

## The Stour Centre – Case Study

When leading UK leisure centre The Stour Centre, in Ashford, Kent, needed an air source heat pump enclosure as part of an eco-friendly renovation, Sound Planning was happy to help.

The popular facility is the borough's flagship leisure centre, offering fitness classes, a huge gym and various activities for people of all ages and abilities. It has been located at Station Approach since it was built in 1972.

Ashford Borough Council decided to include the enclosure as part of its plans to make the area more energy efficient.



Earlier, council chiefs had announced they were aiming to make Ashford 100% carbon neutral by 2030. They also have a short-term target to reduce energy use by 80% by 2025.

After securing a government grant of £1.45 million to replace The Stour Centre's ageing power plant, the upgrade included installing a new state-of-the-art system to cut carbon emissions by 45% and significantly reduce running costs.

The green upgrade will reduce the centre's annual carbon emissions by 657 tonnes, which is equivalent to the annual CO2 emissions produced by heating 243 homes.

### Noise reduction solution

The scheme's plans were drawn up and completed by specialist energy management consultants Leisure Energy, in partnership with the Stour Centre's operators Freedom Leisure, Spearpoint Pavilion and Julie Rose Stadium.

Sound Planning Ltd was commissioned to be the main contractor for the project, which involved installing a large [acoustic enclosure](#) at the centre. Our goal was to attenuate the excess noise coming from three large air source heat pumps, as they were affecting the residential dwellings close to the Stour Centre.

The ASHP units had been installed in a car park with sloping ground, with a "hit and miss" fence around them. The project involved designing an acoustic enclosure to meet acoustic, airflow and access requirements.

### **Associated ground works**

We were also involved in the associated ground works for the project, including creating a ring beam plinth and carrying out internal floor levelling.

After completing structural engineering calculations for the plinth and the steel structure for the enclosure, we supplied and installed the steelwork structure and ensured site security using a Heras fencing compound.

We also organised the electrical installations, including the “emergency exit” signs and the lighting, while continually ensuring the site workers’ welfare during the project.

Sound Planning worked directly for Ashford Borough Council. Craig Thomas, the senior architectural technician of the council’s Project Delivery Team, has issued a testimony to the high quality of our work.

### **Do you need an acoustic enclosure?**

Sound Planning can assist with various noise control solutions, including [ASHP horizontal enclosures](#) and [ASHP vertical enclosures](#).

Installing an ASHP to improve your premises’ energy efficiency can be a straightforward process, but it’s crucial that you don’t overlook the noise that heat pumps can create.

If you’re struggling with noise from your air source heat pump, or if your neighbour’s ASHP is causing problems, you need an acoustic barrier solution. A well-designed and installed acoustic enclosure can be fully customised to effectively block noise, while costing less than other options.

Contact our professional acoustic consultants here at [Sound Planning](#) to discuss and plan your project.