OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00935/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Construction of electrical infrastructure and associated works.

Location: Peterborough Services Peterborough Motorway Services Haddon

Applicant: Miss Emma Harding

Grid Ref: 513955 293970

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site forms part of Peterborough Services located off the A1(M). The application site comprising a parcel of land, carpark and landscaping is located to the northern area of the motorway service area. The service area is located in the countryside and within the Parish of Haddon. The service area known as 'Extra' comprises a main customer services building offering a variety of fast-food options, cafe and shops. The Days Inn Hotel to the east is an 82-bedroom hotel. To the west is the Shell Fuel Filling Station and HGV and Coach parking area.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk from fluvial flooding as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024). The site is not at risk from surface waterflooding and not susceptible to groundwater flooding. The site is not within a conservation area or in proximity to a listed building nor are any ecological designations are within or in proximity to the site.

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of electrical infrastructure and associated works to support electric vehicle charging facilities at the Peterborough Motorway Service Area. The proposed infrastructure includes a substation, two low-voltage feeder pillars, two SCADA (communication) cabinets, and a 2.4-metre-high perimeter fence enclosing the substation.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (12th 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 10).'

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.

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

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

LP 2: Strategy for Development
LP5: Flood Risk
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP16: Sustainable Travel
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP22: Local Services and Community Facilities
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP 35: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance
- Huntingdonshire's Design Guide SPD 2017 - Compatibility Statement (2021)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Developer Contributions: Updates Costs 2019/2020
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024).

PLANNING HISTORY
24/01084/FUL-The development of 24 Electric Vehicle Charging Bays and associated works with no.2 substations- Permitted 30.10.2024

20/00015/S73-Variation of condition 2 for 19/01412/FUL for the amendment to plans- Permitted 02.03.2020

19/01412/FUL- Installation of six electric vehicle charging points and associated infrastructure. - Permitted 04.09.2019

99/01090/FUL-Motorway service area including amenity building, petrol filling station, lodge & car, coach, HGV and caravan parking Land adj. to interchange of A1 & A605 Haddon- Permitted 17.11.1999

CONSULTATIONS
Haddon Parish Council-No comment at the time of determination.

CCC Highways - No objection.

Environmental Health- No objection.

Ecology Officer- No comment at the time of determination.

REPRESENTATIONS
No third party comments received in support or objection at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES
The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
*The Principle of Development
*Design and Visual Amenity
*Impact upon Residential Amenity
*Highways Safety, Parking Provision and Access
*Biodiversity
*Trees

*Principle of Development

The established and lawful use of the site is a motorway service area pursuant to application ref 99/01090/FUL.

This application does not seek to change the existing and permitted use of the application site as a motorway service area but does seek to provide infrastructure to service Electrical Vehicle (EV) parking.

EV charging has been permitted on the wider service area site under application reference 24/01084/FUL, 20/00015/S73, 19/01412/FUL. The submitted covering letter also states the applicant's intension to benefit from permitted development rights to deliver 18no. EV charging bays and 9no. T360 charging upstands, subject to the delivery of the infrastructure subject of this application.

Given the above, the principle of development is considered acceptable and established via the existing and lawful use of the site as a Motorway Service area.

* Design and Visual Amenity
Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 state that developments should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.

The proposal is for the erection of a substation, two low-voltage feeder pillars, two SCADA (communication) cabinets, and a 2.4-metre-high perimeter fence enclosing the substation. The substation proposed would be screened with a 2.4m high close board fencing and the feeder pillars would be located on a raised kerb island. It is acknowledged that the proposal would only be viewable to the public realm by patrons of the wider Motorway Service Area and car park and would be of a scale, siting and design typical of the nature of the development.

Overall, taking all of 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 on the character and appearance of the area. It therefore accords with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Residential Amenity
Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

The site is located within the countryside with no residential properties nearby which would be affected by the development. This proposal is a relatively small-scale infrastructure project in the existing motorway services. The development is considered acceptable in terms of overshadowing, overlooking, overbearing impact, loss of privacy, loss of light and would not have a significant detrimental impact upon residential amenity. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 and paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF (2024).

* Highway Safety, Parking Provision and Access
Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

The proposal seeks to utilise an area of the existing car park to install two low-voltage feeder pillars and two SCADA (communication) cabinets. This would result in the loss of four vehicle parking spaces. A small area of the northern landscape boundary would also be utilised for the erection of a substation.

Cambridgeshire County Council as the Local Highways Authority have reviewed the proposals and have raised no objections to the submitted scheme.

Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that there is sufficient parking and manoeuvring space on the site appropriate to the site of this size, use and location. The proposals are not considered to cause significant adverse impacts on highway safety and are therefore considered to meet the aims and objectives of Policies LP16 and LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Biodiversity
Policy LP30 of the Local Plan requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible.

The application site is currently a paved car park and is within an established urbanised area. A small portion of the application site comprises of modified grassland associated with the northern boundary landscaping.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) accompanies the application which found no significant ecological constraints for the proposed installation of the electrical infrastructure. Given the site's location in an urbanised area, it offers limited habitat value but may be used by commuting bats, badgers, and hedgehogs. The report does however conclude no further ecological reporting is required and recommends mitigation measures such as sensitive lighting and wildlife-safe construction practices. A compliance condition can be imposed on any consent to secure the enhancement measures detailed in Chapter 7 of the PEA.

As of the 2nd April 2024 mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was imposed on small sites. This application is accompanied with a BNG plan, BNG Metric, pre-development mapping and post-intervention mapping. The submitted BNG plan confirms the development would impact approximately 50m2 of modified grassland, the equivalent to 0.02 habitat units. At post development the applicants intend to plant a single small urban tree with medium distinctiveness to offset the loss of the modified grassland.

Subject to conditions to secure the biodiversity enhancement measures and BNG offsetting/10% gain, the proposal would ensure no discernible net gain or loss in biodiversity and would broadly accord with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

*Trees
Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated and that a proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development.

The application is accompanied with an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA). The submitted AIA confirms there are no statutory designations within the proposed development area and the proposal would not require the removal of any trees to facilitate the development. Notwithstanding this the proposed substation, located on the northern landscaped area would be in proximity to a semi mature mixed broadleaf group of trees detailed in the report as 'G1'. The group comprises field maple, cherry, ash, and hawthorn within an unmanaged woodland area. Most trees still have tree guards and stakes in place. The group displays cohesive crown development.

Chapter 5 of the AIA includes an Arboricultural Method Statement and associated Tree Protection Plan. Should the development be permitted, a condition shall be imposed on any consent to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the tree protection methods detailed in the report.

The proposal is considered acceptable in regard to its impacts on adjacent trees, subject to a compliance condition and therefore, accords with Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

*Conclusion
The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it:
* The principle of development is acceptable
* Is of an appropriate scale and design and would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
* Would allow for sufficient parking provision and vehicle movement;
* Would have a negligible impact on biodiversity and geodiversity.
* There are no other material planning considerations which lead to the conclusion that the proposal is unacceptable.

There are no other material planning considerations which have a significant bearing on the determination of this application.

Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is therefore recommended that planning permission should be granted.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Charlotte Dew**