

Date: 16 October 2024
Application: 242619



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

WBC Environmental Health

Development Management &
Compliance

P.O. Box 157

Shute End, Wokingham

Berkshire, RG40 1BN

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991

Dear WBC Environmental Health,

Householder Consultation

Application Number: 242619

Applicant: Robert Westmancoat

Site Address: 57 Oakey Drive, Wokingham, Wokingham, RG40 2DT

Parish: Invalid code

Grid Reference: Easting - 480814, Northing - 168145

Type of Development: Other Householder

Proposal: Householder application for the installation of an air source heat pump to the front of dwelling.

Case Officer: Claire Moore

Development Management has received the above application and we require your comments on the proposal using the recommended memorandum below. The documents associated with this are available to view in NEC DM using the application number 242619. Alternatively, public documents are available to view on the Council's planning application search page: [Wokingham Borough Council Online Planning](#).

Please index your response into NEC DM against the application. If you are recommending conditions, you should give a reason with reference to relevant policies. A list of standard conditions can be found on the Z Drive at: [Z:\Standard Planning Conditions](#).

Your observations are required in respect of this application within **10 working days** of the above date or **15 working days** if the development type is classed as a major development.

Yours sincerely,
Development Management & Compliance

MEMORANDUM

From:	Chris Christofis Env Health Comments		
Service	WBC Environmental Health	App No:	242619
Address:	57 Oakey Drive, Wokingham, Wokingham, RG40 2DT.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the installation of an air source heat pump to the front of dwelling.		
Type of Development:	Other Householder		
Site Visit Made:	No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☒ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

As a consultee to assist planning from an environmental health perspective the primary issue with the installation of an air source heat pump (ASHP) in a residential setting is noise. The pumps are noisy by nature, some more so than others. The installation site needs to be carefully chosen so that noise is not intrusive at the installation property or nearby properties.

The Government, through DEFRA has prescribed a scheme to inform the installation of ASHP and other micro generation units called the Microgeneration Certified Scheme. [Microgeneration Certification Scheme \(MCS\) transfer to MCS Service Company - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/microgeneration-certification-scheme)

Following the Microgeneration Certified Scheme (MCS) assessment procedure this will allow the registered installer of an ASHP to make a calculation according to a formula prescribed in this Government sponsored scheme to inform the best type of install. We can look at the assessment to guide us as to whether there is a likely nuisance from the equipment.

We would ask for a formal noise assessment if the MSC isn't done properly according to the prescribed method or if guidelines aren't met and the installation fails as being too noisy and likely to be intrusive, or where the ASHP is to be installed very close to neighbouring properties or is of a large design, or there is more than one noise source with potential to output a significant amount of tonal noise that may cause a nuisance to neighbours.

If a noise assessment is required, although there is an initial cost to the proposer, having a professional acoustic consultant involved has benefits as they are able to recommend

mitigation measures including acoustic barriers that will mean there is a significantly reduced risk of there being complaints after the install is completed.

If an installation clearly meets the MSC guidelines we would generally have no objection and not require anything else.

Where the guidelines have not been met, we are obliged to ask for a noise assessment.

In this case the MCS assessment has not been completed according to the prescribed method.

The first and most vital stage (having chosen a viable installation site) is to describe the installation site and where the nearest noise receptors are (nearest habitable room). Then measure the distance to 1m away from the facade of that location.

[MCS-020.pdf](#)

All measurements are then based on this measurement, if the measurement isn't clearly measured or is roughly estimated the MCS has no validity at all.

In this case this vital step is simply missing and an arbitrary figure of 12m has been inserted, the author hasn't even described the location or where the nearest noise receptor is or how they have measured it, or the exact type of pump to be installed (although we can assume it is a class 4 pump from the dB output of 58) but **we should not be required to assume anything**. There is no name or job description of whoever tried to complete this assessment.

They have inserted the figure of Q4 without any description?

The document proposed elevations, in the documents list for the application, shows a pump situated away from the building wall (freestanding Q2) and when I place my GIS ruler on the location it is significantly less than 12m to the nearest noise receptor which is the neighbouring property at 58 Oakley Drive.

In the case of a failed or incomplete MCS assessment, a noise assessment must be completed by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant to inform the installation and produce accurate usable data to demonstrate the installation is viable in the proposed location or to recommend mitigation measures such as acoustic barriers to make the installation work.

It is not acceptable to go ahead with an installation based on flawed information and then cause significant observable adverse effect (SOAEL) to nearby properties, the amenity of the installation site should also be carefully considered, if badly advised, a householder may not realise the pump they are requesting could be much more intrusive than they are being led to believe.

Noise is a significant factor in public health, and not to be taken lightly.

ASHP installations in residential settings are viable, many have been done successfully.

In this case I have asked for more information (rather than recommend to planning they reject the application), to allow the applicant to engage a professional installer, able to produce an MCS assessment.

Alternatively, I outline a noise condition as it may be applied to illicit the information that we require.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
Noise Assessment. Prior to installation, a noise assessment should be conducted by an appropriately qualified person(s), this should be submitted to the local authority for approval. This can inform the installation to achieve best practice and good acoustic design. This should address noise impact in terms of future users of the proposed site and nearby properties, both internal and external spaces. This report is to identify a clear scheme of recommended works, or such other steps as may be necessary to minimize the effects of noise, both on nearby noise sensitive receptors and on future occupants of the development. Any recommended noise mitigation measures should be retained and maintained thereafter. Reason - To ensure that no nuisance or disturbance is caused to the occupiers of properties. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.			
Date:	28/11/2024	Signed:	C Christofis