



Mark Youngman
Development Management Group Manager
Hertfordshire County Council
Postal Point CHN115
Farnham House
Six Hills Way
Stevenage
SG1 2ST

Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning

North Hertfordshire Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

District ref: 25/01514/FP
HCC ref: NH/25598/2025
HCC received: 24 October 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Senober Khan

Location

Whitehorse Service Station, Clothall Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 6PD

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

AMENDED PROPOSAL

Full Planning Permission : Erection of shop, forecourt canopy, car and jet wash, car and cycle parking, EV vehicle charging points, hard and soft landscaping, and bin stores following demolition of existing buildings

Recommendation

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

Given the applicant has not satisfactorily addressed the concerns raised or committed to implementing the necessary improvements outlined in the HA's previous comments, the HA maintains its objection. The proposal presents unresolved risks to highway safety and user convenience and does not comply with national or local transport and planning policies.

Highways comments:

The Highway Authority (HA) issued a response dated 16 July 2025, recommending objection to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the following reasons:

- No vehicle tracking provided for standard cars (5.03m) around fuel pumps, parking bays, and car wash.
- No tracking for 7.5-ton LGV (7.9m) exiting southeast pumps near bays 10–13.

- Existing access points not reassessed despite changes in traffic conditions.
- No dedicated pedestrian routes; forecourt access is unsafe.
- Visibility issues at the car wash exit due to vegetation and signage.
- No visibility splays provided for either access point.
- Fails to support safe, sustainable transport in line with Local Transport Policy 4.

In response, the applicant submitted a revised Transport Statement (TS) dated September 2025, along with an amended proposed site plan (drawing no. 102 rev P5, received 23 September 2025). The HA has reviewed these documents and provides the following comments:

Vehicle Tracking

The TS includes tracking for a large car to demonstrate access to two parking spaces in front of the proposed shop when fuel bays are in use.

However, tracking for standard vehicles and larger delivery vans (e.g., Luton vans) remains insufficient. The forecourt layout is tight, and if adjacent bays are occupied, multiple manoeuvres may be required to exit, raising operational and safety concerns.

It is unclear why tracking drawings were embedded in the TS rather than submitted separately for detailed assessment, limiting proper scrutiny.

Parking Layout and Accessibility

The disabled parking bay is located furthest from the shop entrance, requiring wheelchair users to navigate areas used by reversing and turning vehicles, exposing them to blind spots and potential conflict.

Vehicles parked in bays adjacent to the store may be unable to exit if vehicles are simultaneously parked at nearby fuel bays. A minimum 6m clearance is required for manoeuvring, in line with standard car park design guidance.

Pedestrian Safety and Access

No dedicated pedestrian routes are provided within the forecourt, compromising pedestrian safety.

The car wash exit presents visibility issues due to vegetation and signage. No physical measures are proposed to prevent pedestrians from crossing paths with exiting vehicles.

Recommended mitigation includes:

- Clear signage warning of vehicle movements,
- Guardrails or barriers to guide pedestrian flow,
- Visibility enhancements (e.g., mirrors, lighting),
- Marked pedestrian zones and crossings set back from vehicle exits.

Access Arrangements

Vehicular access is proposed via existing forecourt crossovers, with no alterations planned. This is unacceptable as it relies on outdated standards.

To meet current design guidance, the access should be upgraded to include:

- Dropped kerbs for pedestrian crossing,
- Tactile paving for visually impaired users,
- Improved kerb alignments for safe vehicle ingress/egress.
- Physical low wall along the back of the public highway to enclose the parking adjacent to the entrance access

The HA has also identified the need to assess visibility splays and reduce crossover widths to minimise pedestrian-vehicle conflict.

Dropped kerbs to facilitate safe pedestrian crossing,

- Tactile paving to assist visually impaired users,
- Improved kerb alignments to ensure vehicles can enter and exit the site safely and efficiently.

Conclusion:

Without these enhancements, the development risks increasing pedestrian-vehicle conflict and compromising overall highway safety.

With new builds the planning process seeks/provides the opportunity to improve conditions for both development and highway safety by applying current higher standards of design, build and safety to new developments, and not to retain and/or continue with past obsolete standards, therefore improvement on the existing is not acceptable.

Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - requires safe and suitable access and allow refusal where highway safety is compromised.

Manual for Streets - Emphasising visibility, pedestrian priority, and safe access design.

Local Transport Policy 4 - Promoting safe, sustainable transport and inclusive access.

New developments should improve upon existing conditions by applying current standards. Retaining obsolete layouts and access arrangements is not acceptable.

Recommendation

Given the applicant has not satisfactorily addressed the concerns raised or committed to implementing the necessary improvements outlined in the HA's previous comments, the HA maintains its objection. The proposal presents unresolved risks to highway safety and user convenience and does not comply with national or local transport and planning policies.

Signed

Senober Khan

9 November 2025