OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/01994/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Removal of an existing jet wash bay and the installation of two new jet wash bays, plant room, air/water VAC machine and associated works.

Location: Mecury Petrol Filling Station Needingworth Road St Ives

Applicant: -

Grid Ref: 532306 272110

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is located at the Morrisons Petrol Station St Ives, enclosed by Harrison Way to the west of the site, and Needingworth Road to the north. The application site falls within Flood Zone 2 on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning. The site is not in a Conservation Area, and there are no Listed Buildings in the immediate vicinity. Whilst there are some trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders in the vicinity, these lie outside the site and are not impacted by the proposed development.

This application seeks permission for the removal of an existing jet wash bay and the installation of two new jet wash bays, plant room, air/water VAC machine and associated works.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019

LP2: Strategy for Development
LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
LP5: Flood Risk
LP7: Spatial Planning Areas
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP22: Local Services and Community Facilities
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Neighbourhood Plan and relevant policies where applicable

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)

Huntingdonshire Townscape and Landscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (2022)

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Given the nature of the site there is a wide and varied planning history associated with it. The history from 1974 onwards is available to view on HDC's Public Access Site. The most recent, relevant history is detailed below:

16/01924/FUL - Erection of a building for use as a foodstore and non-food retail unit (within Class A1), along with related access, servicing, parking, petrol filling station and landscaping (Permission)

17/02109/FUL - Proposed petrol filling station, parking and landscaping (Revised Scheme for that approved under 16/01924/FUL) (Permission)

18/02073/FUL - Installation of 4 additional petrol pumps, extension to canopy and minor alterations to car park (Permission)

24/00761/S73 - Removal of condition 4 (Operating hours) of 17/02109/FUL (Permission)

24/00815/FUL - Creation of charging zone, erection of EV chargers, erection of canopy, sub-station enclosure, LV panel, meter cabinet and associated works (Permission)

CONSULTATIONS

Needingworth Parish Council - No objections.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 47 of the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan consists of a number of adopted neighbourhood plans, however, there is not an adopted neighbourhood plan in place for Needingworth. Therefore, in this case no neighbourhood plans are given weight in the determination of this application.

The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

The main issues to consider are:

o The Principle of Development
o Design and Visual Amenity
o Residential Amenity
o Flood Risk
o Vehicle Movement and Public Safety
o Biodiversity

*The Principle of Development

Policy LP22 of the Local Plan to 2036 defines fuel filling stations as a local service and community facility. In this case, the site is considered to fall within the built-up area of the St Ives Spatial Planning Area and the development consists of the enhancement of the existing local service. Such development is therefore supported where it:

a. is of a scale to serve local needs;
b. comprises up to a maximum of 600m2 net internal floorspace for a main town centre use; and
c. provides for a new service or facility or it retains or enhances an existing service or facility, including through the provision of premises suitable for mixed use or multiple community functions.

Part b. is not considered relevant for this development due to the location of the application site outside of the main town centre. It is however considered that the scale of development is acceptable and that it enhances the facility. Policy LP22 goes on to state that "provision of local services will continue to evolve in response to changing needs and delivery mechanisms." In this case the proposed removal of a singular jet wash bay and the development of two new ones in its place supports this.

Taking the above into account, the proposal clearly accords with the aims of Policy LP22 of the Local Plan to 2036 and is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other relevant policies and considerations.

*Design and Visual Amenity

The application site comprises of the fuel filling station, associated jet wash bay and parking bays that are associated with the Morrisons Supermarket to the south-east. The fuel filling station is a modern addition to the area, and a typical development of this nature. It has a large area for parking and manoeuvring of vehicles, with the existing jet wash bay concealed at the south of the application site.

The proposed installation of two new jet wash bays will be to the south of the site, utilising the area currently used by a singular jet wash bay and parking spaces ancillary to the filling station sales building. Considering a prior application submitted and approved on the application site for the installation of a charging zone and EV parking (24/00815/FUL), the proposal does not impact the new layout for EV parking to the west of the current jet wash bay. Instead, there are two additional parking bays which were left unaffected by the prior application, and these will make way for the additional jet wash. The proposed jet wash bays will consist of an open and a covered bay, with the maximum height of the covered bay at approximately 3.8 metres and include screens around the bays at approximately 2.8 metres in height. This is consistent with a development of this nature, and will therefore not be uncharacteristic and blend in with the surrounding area. The proposed plant room will sit ancillary to the jet wash bays to the south west, and measure 2 metres in height, 3.1 metres in width and 1.1 metres in length. It is not considered that this would have any adverse impact on the design or visual amenity of the area, and therefore is considered acceptable in this regard.

The development will also include the installation of an air and water vac machine to the north of the site, with the creation of an air/water vac parking bay in place of an existing parking bay. The machine will measure 1.6 metres in height, 1.4 metres in width and 0.5 metres in length. Due to the size and location of the machine, it is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Overall, taking the above factors into consideration the proposed development is considered to be acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the character or appearance of the area. It therefore accords with Policies LP2, LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Residential Amenity

The application site is in an area with a large degree of commercial development with supermarkets, business parks and eateries all within the immediate vicinity. There are no residential dwellings in the nearby locality, and it is not considered that the replacement of a jet wash bay with two new jet wash bays and the installation of an air/ water vac machine would intensify the use of the site as exists to such a degree in which there would be harm.

Overall, taking these factors into account the development is considered acceptable and would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Flood Risk

The application site lies within Flood Zone 2, and thus is liable to food. It is noted that as the proposal would not result in the introduction of a use classed as 'more vulnerable' as per the NPPF (2024). The NPPF states that small non-residential extensions with a footprint of 250m² or less are not subject to Sequential or Exception Tests. However, it does state that a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment should accompany applications for development within Flood Zone 2, which in this case has been provided. Whilst the proposal does not result in an increase in impermeable area at the site, it does result in some degree of built development. However, this is below the threshold, and taking into account the service provision of the existing jet wash, the proposed development would not have a significant impact on flood risk.

Therefore, the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to its approach to flooding and will not (given its scale and use) result in an increased risk of flooding in the locality. It therefore accords with Policy LP5 and LP15 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Vehicle Movement and Public Safety

The submitted application form details that there will be a loss of three parking spaces (there are currently 16 spaces existing in the application site, with 13 proposed). It should be acknowledged that at the current time these 16 spaces appear to be open to any users of the facilities. Considering the approval of the prior application 24/00815/FUL, it is presumed that the 8 spaces to be given to EV charging are not included within this number. This has been determined from an analysis of the proposed plans from both 24/00815/FUL and the current application (24/01994/FUL), alongside having undertaken a site visit. Two parking spaces will be lost to the proposed jet wash bays, with the other space will undertake a change of use to be used as an air/water vac bay. Considering this, the number of proposed spaces (13) is seen as adequate for the scale of the sales building, as many of those who entering the sales building may already be parked on the filling forecourt. The addition of the jet wash bays will not affect vehicle manoeuvrability in the site and will have no adverse impact on public safety, being that the previous jet wash bay was in the same location. Taking into account that the proposed plant room and air/ water vac machine are sited off of the forecourt, these additions will not impact the manoeuvrability of the site, and their locations will not affect public safety.

Overall, it is concluded that the development is acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and parking provision and therefore accords with Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Biodiversity

Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 states that a development should ensure no net loss in biodiversity and achieve a net gain where possible. The application form details that the proposal would be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain legislation as it would fall within the de minimis category and the LPA view aligns with this. Given the commercial nature of the site and its surroundings as well as the nature and scale of the works proposed it is considered that achieving a net gain would be challenging. However, having regard to the above assessment, the proposal will result in no net loss of biodiversity and therefore broadly accords with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it is:

*Acceptable in principle

And it:

* Would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
*Would not result in an increased risk of flooding in the locality;
*Would not be detrimental to highway safety in the locality;
*Is acceptable with regards to the impact on biodiversity;
*There are no other material planning considerations which lead to the conclusion that the proposal is unacceptable.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
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