

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Please note that this guidance is currently under review. The guidance document relates to the policies of the superseded Urban Area Plan and Rural Area Plan and may not be relevant or consistent with the policies of the adopted Island Development Plan 2016. Please refer to the relevant policies and Annexes of the Island Development Plan and contact the Planning Service for further information before submitting a planning application.

Air Source Heat Pumps



Development &
Planning Authority



PLANNING ADVICE NOTE 6: AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS

This advice note looks at the issues surrounding securing planning consent for domestic and commercial air source heat pumps (ASHP).

The note provides general information and advice on factors that will, or are likely to be, taken into account in the determining of planning applications for domestic and commercial air source heat pumps.

It is likely to be of interest to householders who are seeking to install a domestic ASHP at their home or businesses seeking to utilise this form of energy recovery.

Air source heat pumps and planning permission

Air source heat pumps are not strictly a source of renewable energy although their high efficiency can help reduce the impact your property has on the environment and help combat climate change. In principle the harnessing of renewable forms of energy and the use of high efficiency energy generation units are supported, subject to the proposed development meeting all of the relevant planning policies and criteria under Land Planning law.

Erection or installation of an air source heat pump may, depending mainly on its size and visual impact, require planning permission under the provisions of the Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005 (“the Law”). Whether or not the works amount to development would be assessed in relation to the particular proposal but this note gives some general advice. A single small unit, of similar size to a conventional external domestic boiler, that is not more than approximately one metre high, one metre wide and about 350mm deep, would be unlikely to amount to development requiring planning permission unless prominently located so as to have a significant effect on the landscape or sited so as to affect the special interest of a protected building. A larger unit, however, or multiple units, would be likely to be development and would therefore require planning permission. Advice on the requirement for planning permission in any particular case can be obtained from the Planning Service, Telephone 01481 717200 or email planning@gov.gg.

It should be noted that even if not amounting to development in planning terms, a small ASHP unit may still produce relatively high levels of noise which might potentially cause noise nuisance to neighbouring property under Public Health legislation. It is therefore recommended that consultation be carried out with the Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation (711161) at an early stage prior to any installation to discuss the noise specifications, characteristics and location of the proposed unit to ensure that noise impact is minimised.

A list of general issues that will, or are likely to be, taken into account in determining planning applications for air source heat pumps is below. A list of relevant planning policies is available at the end of this document.

It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of potential planning issues. Other considerations may apply in particular circumstances, or might emerge in the future. It should also be remembered that each application will be considered on a case by case basis.

Main considerations for air source heat pumps

The following issues will, or are likely to be, taken into account in determining planning applications for air source heat pumps under the Law and the Development Plan policies:-

Effect on neighbour amenity

Heat pumps incorporate a fan and compressor that will generate a degree of background noise under normal operation. **ASHPs can produce relatively high levels of noise which can potentially cause noise nuisance to neighbouring property. The dominant frequencies within the noise are typically low frequencies (i.e. 50 – 200 Hertz (Hz)) which travel further and can potentially be heard as an annoying hum within buildings, particularly through the night.**

- The likely effect of the proposed ASHP on the reasonable enjoyment of neighbouring properties is a statutory planning consideration.
- The potential for noise nuisance is a significant problem with some proposals for ASHPs and can potentially make an application unacceptable. The level of impact is likely to be greater where an operating ASHP is located in close proximity to neighbouring residential properties.
- Applicants requesting permission to install ASHPs will need to give very careful consideration to the proposed siting to ensure that potential for noise nuisance to neighbours will not result.
- In order to be able to consider an application efficiently and avoid delays whilst further information is requested, the following details should be supplied with your application;
 - Manufacturers' specifications of the proposed unit;
 - Distance to the closest noise sensitive property (this may be the boundary of a domestic garden);
 - Evidence that the noise level the proposed pump would operate at would have no increase on the lowest background noise level at any time (this is generally at night); this may require you to commission a survey of background noise levels; and
 - Details of any proposed attenuation measures to reduce the impact of the air source heat pump.
- Applicants may wish to consider enlisting the assistance of an acoustic consultant to ensure that their application provides the necessary level of information. The Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation have a list of qualified acoustic consultants as a reference point.
- Any measurement and assessments must be made in accordance with British Standard 4142:1997.
- Applicants are strongly advised to contact the Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation (711161) prior to the submission of an application for an ASHP to discuss the noise specifications and characteristics of the proposed unit(s) and to ensure that appropriate supporting information is submitted.

The application including all supporting information is made to and determined by the Development & Planning Authority although we may consult the Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation in relation to noise.

Visual impact

- The visual impact of a proposal for an ASHP must be considered. Important considerations include design, character and amenity and whether the proposal is within a Conservation Area, is in the setting of a protected building or involves works to a protected building. There is a duty under the Law to pay special attention to the desirability of (1) preserving the setting of a protected building and (2) preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area.

- In any particular case the decision will depend upon factors such as the precise design of the proposal, its siting, height and its degree of prominence from the road or other public areas.
- Within Conservation Areas the impact of proposals on the character and appearance of the area is of greater importance. However this would not necessarily prevent permission being given for an appropriately sited ASHP which would not have a significant impact on the character or appearance of the area concerned.
- Outside the Conservation Areas, a particularly prominent or obtrusive siting, for example on or close to the front elevation of a house or in close proximity to a road, might still result in refusal of permission and so very careful consideration must be given to the proposed siting.

Effect on protected buildings and other historic buildings or buildings of character

- In the case of protected buildings or other historic buildings or buildings of character, the impact of the proposal, not only on the area or locality concerned, but also more specifically on the building itself must be considered.
- The attachment of a modern ASHP to the structure and its consequent effect on the architectural or historic interest of such a building could be the main issue of concern. Such concerns might be overcome, for example, by choosing a free-standing location for such equipment providing it did not have an adverse impact on the setting of the building.
- Where ASHPs are proposed to be attached to a protected building, it is particularly important that any associated works form part of the application.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Schedule 1 of the EIA Ordinance includes “non-domestic installations for the production of energy” as requiring submission of an EIA. ASHPs do not produce energy as such, and notwithstanding this, installation of an ASHP would of itself be unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment such that it would amount to EIA development and require an EIA.

How to apply for planning permission to install an ASHP

Information on how to make a planning application is available on the States website at www.gov.gg. Planning Application forms and the Schedule of Fees can also be found on the website.

Alternatively guidance notes and application forms can be collected from our reception at Sir Charles Frossard House, or posted on request.

Other Permissions and Consents

You may need other permissions or consents in relation to any works you intend to carry out. This may include a Building Licence issued under the Building Regulations.

In relation to the Building Regulations, the installation of an ASHP is not in itself considered to be Building Work and is therefore not controllable, but the installation or alteration of the property services that the ASHP is connected to is controlled; a good example being an unvented hot water storage vessel. In addition, it may be appropriate to seek advice as to the adequacy of any structure that the ASHP is to be fixed to. If strengthening work is deemed to be necessary, then this work will also be controllable under the Building Regulations and an application will need to be made for this work in the normal way.

You and/or your agent will need to contact the relevant bodies to determine whether those permissions and consents are required.

Further Information

The table below consists of a summary of the planning policies relevant in consideration of an application for an ASHP.

- UAP refers to a policy of the Urban Area Plan
- RAP refers to a policy of the Rural Area Plan

The following list is not exhaustive.

Policy	Description	Detail
RAP - RGEN1 RAP - GEN2	Sustainable Development	The development must be beneficial to the community and sustainable in terms of location, design, use and conservation of resources and impact on the environment. Use of design and technology to achieve sustainable forms of development will be encouraged.
RAP - RH6	Extensions and alterations to dwellings	This policy is supportive of minor domestic development. The material considerations will be taken into account in determining applications under RH6
RAP - RGEN5 UAP - GEN6	Character and amenity	We will take into account character, local distinctiveness and amenity
RAP - RGEN6 UAP - GEN5	Design	These policies account for quality of design, materials and relationship of the development to its surroundings
RAP - RGEN11 UAP - GEN12	Effect on adjoining properties	These policies take into account any significant impact on the reasonable enjoyment of adjoining properties, including through noise and disturbance
RAP - RCE12 UAP - DBE1	Design and local distinctiveness	Proposals for development will only be permitted where they fulfil certain criteria, including a good standard of design and respecting the scale and massing of other buildings in the vicinity
RAP - RCE10 UAP - DBE7	Conservation Areas	Development must conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, including in size, form etc.
RAP - RCE11 UAP - DBE8	Buildings of special interest	The special qualities of buildings of special interest and their settings will be protected, only limited development being permitted.

Contact Us For further information or advice at:
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Telephone 01481 717200 E-mail planning@gov.gg

Have you visited our website?
Go to www.gov.gg for additional guidance material and other planning information, or to book a pre-application discussion

This note is issued by the Development & Planning Authority to assist understanding of the provisions of the new planning legislation. It represents the Authority's interpretation of certain provisions of the legislation and is not intended to be exhaustive or a substitute for the full text of the legislation copies of which are available from the Greffe. Electronic copies are also available at www.guernseylegalresources.gg. Substantive queries concerning the legislation should be addressed to the Authority by telephone on 717200. The Authority does not accept any liability for loss or expense arising out of the provision of, or reliance on, any advice given. You are recommended to seek advice from an independent professional advisor where appropriate.