

Application Number:	P/FUL/2023/02398		
Webpage:	Planning application: P/FUL/2023/02398 - dorsetforyou.com (dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)		
Site address:	Hillside First School Hillside Road Verwood BH31 6HE		
Proposal:	Installation of an air source heat pump and erection of 3m high acoustic barrier		
Applicant name:	Mr Bowell		
Case Officer:	Steve Clothier		
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Coombs, Cllr Flower and Cllr Gibson		
Publicity expiry date:	12 July 2023	Officer site visit date:	16 May 2023
Decision due date:	15 September 2023	Ext(s) of time:	15 September 2023

1. Reason for Committee Consideration

Land owned by Dorset Council

2.0 Summary of recommendation:

GRANT subject to conditions

3.0 Reason for the recommendation: as set out in Section 16 of this report

- The location of the proposed air source heat pump is considered to be discrete and is acceptable in its design and general visual impact.
- There is not considered to be any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenity.
- There are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application.

4.0 Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	The school is located in the settlement boundary where the principle of an air source heat pump is acceptable and sustainable.

Scale, design, impact on character and appearance	The units and acoustic barrier would be set against this large school complex where their impact would be modest.
Impact on amenity	The only amenity impact would be in terms of noise. A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted which has been the subject of comments from the Environmental Health Officer who recommends a condition to secure the proposed mitigation measures.

5.0 Description of Site

- 5.1 This school site is located to the north of the settlement of Verwood at the northern end of Hillside Road. Some of the northern part of the site lies within the Green Belt although the main school buildings complex is within the settlement boundary. The main entrance to the school is accessed from Hillside Road where there is a car park and access to the reception area.
- 5.2 Established residential properties of a variety of designs and sizes lie to the south and west of the school. The site itself is relatively level around the vicinity of the proposals including the car park and adjacent road.

6.0 Description of Development

- 6.1 This proposal is to replace the existing school boiler with an air source heatpump which would be located on the south façade of the building in a corner formed by the main building and a projecting front wing. The two units would each be a maximum of 1.71 metres high with a depth of 0.75 m and width of 1.98 m set inside a 3m high acoustic fence with a pedestrian gated access. Note - the plans have been amended since the original submission to include the acoustic fence in line with the recommendation of the Environmental Health Officer.

Materials specified for the acoustic barrier are white powder coated frame and posts with buff colour panels.

7.0 Relevant Planning History

This site has a lengthy planning history which is not relevant to the consideration of this proposal. The most recent planning permission is:

3/17/0484 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 20/04/2017

Demolish 2 single and 1 double temporary classroom and erect a modular building containing 4 classrooms and toilets. Construct new hard play area.

8.0 List of Constraints

Settlement Boundary; Verwood.

Dorset Council Land (Freehold): Hillside First School, Hillside Road, Verwood

9.0 Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

Natural England – no objection

Bournemouth Water Ltd – no comment or objection

Dorset Council Trees (East & Purbeck) – no objection

Dorset Council Environmental Services – Protection – no objection subject to a condition to secure the mitigation measures recommended in the Noise Impact Assessment.

Verwood Town Council – no objection

Ward Member- Cllr Gibson – supports this application.

Representations received

A site notice was posted outside the site on the 12/05/2023 with an expiry date for consultation 22 days from the date of the notice. One representation was received asking exactly where the pump is to be located, what are the likely operating hours, what the anticipated noise level will be, how will it impact on their property and is it environmentally friendly. The Case Officer responded to these comments on the 27th June 2023, no further comments have been received.

10.0 Duties

s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

11.0 Relevant Policies

Development Plan

Adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan:

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

KS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

KS2- Settlement hierarchy

HE2 - Design of new development

ME5 – Sources of renewable energy

Saved policy DES2- Criteria for development to avoid unacceptable impacts from types of pollution, of the East Dorset Local Plan 2002.

Material considerations

Emerging Dorset Council Local Plan:

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the Draft Dorset Council Local Plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Other relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4. Decision taking: Para 38 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 126 – 136 advise that:

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

- Section 14 'Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change'

12.0 Human rights

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

13.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have "due regard" to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have "regard to" and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

The proposed air source heat pumps and acoustic fence will not impact materially on anyone with a protected characteristic.

14.0 Financial benefits

None relevant

15.0 Environmental Implications

The proposal will lead to a reduced carbon footprint by decarbonising the school estate.

16.0 Planning Assessment

16. The main planning considerations for this application are:
- Principle of development
 - Scale, design and impact on character and appearance
 - Impact on amenity

Principle of development

17. As this site lies within the settlement boundary of Verwood the principle of the proposed air source heat pumps is acceptable. Local Plan Policy ME5 encourages the sustainable generation of energy from renewable and low carbon sources where adverse social, environmental, and visual impacts have been minimised to an acceptable level.

Scale, design and impact on character and appearance

18. The location of the air source heat pumps and acoustic fence at the front of the school buildings would mean that they would be visible in the public realm. However, they would be seen against the walls of the school with the car park in front of them and would appear very much as subservient features particularly having regard to the visual screening that would be provided by the acoustic fence. While they would have a utilitarian appearance, they would be modest in size when compared to the school buildings as a whole and would be acceptable features in this context, particularly bearing in mind the benefits of sustainable energy provision. These comments would also apply to the proposed security mesh fencing.
19. In conclusion, on this matter it is considered that the proposals would be appropriate in accordance with policy HE2 given the site context and the benefits achieved.

Impact on amenity

20. The proposed air source heat pumps and associated security fencing would be located well away from neighbouring residential property (the closest being about 30 metres away) such that they would have no adverse neighbour impacts in terms of light or shadowing. The only potential impact that has been identified is that relation to potential noise nuisance.
21. A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) has been submitted which has identified that the closest residential properties are Nos. 9 and 10 Hillside Road.
22. The report has been the subject of consultation with the Environmental Health Officer who has raised no objection to the proposals subject to a condition that secures the mitigation measures proposed in the NIA. The NIA has been undertaken in the context of recently published CIEH/loA Professional Guidance Note: Heat Pumps (Nov.2022). The plans have been amended to include the acoustic fence which would ensure that the predicted noise rating

levels at the two closest residential properties identified would be below the target limit of LAR 35 dB (LAR 26 dB) These would ensure that any noise impacts would be limited to a level which would not harmfully impact on neighbouring amenity in accordance with policy HE2 and saved policy DES2.

17.0 Conclusion

The proposed air source heat pumps and acoustic fence are acceptable in principle with no adverse implications for visual amenity or for occupants of neighbouring properties.

18.0 Recommendation

Grant, subject to conditions

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

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

577-P-01 Location Plan

577-P-02 Block Plan

577-P-05 Proposed Elevations & Plant Plan

577-P-04B Proposed floorplan and fence elevation

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Prior to the development hereby approved being first brought into use the 3m acoustic fence shown on drawing no. 577-P-04B must be installed. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and the noise attenuation measures including the acoustic fence shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In order to protect the living conditions of surrounding residential properties.

Informative Notes:

1. Informative: National Planning Policy Framework Statement

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant/agent was updated of any issues and provided with the opportunity to address issues identified by the case officer.

2. Please check that any plans approved under the building regulations match the plans approved in this planning permission or listed building consent. Do not start work until revisions are secured to either of the two approvals to ensure that the development has the required planning permission or listed building consent.

3. We would advise applicant to follow guidance: [heat-pumps-briefing-note-professional-advice-note.pdf](#) (cieh.org).