Agenda Item	A12
Application Number	21/00325/FUL
Proposal	Installation of air source heat pumps and associated infrastructure and erection of fencing and compound area
Application site	Salt Ayre Sports Centre, Doris Henderson Way, Heaton With Oxcliffe Lancaster
Applicant	Lancaster City Council
Agent	Will Swarbrick
Case Officer	Mr David Forshaw
Departure	No
Summary of Recommendation	Approval

(i) Procedural Matters

This form of development would normally be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation. However, Lancaster City Council is the applicant, and as such the application must be determined by the Planning Regulatory Committee.

1.0 Application Site and Setting

1.1 The site of this installation is at the eastern end of the sports centre building furthest from the main vehicular entrance. It is currently part of the paved pedestrian area between the building and car park.

1.2 It is wholly contained within the grounds of the sports centre. The nearest housing is approximately 70m away on Brindle Close with the sports centre building between and approximately 82m away on Brindle Mews separated by public open space and mature trees along the route of a footpath.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 The proposal is to site 3 air source heat pumps (ASHP) and 2 thermal buffer tanks on a concrete plinth in a compound measuring approximately 186 sq.m in area. Each ASHP is contained within a 7.2m x 2.2m x 2.4m high box constructed of metal finished in goosewing grey. On top of each box are 8 fans pointing upwards. Each ASHP is connected to the building by two pipes. The thermal buffer tanks are cylindrical with a diameter of 1.8m and 2m high and also finished in goosewing grey metal. The compound will be irregular in shape with maximum dimensions of 20.3m x 11.3m formed by solid timber feather edged fencing 2.6m high with pedestrian and vehicle access gates. The timber will be pre-treated and left in its natural colour.

2.2 The ASHP system will provide the sports centre with full heating capacity to replace the existing dilapidated natural gas boilers. The ASHPs work by absorbing heat from the air into a fluid at low temperature. The fluid passes through a compressor which increases its temperature. The higher temperature is then transferred to the heating and hot water circuits in the leisure centre. The system

runs on electricity with efficiencies of between 200% and 400% depending on the external ambient temperature.

2.3 An application has also been received to site solar photo voltaic (PV) panels on part of the former Salt Ayre landfill site west of the sports centre (application number 21/00256/FUL). The aim is to have the solar PV provide the majority of the ASHP's daytime electricity consumption in summer, autumn and spring but only a small percentage in winter and during the night. At times where there is insufficient electricity generation from the Solar PV, or if the solar PV scheme does not go ahead, the ASHPs will run off mains electricity.

2.4 Without the solar PV, the ASHP system will initially provide over a 25% reduction in the sports centre's carbon emissions, which will only increase as the National Grid is decarbonised, so that even without further interventions, the sports centre should be 100% green by 2050 (assuming government targets are reached). With the solar PV installed along with the ASHPs the initial carbon emission reduction will be over 50%.

2.5 Capital cost for both the ASHPs and PV are being funded by Salix. If the PV side of the project does not to go ahead, the Salix funding for the ASHPs would not be affected. The only implication for the ASHP project, should the solar PV not be built, is an increase in electricity costs in running the sports centre.

3.0 Site History

3.1 A number of relevant applications relating to the sports centre have previously been received by the Local Planning Authority. These include:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
20/01053/VCN	Erection of an extension, alterations to the main entrance and construction of a jump tower with a briefing cabin (pursuant to the variation of condition 2 on planning permission 17/00181/VCN to retain the proposed frontage)	Pending decision
19/00688/FUL	Change of use of car park and public space to the front of the sports centre to children's playground, outdoor activity area and mini golf area	Application Permitted
18/00484/FUL	Erection of a single storey extension and bin store and creation of a seated area and children's playground/outdoor activity area to the front	Application Permitted
17/00181/VCN	Erection of an extension, alterations to the main entrance and construction of a jump tower with a briefing cabin (pursuant to the variation of conditions 2 and 3 on planning permission 16/00552/FUL to amend the proposed extension elevations with the addition of louvres)	Application Permitted
16/00552/FUL	Erection of an extension, alterations to the main entrance and construction of a jump tower with a briefing cabin	Application Permitted
11/01076/DPA	Installation of photovoltaic solar panels to roof slopes	Application Permitted

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and internal consultees:

Consultee	Response
Environmental Health	Agrees with the submitted noise assessment that providing the plant is installed as shown on the plans, including the 2.6m high solid timber fence no adverse effect due to noise will be experienced at the nearest noise sensitive receptor in Brindle Mews.

4.2 No responses from neighbours have been received at the time of writing. Any comments received will be verbally reported.

5.0 Analysis

5.1 The key considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- The Council's climate change agenda and sustainable development
- Effects on Amenity
- Visual appearance
- Ecology
- Loss of functional space

5.2 The Council's climate change agenda and sustainable development (SPLA policy SP1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development; DM29: Key Design Principles; DM30: Sustainable Design; DM53: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; NPPF Section 14)

5.2.1 The Council is committed to reducing its own carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 while supporting the district in reaching net zero by 2050. The Salt Ayre Leisure Centre is the largest CO_2 emitter in the Council's building and property portfolio. It is also responsible for over a tenth of the Council's carbon emissions. The ASHPs, in conjunction with other planned improvements to the leisure centre, will drastically reduce CO_2 emissions.

5.2.2 There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development in development plan policies and the NPPF. DM DPD policy DM53 actively supports proposals for renewable and low carbon energy schemes and therefore the proposal is acceptable in principle, subject to site specific issues relating to amenity, appearance, ecology and loss of space at the leisure centre, which are discussed below.

5.3 Effects on Amenity (DMDPD policies DM27 Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities; DM29: Key Design Principles; DM53: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy)

5.3.1 The single storey installation will not give rise to any adverse impact on neighbours from its location, size or appearance. The ASHPs and tank will be screened from ground floor views from the nearest facing housing on Brindle Mews by the compound fencing and views from upper floors will be mitigated by intervening trees and distance.

5.3.2 It is expected that the pumps will operate primarily during the operational hours of the centre (typically 06:00 to 22:00 during normal times) and tick over at a low level overnight. The submitted noise survey states the noise level will not create nuisance for occupiers of the nearest residential properties in Brindle Mews during the day or night (if used 24 hours) provided the solid screen fencing is erected and maintained. This can be conditioned.

5.4 Visual Appearance (DMDPD policies DM27 Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities; DM29: Key Design Principles; DM53: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; NPPF section 12)

5.4.1 The ASHPs, tank and pipes will be wholly screened by the solid timber fencing. The compound is located at the rear of the main sports centre building and is vastly subservient to it. Although visible from the car park, footpath and open space to the north and housing beyond, the fencing is sympathetic being made of timber and does not appear industrial and harsh as a result. The visual appearance is considered acceptable.

5.5 Ecology (DMDPD policies DM27 Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities; DM53: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; NPPF section 15)

5.5.1 There are no ecological implications of locating the compound on the existing paved area immediately rear of the main building.

5.6 Loss of Functional Space (DMDPD policy DM27 Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities)

5.6.1 The site is part of a larger open paved area which provides amenity circulation space around the sports centre. Loss of this space will not adversely affect the use of the wider grounds or the link between the building and the car park.

6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

6.1 The development is welcomed as a major contribution towards meeting the council's response to the climate change emergency. There are no significant negative impacts from the proposal so the recommendation is for the application to be approved.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

Condition no.	Description	Type
1	Standard 3 year timescale	Control
2	Approved plans	Control
3	Installation and Retention of Fencing	Control

Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

In accordance with the above legislation, Lancaster City Council has made the recommendation in a positive and proactive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with the applicant to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The recommendation has been made having had regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the officer report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance.

Background Papers
None