

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	25/00510/FUL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Reece Black
<u>WARD:</u>	Stockbridge	<u>PARISH:</u>	Knowsley Parish Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	56 Highfield Road, Huyton, Knowsley		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	INSTALLATION OF AN AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP TO FRONT ELEVATION OF PROPERTY.		

Site Description

The application site is located at 56 Highfield Road, Huyton, and is situated within a Primary Residential Area in the Local Plan Policies Map. The application property is a 2.5 storey, semi-detached dwellinghouse, served by a dual-pitched roof, which contains a number of small dormer windows. The property is brick facing to its elevations and includes white UPVC openings and brown, flat roof tiles. The plot is largely rectangular.

The application property benefits from an adjoining garage. The front elevation of the property is set-back from the street scene by 2.3m. There is hedgerow adjacent the public footpath. The site is located within an established residential area.

Proposal

The proposal is for the installation of 1 no. air source heat pump (ASHP) to the front elevation of the property.

The ASHP would have dimensions of 0.9m (width) x 1.3m (height) x 0.6m (depth). The ASHP would be sited 0.25m from front elevation of the application property and located adjacent the front entrance to the property. The proposed ASHP would be constructed from a polymer shroud and would be anthracite grey (RAL colour 7016).

The submitted Manual Sound Calculation completed as part of the assessment (MCS 020(a)) predicts that based on the normal operating level has predicted a noise level at the nearest habitable room window at the neighbouring dwelling (No.58 Highfield Road) calculated at 37.1dB(A).

Consultations

Environmental Health (Knowsley Council): - No objections, subject to a condition on the fixed plant associated with the ASHP is below 5dB(A) below existing background noise.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 7 neighbours. No representations have been received.

Planning History

No relevant recorded planning history.

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that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear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.

The site is identified as a site allocated for housing development in the adopted Unitary Development Plan. As such, a domestic extension to the existing residential property is considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with local planning policy and guidance.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

- CS2 - Development Principles
- CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
- CS22 - Sustainable and Low Carbon Development
- CS23 - Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure

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

- H5 - Development within Primarily Residential Areas

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SPD's)

- Householder Development SPD (2016)

Article 35 Statement

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 National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

Saved Policy H5 'Development within Primarily Residential Areas' in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan states that *proposals for development within Primarily Residential Areas will be permitted provided that:*

New development within the Primarily Residential Areas (or proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of existing buildings) which is for uses appropriate to a residential area will be permitted provided that the development (either by itself or in conjunction with other developments) would not:

- a) Have an unacceptable impact on the amenity occupiers by reason of noise, disturbance, overlooking, visual intrusion, smells, fumes, on-street parking or other causes; or,*
- b) Adversely affect the character or street scene of the area.*

The NPPF (Paragraph 167) states that Local Planning Authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).

DESIGN AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The application property is paired with No.58 Highfield Road and adjacent to No.54 Highfield Road. The ground floor window to the front elevation of No.58 is understood to serve a kitchen and would be located 4.5m from the proposed ASHP. The first-floor windows to the application property are not indicated to be severely affected by the proposal; the closest window is understood to serve a habitable room, likely a bedroom and although would be located 3.4m from the ASHP, the porch canopy partially obstructs to a degree that any produced noise would be reduced and the noise assessment stipulates that this window would be less affected than the ground floor kitchen window. The furthest first-floor window serves a hallway landing which is not a habitable room and therefore has not been surveyed. It is important to consider that the proposed ASHP is designed for domestic use.

The Councils' Environmental Health Team have been consulted on the application and have not raised objection. The Officer has outlined that the normal operating noise level of the ASHP is reported to be 53.5dB(A), however could occasionally reach a higher level of 58dB(A) but this is only during the 'defrost cycle' which operates intermittently (dependent on weather conditions) and for a short duration. The submitted Planning Statement states that the "A rated sound power level of the heat pump is not its usual operating noise and only occurs intermittently, usually less than 5% of the time, for example when its really cold or during the disinfection or hot water cycle."

The Officer has reviewed the submitted noise assessment of the closest window (the ground floor of No.58) which has predicted the noise level of this window at 37.1dB(A). The Environmental Health Officer has acknowledged that this is a relatively low noise level and unlikely to cause disturbance (given that 37dB is less than the equivalent of a library, bird calls (44dB), which are the lowest limit of urban ambient sound, as a reference point). Although, as noted by the Environmental Health Officer, the background noise level for the area remains unknown, making it difficult to make a direct comparison. As these noise levels are generally low and given the distance between this window and the ASHP, it is considered that the

proposal would not constitute an unacceptable, harmful increase in noise.

In order to progress with the determination of the application, Environmental Health have recommended that the standard fixed plant noise condition be included should the application be approved. The Officer has also stated that if noise complaints arise in the future, a formal assessment to demonstrate background noise levels for the area may be required, and mitigation measures may need to be implemented.

The proposed ASHP would be of a relatively modest scale to minimise any harm to visual amenities. The design would be utilitarian, but of a standard, typical design of a domestic use ASHP and would not be significantly incongruous to any other associated equipment, technologies etc associated with residential properties. The colour would be anthracite grey (RAL colour 7016) and the ASHP would be constructed from a shroud polymer (for reduced tonality), the proposed materials and colour would not appear discordant in the street scene. Moreover, the ASHP would be situated behind the existing hedgerow, which would suitably screen any visual impact from the proposal. The proposal would not have a detrimental effect on appearance of the street scene.

OTHER ISSUES

RENEWABLE TECHNOLOGIES

The proposed ASHP would provide significant environmental benefits through heating from electricity, as opposed to gas. As outlined within the submitted Planning Statement, ASHPs' are a key component of the UK government's strategy to achieve net-zero carbon emissions. This technology provides a highly efficient and sustainable alternative to traditional fossil fuel-based heating systems, significantly reducing carbon emissions and helping to combat climate change. This should hold significant weight in the determination of this application.

HIGHWAYS

The proposed development would not affect highway safety or impact on any existing in-plot parking arrangements. Therefore, no highway considerations are deemed material to this application.

Conclusion

The proposal would be acceptable in terms of visual and residential amenity. The proposal also complies with the relevant Core Strategy, Replacement UDP policies and guidance in the NPPF and is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Recommendation

That planning permission be granted subject to the following condition(s):-

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

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of 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 approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) The fixed plant associated with the air source heat pump shall be designed, installed, and operated to ensure that the rating level of noise emitted is at least 5dB(A) below the existing LA90 background noise level, as measured during the relevant time period. Where the noise contains tonal, impulsive and/or other distinctive characteristics, corrections shall be applied in accordance with the methodology set out in BS 4142:2014+A1:2019: Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound. Compliance shall be assessed at a position 1 metre from the nearest window of the affected noise-sensitive property.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby residents and to comply with Saved Policies H5 and ENV2 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
05/09/2025	05	B	LOCATION PLAN
04/09/2025	02	-	PROPOSED SITE PLAN
29/10/2025	04	D	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
04/09/2025	-	-	HEAT PUMP TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION
13/10/2025	-	-	EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH AGENT - PHOTO OF ASHP

Signed Case Officer¹: Reece Black

Signed Authorising Officer²: Mark Quinn

Date: 30/10/2025

Informatives

Not applicable

¹ 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

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