

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0718/26

Recommendation: – APPROVE

Site: Multi Storey Car Park High Street Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Application to vary condition 1 (Approved plans) of application AWDM/0125/26. Amendments include a change to the site area and methodology to include some areas of open cut trenching alongside horizontal directional drilling

ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION - Extension to buried pipework and associated equipment to connect to the district heat network. The pipework will run underground along High St, through Steyne Gardens and east and west along the promenade to connect the energy centre with Splashpoint and Pavilion Theatre.

Date of Site Visit: 5 March 2026

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional Neighbours Notified: N

Site and Surroundings

The heat network will be underground within Worthing Town Centre. The route is within a mixed character area that contains businesses, housing and hotels.

The route runs predominantly through Steyne Gardens Conservation Area. The western section will be within the South Street Conservation Area.

The route will be in proximity to a number of listed buildings along the route. The War memorial to the south of Steyne Gardens is Grade II listed as are properties on the western side of The Steyne, and northern side of Marine Parade. The heat network will connect to Pavillion Theatre, a Grade II listed building. There are also numerous local interest buildings in the vicinity of the site.

The route runs through the Historic Core of Worthing archaeological notification area and adjacent to Medieval Settlement Activity, High Street Archaeological Notification Area.

Proposal

The proposal is for phase two of the town centre's district heat network. Permission was secured in December 2025 for extension to the pipework.

Permission was then secured in December 2025 for changes to allow for directional drilling rather than open trenching.

Having received the second permission the applicant has advised that it may not be possible to complete directional drilling along the promenade due to ground conditions.

This application seeks to approve a combination of directional drilling and open trenching.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/1196/23 - Full planning permission for the buried pipework and other ancillary equipment such as valves associated with that pipework. The pipework will run underground across the town centre of Worthing and provide heat energy to multiple buildings across the Town. Please note, the infrastructure subject to this planning application is entirely underground so has no visual impact once the installation is complete.

STATUS: Application Permitted 28th March 2024.

AWDM/1439/23 - Proposed two storey Energy Centre, Thermal Store, electrical sub-station, car-park rooftop plant, and riser pipework.

STATUS: Application Permitted 26th March 2024.

AWDM/1212/24 - Application to Vary Condition 1 of AWDM/1439/23 (approved plans). Amendment: Roof top plant to be moved to the north end of the carpark roof; and relocation of containerised gas fired boiler plant room from the carpark roof to ground floor level internal to the carpark.

ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION: Proposed two storey Energy Centre, Thermal Store, electrical sub-station, car-park rooftop plant, and riser pipework.

STATUS: Pending Decision

AWDM/0968/25 - Extension to buried pipework and associated equipment to connect to the district heat network. The pipework will run underground along High St, through Steyne Gardens and east and west along the promenade to connect the energy centre with Splashpoint and Pavilion Theatre.

STATUS: Application Permitted 16th December 2025.

AWDM/0246/26 - Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 7 (Construction management plan) and partial approval of condition 9 part (1) only (Archaeological watching brief) of approved application AWDM/0968/25

STATUS: Application Permitted 13th April 2026.

AWDM/0125/26: Application to vary condition 1 (Approved plans) and condition 3 (Tree protection works) and remove conditions 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11 (Tree and Steyne Gardens conditions) of application AWDM/0968/25. Amendments include a change to horizontal drilling from open trenches, and a change to the development boundary to allow for a revised pipe route location through Steyne Gardens and to include pits to allow for the horizontal drilling. Conditions 4, 5, 6 and 10 are to be removed as the change to directional drilling will not include the removal of any trees and the memorial gardens will not be affected by the horizontal drilling.

ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION - Extension to buried pipework and associated equipment to connect to the district heat network. The pipework will run underground along High St, through Steyne Gardens and east and west along the promenade to connect the energy centre with Splashpoint and Pavilion Theatre.

Permitted 03/06/2026

Consultations

WSCC (LLFA): This application is to vary condition 1 (Approved plans) of application AWDM/0125/26. Amendments include a change to the site area and methodology to include some areas of open cut trenching alongside horizontal directional drilling.

As there is no increase to the impermeable area or alterations to surface water drainage we have no detailed comments to make. We have no objection to the application.

We'd strongly encourage the applicant to consider underground surface water sewers/water infrastructure during the design stages, to ensure surface water flood risk is not increased elsewhere. If any unmapped surface water sewers are discovered during construction, please contact FRM@westsussex.gov.uk and the team may be able to assist.

Network Rail: No comments

WSP: Following a review of the submitted information, we note that West Sussex County Council have previously provided flood risk and drainage comments on the proposed development. Therefore, we would recommend they are consulted and continue to provide any further comments regarding this application.

WSCC (Highways): From the Local Highway Authority's perspective there would be no objections to the proposals from a planning perspective. Any highway assets that require temporary resighting or removal will have to be reinstated. Any works on the highway would include highway licences from the LHA's Street Works Team prior to any works starting.

INFORMATIVE Temporary Works Required During Construction The applicant is advised of the requirement to enter into early discussions with and obtain the necessary licenses from the Highway Authority to cover any temporary construction related works that will obstruct or affect the normal operation of the public highway prior to any works commencing. These temporary works may include, the placing of skips or other materials within the highway, the temporary closure of onstreet parking bays, the imposition of temporary parking restrictions requiring a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, the erection of hoarding or scaffolding within the limits of the highway, the provision of cranes over-sailing the highway.

The Worthing Society: No response

Environmental Health: there are no adverse EH comments for this application.

Southern Water: No response

Neighbour Representations

1 objection was received on the grounds of:

- Not being told the truth by Hemiko
- Park run has had to stop due to works
- Confusion around signage at east beach and the impact on traders
- Change in methodology will have a major impact on the promenade and impact visitors to the town and seafront
- Timings and dates should be included for open trench drilling

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM6, DM22, DM24

National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment:

The extension to the heat network was approved under application AWDM/0968/25 and again as varied under AWDM/0125/26. This application will assess only those elements of the proposal which differ from the application granted.

The application seeks to combine the two previous methodologies to allow both trenching and horizontal drilling. The red line has been expanded again to take into account the larger work zone required for the trenching. The trenching has previously been approved and is considered acceptable subject to the conditions on the previous consent. In order to protect Steyne Gardens trenching will only be possible in those areas indicated as such in the route statement.

The change back to trench drilling on the seafront will not have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. The EHO has raised no objection.

In order to protect visitors to the town centre and the ongoing operation of local businesses, the embargoed dates will be increased in line with the original consent for trench drilling. Additional dates of 26 March to 11 April 2027, 22 July to 31 August 2027 and 1 Dec 2027 to 3 January 2028 will be included to ensure all relevant holidays are covered during works.

A main concern with the original application was the impact of works on the town centre noting issues with highways closures and access to car parks. The change back to trench drilling along the seafront may cause some impacts as per the original consent. The CMP approved under condition 7 will continue to be adhered to for the duration of works. The LHA has raised no objection but has recommended an informative to be added about temporary access.

Conditions related to times of works, access to the High St car park and promenade access will be kept as per the original permission.

Recommendation:

APPROVE subject to condition(s):-

1. Approved plans.
2. Standard time limit.
3. Development in accordance with Technical note
4. Construction management plan
5. Steyne Gardens works
6. Archaeological watching brief
7. High St car park access
8. No work during set periods
9. Seafront premises access
10. WWII bunker
11. Trenching only where shown on the Route Statement

Informative

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.

LHA temporary activities during construction.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? Y

Case Officer: Louise Prew Date: 20/08/2026

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 24 August 2026