

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Andrew Hunter.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01039/FP	Erection of electrical infrastructure works to include 2no. substations, 2no meter cabinets, 2no. low voltage feeder pillars and 2no. SCADA (communications) cabinets. Erection of 2.4m high close boarded fencing to screen the two substations (amended by plans received 23/05/25)	Baldock Services Great North Road Radwell Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 5TR

Submitted Plan Nos

25011_01_D_ 25011_02 25011_04_ ESPE004a - Baldock GS - Sub - Substation Layout Plan
2558140100G01 D3-GRP Cabinet - Elevations Plan 2_Post-Intervention Map 1_BNG Baseline Habitat
Map 25011_03_F 25011_05_E

1.0 Policies

CGB1	Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt.
CGB4	Exist buildings in the RA Beyond GB
D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
D4	Air quality
NE2	Landscape
NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SECN15	Conserve + enhance natural environment
SECN9	Promoting sustainable transport
SP12	Green infrastructure, landscape and biod

SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
SP6	Sustainable transport
SP9	Design and Sustainability
T2	Parking
T1	Assessment of transport matters

2.0 **Relevant site history**

2.1 None.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Ecologist** – No ecological objection.

3.2 **Environmental Health Officer** – No objections.

3.3 **Highways Officer** – Does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The site is a small part of a car park and surrounding landscaping and access road of Baldock Services, with the site being at the south-east area of the car park near a pond.

4.1.2 Baldock Services is a motorway service area near Junction 10 of the A1(M), which includes car parks, petrol station, main building for restaurants etc., and hotel. The service area is within a higher 'bowl' of landscaping, largely surrounded by trees and planting.

- 4.1.3 Land surrounding the service area is primarily agricultural, and the A1(M) is to the west. The site is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 The erection of electrical infrastructure works to include 2no. substations, 2no meter cabinets, 2no. low voltage feeder pillars and 2no. SCADA (communications) cabinets. Erection of 2.4m high close boarded fencing to screen the two substations. The development is proposed to enable the associated construction of 36 charging bays and upstands for electric vehicles that are stated as being installed under permitted development.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key material considerations are whether the development is acceptable in principle, design and landscaping, neighbour amenity, parking and highways, and ecology.

Principle

- 4.3.2 The site is in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt (RA). Local Plan Policies CGB1 and CGB4 are not considered applicable as the site and the application do not relate to a rural building, rather that it's a motorway service area with a variety of uses and a large car park.
- 4.3.3 Local Plan Policies SP6 and D4 are considered to relate to the proposal. SP6 b) permits proposals that can encourage development in locations which enable sustainable journeys to be made to key services and facilities. It's considered that the development would encourage sustainable journeys given that the proposed development would enable new EV charging points that would not result in local emissions.
- 4.3.4 This leads into Policy D4, wherein policy wording advises that permission will be granted for proposals that would consider local air quality when in use. Given that the proposal by enabling new EV charging points would reduce local emissions, it's considered that the development would fall within the scope of this policy wording. Furthermore, the supporting text describes how D4 can be applied to support sustainable transport within SP6. Overall, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle given that it would be supported by the above policies.

Design and landscaping

- 4.3.5 The proposed works would be fairly conventional for such development, and also similar to works approved under recent planning permission 24/02129/FP nearby also within the service station car park to the SW.
- 4.3.6 In the context of the wider car park and services site, the proposed development would not be out of character as such facilities exist in the car park and are now commonplace in general, and as the height and size of the elements of the development are small. Their visual impacts would also be softened by the backdrop of existing and proposed higher trees and planting.

- 4.3.7 Some areas of landscaping and planting would be removed, however these would be small and it's also considered that this would be compensated by new planting and landscaping proposed. The development would not in any case be significantly visible outside the service area site as views would be obscured by an earth bund and planting. The design and landscaping are considered acceptable. There will also be benefits as the proposal will improve EV infrastructure and potentially reduce carbon emissions. The proposal complies with Policies D1 and NE2 of the Local Plan, and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Neighbour amenity

- 4.3.8 The proposed development would be of a small scale and there are no dwellings or other neighbours near the site that could be affected. As such, the proposal is not considered harmful to amenity. The proposal complies with Policy D3 of the adopted Local Plan.

Parking and highways

- 4.3.9 The proposal will remove 3 parking spaces to allow construction and access of the substations, which is a very small change in the context of the wider service area car park, and is acceptable.
- 4.3.10 The site and proposal is outside of the public highway network and will not be considered to affect it, and the highways officer has not objected. The proposal will not obstruct vehicle circulation in the car park. The proposal complies with Policies T1 and T2 of the Local Plan, and Section 9 of the NPPF.

Ecology

- 4.3.11 The proposal will not affect protected species or their habitats, and the development can provide the mandatory 10% BNG required. The proposal is acceptable with regards to ecology. The proposal complies with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan and Section 15 of the NPPF.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **GRANTED**.

5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:
 - (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
 - (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be North Hertfordshire District Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>).

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Anne McDonald Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 24 June 2025	