Visual Amenity

The proposed development will be located to the side and rear of the existing building therefore the proposal is unlikely to be visible within the street scene of Urban Road.

The solar panels are of a typical design and whilst they will be visible from properties to the west, north and east of the site it is considered unlikely that there would be any impacts on visual amenity.

The proposed air source heat pump will be formed of two parts as discussed and located to the west of the existing building. The ventilated attenuation compound is proposed to be enclosed by a fence as well as the equipment having an Armco barrier erected around it. The proposal will mainly be visible from Aldi car park adjacent to the site however the existing planting to the west boundary is proposed to be retained which will provide a level of screening. Whilst the proposed equipment will be visible to some extent it will not be any higher than the existing garage that it is located adjacent to and due to its siting, it is considered unlikely that it would have any impact on visual amenity that would be detrimental enough to warrant a refusal.

Residential Amenity

The proposed solar panels due to their size and siting are unlikely to give rise to any impacts on nearby neighbouring properties.

The proposed air source heat pump will be sited approximately 40m+ away from the nearest residential property, as the crow flies and approximately 68m+ away from Aldi which is sited to the west of the site. It will however be in proximity to the existing Council Offices building.

Due to the size and siting it is considered that the proposed air source heat pump wouldn't have any impacts on residential properties in terms of overshadowing, overbearing, loss of privacy and overlooking.

In support of the application a Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted. The Council's Environmental Health officer has acknowledged that noise will be emitted from the proposed air source heat pump, however, the assessment suggests that the level of impact on nearby residential properties and the existing Council Offices would be low. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would result in a detrimental impact on the amenity of nearby residents and staff working within the existing council offices building.

Highway Safety

The proposed solar panels are located towards the rear of the building on the existing roof slopes so will not have a detrimental impact on parking or highway safety.

The proposed air source heat pump will be located in what is identified on plans as an existing turning head which may result in any vehicles accessing the side of the building having to reverse into the main area of the car park to be able to leave in a forward gear however it is considered unlikely that the distance they would have to reverse would result in any impact on highway safety that would be detrimental enough to warrant a refusal. In addition to this it should also be noted that the proposal does not seek to remove any of the existing car parking provision.

Ecology

The Councils ecology officer was consulted on the proposal and commented that a Preliminary Roost Assessment should be carried out on all roof sections to be affected by the proposal to assess whether there would be any potential impacts on bat roosts. They also commented that an assessment should be undertaken on the vegetation on the western boundary for the potential for nesting birds and roosting bats. The application does not seek to remove the planting along the boundary and whilst there may be a need to trim them when installing the proposed air source heat pump it is likely that this would not go beyond any usual maintenance likely to be carried out. However, to address the point raised it is recommended that an informative is appended to any favourable decision in relation to bird nesting season and avoiding impacts on nesting birds.

Following on from the initial comments a bat survey was undertaken by Middlemarch and submitted in support of the application. The Councils Ecology Officer was consulted on the report and commented that they were satisfied that all of the survey work had been carried out in accordance with best practice. The survey identified the presence of 2 single bat roosts however they are satisfied that the area of the building in which the roosts were found would not be impacted by the proposed solar panel installation. They considered that the overall impacts to roosting bats are considered unlikely provided that the works are carried out in accordance with the recommendations made within the report.

It is therefore recommended that a condition is appended to any favourable decision requiring the works to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained within the Bat Survey carried out by Middlemarch dated March 2024.

Conclusion :

The introduction of more solar panels along with the installation of an air source heat pump is considered to be a positive contribution to the existing building and will help reduce the Council's carbon footprint in line with the climate change strategy 2021 to 2026.

Having reviewed the submitted information and comments received against all relevant policies and material planning considerations it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have any detrimental impacts on visual amenity, residential amenity, highway safety or ecology.

Recommendation: - Grant Consent Conditionally

CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby approved shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
2. This permission shall be read in accordance with the following plans:
 - Site Location Plan, Dwg No. 1207GF-ADC-08-00-DR-A-001 Rev P01, received 07/08/2023
 - Site Block Plan as Existing & Proposed, Dwg No. 1207GF-ADC-08-00-DR-A-002 Rev P02, received 26/02/2024
 - Roof Plan as Existing & Proposed, Dwg No. 1206GF-ADC-08-RF-DR-A-001 Rev P02, received 26/02/2024
 - Elevations as Existing & Proposed Sheet 1 of 2, Dwg No. 1207GF-ADC-08-ZZ-DR-A-001Rev P03, received 26/02/2024
 - Elevations as Existing & Proposed Sheet 2 of 2, Dwg No. 1207GF-ADC-08-ZZ-DR-A-002 Rev P03, received 26/02/2024
 - Site Plan, Dwg No. P012-8000-02 Rev P01, received 26/02/2024
 - Solar PV Layout, Dwg No. P012-4000-09, received 26/02/2024
 - Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plans, Dwg No. P012-8000-03 Rev P01, received 26/02/2024
 - Existing & Proposed Service Road Elevations, Dwg No. P012-8000-04 Rev P01, received 26/02/2024
 - Existing & Proposed North Elevations, Dwg No. P012-8000-05 Rev P01, received 26/02/2024
 - Existing & Proposed West Elevation, Dwg No. P012-8000-06 Rev P01, received 26/02/2024
 - Existing & Proposed South Elevations, Dwg No. P012-8000-07 Rev P01, received 26/02/2024
 - Ashfield District Council Central Offices; Sound Impact Assessment, Clarke Saunders Acoustics, dated February 2024, received 26/02/2024

The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with these plans unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

3. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations R1 and R2 provided in section 6 of the bat surveys report prepared by Middlemarch dated March 2024.
4. Notwithstanding the submitted information, prior to the first use of the development, details of the fencing proposed to enclose the proposed evaporator shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to first use of the development.

REASONS

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.
2. To ensure that the development takes the form envisaged by the Local Planning Authority when determining the application.
3. In the interests of Ecology.
4. To protect and safeguard the visual amenity of the area.

INFORMATIVE

1. The applicant/developer is strongly advised to ensure compliance with all planning conditions, if any, attached to the decision. Failure to do so could result in LEGAL action being taken by the Ashfield District Council at an appropriate time, to ensure full compliance. If you require any guidance or clarification with regard to the terms of any planning conditions then do not hesitate to contact the Development & Building Control Section of the Authority on Mansfield (01623 450000).
2. In order to avoid impacts to nesting birds, all tree/shrub/hedgerow/scrub and rough grassland removal work be undertaken outside of the bird-breeding season (March-September inclusive). If works are to be carried out during this time then a suitably qualified ecologist should be on site to survey for nesting birds prior to any vegetation clearance. As you will be aware all nesting birds', birds' nests, young and eggs (except pest species) are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Nesting is taken to be from the point at which birds start to build a nest, to the point at which the last chick of the last brood of the season has fully fledged and left the nesting area.