

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	25/00661/FUL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Lee Osborne
<u>WARD:</u>	Northwood	<u>PARISH:</u>	
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Vacant grass verge adjacent to Moss End Way, Knowsley Industrial Park, Kirkby		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	ERECTION OF 1NO. BATTERY STORAGE FACILITY.		

Site Description

The site is a small grassed triangular area of land on Moss End Way adjacent the junction with Depot Road at the north end of Knowsley Industrial Park. Around the site is adopted footpath and the site itself is adopted highway (although grassed). There is a commercial site adjoining the footpath to the rear of the site, bounded by palisade fencing.

Proposal

This application seeks permission for a 200kW (800kWhr) Energy Storage System (ESS) to be located on this grassed triangle of land. The ESS imports electricity from the local electricity network when demand for electricity is low or when there are high levels of renewable energy available. It then exports that electricity back to the grid when required during periods of high demand.

The ESS would connect into the low voltage (LV) electricity network, the lowest and most local point in the distributed system, where there is increasing demand for electricity with the electrification of transport and heating systems. Stored electricity from the ESS would be exported and consumed locally. The ESS would not directly connect to existing wind or solar farms; it would connect directly to the local electricity network.

An average home uses around 1kWh in any given hour. The ESS would store 800kWh and has the potential to power 200 homes for four hours where there is a disruption to the supply to an area.

The ESS units together with a grid interface cabinet would sit on concrete 5.98m x 2.75m, and 2.46m high green mesh fencing would extend south eastwards from the ESS units and beyond the concrete base a total of 2.1m and would slightly wider than the width of the combined units/cabinet, to secure the units where accessed for maintenance. The units/cabinet would be 2.45m high from ground level (including base and plinth depths). The development would be 1.5m from the footpath at the rear

Consultations

Highway Authority – Object on grounds that proposal would result in unacceptable risk to highway safety for the following reasons:

- Sites immediate proximity to the highway
- The legal prohibition on stopping on the Red Route
- The absence of any safe or lawful maintenance or emergency access

arrangements

- Increased safety risk to nearby businesses and road users
- The placement of hazardous operational plant on adopted highway land.

Environmental Health – No objections, requests fixed plant noise condition and construction details conditions plus contaminated land advisory.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority - Gives informative.

United Utilities Water Ltd - Gives informative.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 12 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice. No representations have been received.

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles

CS7 – Transport Networks

CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

CS23 – Renewable and low Carbon Infrastructures

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

EC3 - Primarily Industrial Areas

ENV2 - Noise and Vibration

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating with the applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

The proposal is for small scale energy storage units on a grassed triangular piece of land within the Industrial Park and is acceptable in principle.

Design and Visual Amenity Considerations

The development is relatively modest in area. The proposed green mesh fencing is acceptable in the street scene and commonly found along sites with highway frontage (including school sites in residential areas). Whilst the proposal would be set back from the carriageway and junction it would constitute clutter in the street scene and eat into the grass verge, one of the few remaining grass verges in the industrial park. As such the development would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the locality and the street scene.

The application complies with Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Cor Strategy and Saved Policy EC3 of the UDP.

Highway Considerations

The proposed battery storage compound is shown to be located on a grass verge that forms part of the adopted public highway, as confirmed by the Council's highway adoption records. A publicly adopted footpath surrounds the adopted grass verge. The Highway Authority does not support this proposed battery storage facility.

With the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound positioned adjacent to the carriageway, and with a Lithium-ion energy storage system proposed to be used for the electricity storage there would be no safe separation distance. Lithium-ion energy storage systems present recognised risks including thermal runaway, high-temperature fire, explosive pressure release, and projection of debris and toxic smoke. Any such event at the proposed site location would have an immediate impact on the public highway. Such an event would endanger drivers, pedestrians, HGV operators and nearby workers. The applicant's submitted Planning Statement provides no site-specific fire safety assessment, no emergency response strategy and no justification for situating a high-risk installation beside a live highway.

Moss End Way is a Red Route where stopping is prohibited at all times. The proposed compound provides no internal space for maintenance vehicles, operational vehicles or emergency responders. This would result in all servicing, inspections or emergency attendance requiring vehicles to stop on the Red Route, which is in contradiction to the TRO in place, would be unsafe and would create an immediate hazard to other road users.

The constrained verge, close fencing and zero standoff would mean emergency

vehicles have no safe position from which to respond to an incident at the proposed facility. The absence of safe emergency access represents a critical and unresolvable highway safety failure.

The proposal places operational plant within the adopted public highway. Both the LPA and the Local Highway Authority cannot support development that would be located on highway land where it would introduce a highway safety risk, obstructs lawful highway use and/or prevents safe maintenance and emergency access. The development as proposed would therefore compromise the safe operation of the highway and is not supported. The permanent occupation of operational plant such as that proposed within the adopted highway boundary would contribute to the prevention of the highway from performing its primary function and would compromise the maintenance and safe operation of the highway.

Due to the site constraints of proximity to the carriageway, and the Red Route designation, the concerns raised above cannot be mitigated within the existing highway geometry.

The proposal as can be seen above would conflict with Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Core Strategy

Amenity Considerations

Due to residential properties located on Depot Road it would be prudent to require a fixed plant noise condition to ensure that the development did not adversely impact on those properties if planning permission were granted. No other amenity concerns are raised.

The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies CS2, CS7 and CS19 of the Core Strategy.

BNG

The developed site area is less than the BNG threshold of 25 m² and therefore is BNG exempt.

Conclusion

The proposal is relatively small scale and modest in size. However the site is located on a grass verge within the adopted highway and would eat into that verge which is one of the few remaining verges within the industrial park and would constitute clutter within the street scene. As such taking these points into consideration the proposal would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area and the street scene and therefore conflict with Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Core Strategy and Saved Policy EC3 of the UDP.

Furthermore the proposal would result in an unacceptable risk to highway safety due to:

- The site's immediate proximity to the highway
- The legal prohibition on stopping on the Red Route and the safety issues if such occurred.
- The absence of any safe or lawful maintenance or emergency access arrangements.
- The increased safety risk to nearby businesses and road users as a result of the

- The placement of potentially hazardous operational plant on adopted highway land.

Recommendation

- 1) The proposed battery electrical storage facility would result in unacceptable risk to highway safety, both pedestrian and vehicular, due to the technology proposed to be utilised by the facility and the location in close proximity to the carriageway and footway, together with the legal prohibition of stopping on the Red Route, and the absence of any safe maintenance or emergency access arrangements. Should any of the identified risks associated with lithium-ion energy storage systems become an issues then the impacts of such on the local area due to the location and identified issues associated with the proximity of the highway and Red Route would be dangerous and detrimental to such a degree to vehicles, pedestrians and employees on nearby sites that the refusal of planning permission is justified for public health and highway safety reasons. As such the application conflicts with Policies CS2, CS7 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016.
- 2) The proposed battery storage unit would eat into a grass verge which gives a sense of spaciousness in the street at the Moss End Way / Depot Road junction and is one of the last remaining grass verges within the industrial park. The scale, nature and location of the proposed works would introduce significant visual clutter to this area of the street scene to the detriment of the street scene and the visual amenity of the area. As such the application conflicts with Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and Saved Policy EC3 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006.

Signed Authorising Officer²: **Jo Sheridan**

² I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

Date:

24/04/2026
