

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Alex Howard.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
24/01700/FP	Installation of electric vehicle charging bays and associated works.	Land Opposite Wickes Store At Plinston Retail Park Cotton Brown Park Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 1UP

Submitted Plan Nos

PoGo-SI24-SD-11-01-C PoGo-SI24-SD-12-01-C PoGo-SI24-SD-12-04-B PoGo-SI24-SD-13-01-C PoGo-SI24-SD-13-05 PoGo-SI24-SD-14-05-UKPN SI22-033-03-F-01-B SI22-033-03-F-02-B SI22-033-03-P-03-B

SP6	Sustainable transport
D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
SECN9	Promoting sustainable transport

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 Extensive site history, none relating to this application.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Environmental Health (Noise)** – No objection.

3.2 **Letchworth Heritage Foundation** – None received.

3.3 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site is an area of the car park associated with Plinston Retail Park in Letchworth Garden City. The site is located in the southeast corner of the retail park, within relatively close proximity to the long-established Wickes and Burger King. The site is allocated as an Employment Area in the Local Plan.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning permission is sought to replace 12 no. standard car parking bays with 6 no. EV Charging bays and the introduction of associated works, including EVC upstands, a feeder pillar, power units, bollards, signage, lighting, and substation.

4.3 Key Issues

4.3.1 The key issues in this case are:

- ☐ The Principle of Development/Sustainability
- ☐ Design and Layout
- ☐ Highways and Parking
- ☐ The Impact on Amenity
- ☐ Biodiversity Net Gain

The Principle of Development/Sustainability

4.3.2 Policy SP6 of the Local Plan seeks to deliver accessibility improvements and promote the use of sustainable transport modes insofar as reasonable and practicable. The policy states that the council will encourage development in locations which enable sustainable journeys to be made to key services and facilities and work with Hertfordshire County Council, neighbouring authorities, Highways England, and service providers to ensure that a range of sustainable transport options are available to all potential occupants or users.

4.3.3 The NPPF sets out in paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, and convenient locations.

4.3.4 Furthermore, the recently adopted Sustainability SPD has considerable guidance on the need and benefits of EV charging points to help tackle the Climate Emergency.

4.3.5 The proposal seeks to deliver 6no EV Charging bays in place of 12no standard car parking spaces. The bays would be facilitated by the associated infrastructure, including upstands, a feeder pillar, power units, bollards, signage, lighting, and substation. There is considerable Local and National planning policy that supports the delivery of sustainable measures such as that proposed herein.

4.3.6 As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle, in line with Policy SP6 of the Local Plan, the NPPF, and the North Herts Sustainability SPD.

Design and Layout

4.3.7 The associated development for EV charging bays, such as upstands, a feeder pillar, power units, bollards, signage, lighting, and substation, are fairly utilitarian in appearance but they are necessary to serve their purpose. The site is a car park with limited landscaping, so it is deemed that the proposal will align with this prevailing character.

4.3.8 Therefore, the design and layout of the proposed development is considered acceptable, in line with Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

Highways and Parking

- 4.3.9 There is no objection in highway terms to this proposal, given that it is essentially replacing one type of parking space with another. There are no requirements to alter the layout of the wider road network to facilitate this proposal.
- 4.3.10 The scheme would deliver 6no EV bays in place of 12 standard parking bays, which would result in the loss of 6 parking spaces at the site. However, the site has considerable parking given that it serves the retail park and the benefits associated with delivering EV bays is considered to outweigh the relatively modest net loss of standard parking spaces.
- 4.3.11 As such, the proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policy T1 and T2 of the Local Plan.

The Impact on Amenity

- 4.3.12 The site has no residential neighbours within its immediate vicinity, given the Employment Area allocation and existing large scale Retail Park. Therefore, it is unlikely that the proposal will result in any material harm upon the reasonable living conditions and well-being of neighbours. This is in line with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3.13 This is a form of development which is exempt from BNG Legislation, defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 due to it falling under the scope of the 'de minimis' exemption. This has been confirmed by the North Herts Ecologist.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms in accordance with the relevant local and national planning policies.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None.

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 4.6.1 N/A.

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. This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

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  Sam Dicocco Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 30 September 2024	