

Recommendation Report for Planning Permission

REF NO: LU/245/25/PL

LOCATION: White Meadows Primary School
Whitelea Road
Littlehampton
BN17 7JL

PROPOSAL: A portion of the existing gas-fired boiler plant will be fully removed and replaced with a new air source heat pump system. This application is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	It is proposed to decommission and remove a portion of the gas boiler system and provide 2 no. air source heat pumps to an externally to the building.
SITE AREA	23246 sqm.
TOPOGRAPHY	Predominantly flat.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	Timber fence, hedging and built form.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	Primary School.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	Residential.
Noted.	

REPRESENTATIONS

Littlehampton Town Council - Support.

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

Noted.

CONSULTATIONS

CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED:

Environmental Health - No objection
- No objection subject to the recommendations and mitigation measures found in the Noise Assessment (J005963-9227-TD-01 dated 17th December 2025) being secured.

COMMENTS ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Comments noted.

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:
 Built Up Area Boundary
 2km Buffer Zone SSSI
 Mineral Consultation Area
 Pockets of high surface water flooding on site.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031:

DDM1	D DM1 Aspects of form and design quality
DDM4	D DM4 Extensions and alter to exist builds (res and non-res)
DSP1	D SP1 Design
ECCSP2	ECC SP2 Energy and climate change mitigation
QEDM1	QE DM1 Noise Pollution
QESP1	QE SP1 Quality of the Environment

Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan 2014 Policy 1 The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan 2014 Policy 2 A Spatial Plan for the Town

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance

POLICY COMMENTARY

The Development Plan consists of the Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031, West Sussex County Council's Waste and Minerals Plans, The South Inshore & South Offshore Marine Plan and Made Neighbourhood Development Plans. The policies are published under Regulations 19 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant Development Plan policies in that the provision of decarbonised energy producing technology will not harm the character or appearance of the site or wider area, nor will it harm the amenities of local residents.

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that

(2) in dealing with an application for planning permission the authority shall have regard to -

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,
- (aza) a post examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,
- (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and

(c) any other material considerations.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no other material considerations to be weighed in the balance with the Development Plan.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

This application is not liable for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as there will be a de minimis impact on habitats and species.

CONCLUSIONS

PRINCIPLE

The site is within the Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB), where the principle of development is supported by Arun Local Plan Policy SD SP2.

Policy 1 of the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Development Plan states that permission should be granted where applications accord with the relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. It also sets out circumstances where applications that conflict with Policy 1 would be acceptable.

Policy 2 of the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to focus development within the built-up area boundary.

The principle of development is therefore established.

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The portion of the gas-fired boiler to be removed is located within the school's basement and will not impact the visual appearance of the area or the appearance of the school itself.

The two new air source heat pumps (ASHPs) to be installed will be located to the rear of the existing building and will not be visible from any public viewpoints. As such, they will not have an adverse impact on the character of the area.

The ASHPs will be contained within an acoustic enclosure. The enclosure will measure approximately 5.2m by 4m and 3.35m in height.

Although not architecturally attractive, given the overall scale of the development when compared to the host building and its use, the proposal will be subservient and not incongruous within its setting.

The proposal complies with Arun Local Plan policies D DM1 and D DM4.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The ASHPs will be positioned adjacent to the rear elevation/playing field of the school and will be surrounded on three sides by residential properties. There is a minimum distance of 53m from the rear elevations of dwellings in Westway, 105m from the rear of dwellings in Manning Road, and 106m from properties in Wick Farm Road. A noise assessment has been provided with the application, which has correctly identified the nearest sensitive receptors.

The Noise Assessment indicates that, subject to an acoustic enclosure being provided, noise emitted from the ASHPs would be less than both the daytime and night-time background noise levels.

Environmental Health has confirmed that the assessment is acceptable and has raised no objections.

Due to the limited size and scale of the development, it will not be overbearing or cause overshadowing to neighbouring residents.

The proposal is compliant with Arun Local Plan policies D DM4 and QE DM1 in these respects.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The proposal will decommission an existing gas-fired boiler and replace it, at least in part, with an energy-efficient air source heat pump (ASHP). Arun Local Plan Policy ECC SP2 is supportive of such retrofits, subject to consideration against relevant design policies. Consideration must also be given to site constraints, technical and financial viability, and the delivery of additional benefits.

It is assumed that the proposal is both technically and financially viable. Consideration has already been given to the site's constraints, which are essentially limited to its location within a residential area. The ASHP will contribute towards objectives including the decarbonisation of the operation of the site. In conjunction with the existing solar panels, this is also likely to result in cost savings associated with heating and powering the building.

The proposal accords with Arun Local Plan Policy ECC SP2.

SUMMARY

It is recommended to approve the proposal with the following conditions and informatives.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The Council in making a decision should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as Arun District Council to act in a manner, which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Consideration has been specifically given to Article 8 (right to respect private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). It is not considered that the recommendation for approval of the grant of permission in this case interferes unreasonably with any local residents' right to respect for their private and family life and home, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation for approval is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

DUTY UNDER THE EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Duty under the Equalities Act 2010

In assessing this proposal the following impacts have been identified upon those people with the following protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).

The proposal would have a neutral impact on the protected characteristics.

CIL DETAILS

This application is not CIL liable as other development.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE CONDITIONALLY

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

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

1. Proposed Floor Plans (Location and Block Plans) WMP01-E3C-50-00G-DR-M-004 Rev C02
2. Proposed Heat Pump Enclosure Elevations WMP01-E3C-50-00G-DR-M-002 Rev C02
3. Product Specification

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of amenity and the environment in accordance with Arun Local Plan policies D DM1 and QE DM1.

- 3 The air source heat pumps hereby approved shall not be brought into use until a solid acoustic enclosure has been installed in full accordance with the Noise Impact Assessment (section 5.3) prepared by Philip Dunbavin Acoustics Ltd (Ref: J005963-9277-TD-01, dated 17 December 2025).

The acoustic enclosure shall thereafter be retained and maintained in effective working order for the lifetime of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The applicant should review the Planning Noise Advice Document - Sussex, November 2023: <https://www.arun.gov.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjjm4n19846.pdf&ver=24686>.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents in accordance with Arun Local Plan policy QE DM1.

- 4 Based on the information available, this permission is exempt from the requirement to provide a biodiversity gain plan under Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The following exemption applies:

This planning permission is de-minimis as the development does not impact an onsite priority habitat and the development impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has a biodiversity value greater than zero and less than then 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.

Reason: In accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 5 **INFORMATIVE:** Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning

permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the NPPF.