

PLANNING, DESIGN,  
ACCESS AND RETAIL  
STATEMENT

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**Demolition and  
decommissioning of  
existing PFS and linked  
convenience store and  
erection of replacement  
convenience store and  
associated works**

**Esso PFS, 94-96  
High Street, Solihull**

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November 2021



## Summary

**Proposal:**

Demolition and decommissioning of existing PFS and linked convenience store and erection of replacement convenience store and associated works.

**Location:**

Esso PFS, 94-96 High Street, Shirley, Solihull, B90 1TA

**Date:**

November 2021

**Project Reference:**

S21.277

**Client:**

EG Group

**Product of:**

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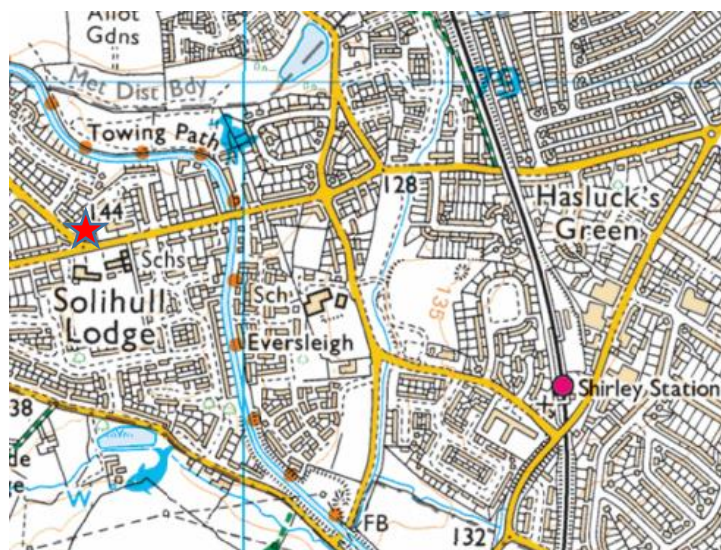
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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design, Access and Retail Statement has been prepared on behalf of EG Group to accompany a full application proposing the demolition and decommissioning of the existing PFS and linked convenience store and erection of replacement convenience store and associated works at Esso PFS, 94-96 High Street, Shirley, Solihull.
- 1.2 The existing PFS is underperforming. EG Group, a market leader in the provision of fuel sale throughout the UK are seeking an alternative use in order to avoid the prospect of a long-term vacancy at the site.
- 1.3 The decommissioning of petrol filling stations is a time consuming and cost hungry process. There are few prospective uses which would enable viable redevelopment to be undertaken and a positive use brought forward at such sites.
- 1.4 The use of the land as a convenience store would represent such a use and will result in a continuation of retail uses at the site, enable job retention and creation and an increased level of choice and value for customers who will overwhelmingly be drawn from the immediate locality.
- 1.5 The proposed store is small in scale and not large enough to give rise to concerns likely to impact on existing shopping patterns.
- 1.6 The purpose of this Planning and Retail Statement is to provide a clear and logical document to assess all material planning considerations associated with the proposed development.
- 1.7 The statement is subdivided into eight sections, including this introduction, which are as follows:
  - Section 2 outlines the site context.
  - Section 3 provides a profile of EG Group.
  - Section 4 sets out a description of the proposed development.
  - Section 5 identifies the relevant national and local planning policies which provide the framework for appraising the application.
  - Section 6 relates to sustainable economic development.
  - Section 7 provides a planning justification.
  - Section 8 Conclusion as to why the proposal should be granted planning permission.

## 2. Site Description

- 2.1 The application site is situated within Shirley, Solihull and comprises an existing PFS at 94-96 High Street. The existing facility includes a linked Spar convenience store. It is 0.21 acres in size and the Spar store as existing comprises 101m<sup>2</sup> GIA.
- 2.2 Solihull is a large market town and the administrative centre of the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull in the West Midlands.
- 2.3 Vehicular and pedestrian access is achieved from two existing access and exit points from High Street and Yardley Wood Road.
- 2.4 The site benefits from exceptional transportation links and is strategically located to access a wide highway network including the A34 and A435. The site also lies to the immediate west of a traffic-free cycle route, as shown on the OS Map below, the route follows the River Cole.



- 2.5 The site is accessible by public transport by virtue of several bus stops located on High Street, the closest being some 90m away. It is also accessible by train by virtue of Shirley train station which is located approximately 0.9 miles away encouraging sustainable modes of transport.
- 2.6 The application site is prominent at High Street and is tired in appearance. It also lies immediately opposite Peterbrook Primary School.
- 2.7 A review of the Environment Agency's Flood Map reveals the site lies

within an area of Flood Risk Zone 1 meaning it is at little or no risk of fluvial or coastal/tidal flooding for the purposes of achieving a planning permission.



2.8 Based on a Historic England Map search, the site is free from constraints in this respect (extract below):



### **Planning History**

2.9 A review of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Planning Portal gave an indication that the site had previously been subject to a degree of planning history which is as follows:

- [PL/1991/01174/FULL](#) – Refurbishment and extensions to service station including jet-wash facility – Approved – 11/11/1991
- [PL/2008/01723/FULL](#) – Extensions to shop – Approved –

17/09/2008

- PL/1991/00564/FULL – Demolition of existing buildings, installation of new pumps and sales building, pump islands, 2no. jet washers and underground petrol tank – Unknown Decision
- PL/1991/00058/FULL – Demolition of existing buildings. New car wash, shop/office buildings, pump island and underground storage tanks – Refusal – 11/04/1991
- PL/1990/00504/FULL – Demolition of existing building, new car wash, shop/office buildings, islands and 10,000-gallon tank – Refusal – 20/12/1990

2.10 In accordance with the above, it is not considered that there is any planning history which could be considered negative in the context of the application to which this statement relates. Therefore, it should be assessed in accordance with prevailing planning policy at a local and national level.

### 3. EG Group

- 3.1 Based in Blackburn, EG Group was founded in 2001 by brothers Mohsin and Zuber Issa with the acquisition of a single petrol filling station in Bury, Greater Manchester. In October 2017 the company rebranded its Europe Wide operations to the EG Group since establishing itself as one of Europe's fastest growing and most recognisable forecourt operators, with an expanding portfolio of 341 freehold-owned petrol stations located throughout mainland UK and a large number of separate roadside welfare facilities (roadside restaurants and motorway service areas). The company operates approximately 2,500 sites across Europe (including the UK) and employs approximately 12,500 people.
- 3.2 Alongside an innovative approach to roadside retail property, EG Group has forged high-profile relationships with nationally and globally recognised retail and convenience brands, now operating in excess of 142 Starbucks drive-to and drive-thru restaurants, 161 KFC restaurants, 12 Burger Kings, 153 Subway sub-stations, 4 Sbarro, 2 Cinnabon and 200 Greggs bakeries. EG Group is the largest franchisee for Subway in Europe and has also recently completed the purchase of Leon – a largely plant / vegan based fast food restaurant.
- 3.3 The company's vision is to collaboratively engage and work with leading retail brand partners to be able to deliver a world class fuel, convenience, food and drink offer that exceeds the expectations of the modern consumer.
- 3.4 The company promotes the following values and business ethos:
- Market awareness with active responsiveness to convenience consumer trends and demands.
  - Delivering value and results consistently to shareholders, stakeholders and partners.
  - Commitment to on-going infrastructure and people investment to build a sustainable business model.
  - Supporting local communities with a view to empowering individuals to grow, contribute and succeed.
- 3.5 EG Group make sustainability a key consideration. To that end, in 2014 they invested £2.6m in providing solar panels for over 20% of the EG sites. In May 2017, it was announced that they would be providing an additional £6m into reducing their carbon footprint. Additionally, six motorway service stations feature rain water harvesting systems, collecting rain water which is then filtered to be used on site.



- 3.6 In 2014, EG Group invested £3.2m in the installation of LED lighting on sites throughout the estate. As well as consuming less energy than incandescent and high-intensity discharge (HID) lights, LED lights use only 2-17 watts of electricity, which is 25%-80% less energy than standard lighting systems, decreasing cost and impact significantly.

### **Sustainability**

- 3.7 As a responsible developer, EG Group have investigated and implemented a series of core sustainable design principles within their project design, delivery and operation that align with a number of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015). Their developments also reduce potable water consumption through high quality water saving technologies within WC and Shower areas, where possible looking for opportunities to recycle / reuse water.
- 3.8 Environmental impact is further reduced on each of their sites with extensive landscaping promoting an increase in Biodiversity and Ecological habitats, they adopt detailed surface water drainage strategies that extensively provide improvement to run off rates and surface water pollution management through SUDS technology.
- 3.9 As a central part of their BREEAM and sustainability design response Euro Garages operate a Sustainable Material Procurement policy, this aims to influence design decisions in the specification of materials that are appropriate to the design and operation of the development considering; life cycle, maintenance, end of use, environmental management systems, responsible and local sourcing opportunities and capital cost. Their Sustainable Material Procurement policy also extends to the construction phase, establishing supply chain and local resource and training opportunities alongside material product certification and ISO accreditation.

## 4. The Proposed Development

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition and decommissioning of an existing PFS and linked convenience store and erection of a replacement convenience store and associated works at Esso PFS, 94-96 High Street, Shirley, Solihull.
- 4.2 It is the intention for the convenience store to be occupied and operated by Asda.
- 4.3 It is noted that there is another convenience goods retailer (one stop) near the site. There are also a cluster of retail and supermarket stores to the east at Solihull Retail Park which include a Sainsbury's Local some 0.9miles from the site.).
- 4.4 The existing convenience store on site amounts to 101m<sup>2</sup>. It is proposed to increase this to 211m<sup>2</sup> to provide a local store that is fit for purpose as a top-up function.
- 4.5 The proposed store will replace the existing convenience store on site and will be located at approximately the same location. There will be parking to the south east in front of the front elevation of the store and to the north west utilising the existing entrance/exit points on site.
- 4.6 The GIA of the unit will comprise 211m<sup>2</sup> with a back of house comprising 55m<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, the tradeable area will comprise 156m<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.7 The proposed development will provide 12 customer parking spaces (inc 2 disabled spaces). The car park will also include 2 spaces with charging points and a cycle storage area, encouraging more carbon neutral modes of transport.
- 4.8 It is now a fundamental part of design standards to ensure that new developments are as accessible as possible by several modes of transport. In this regard and as identified in Chapter 2, the site lies off High Street, where bus stops are within walking distance, allowing methods of sustainable travel throughout the surrounding area. It is also within walking distance of Shirley train station.
- 4.9 In regard to appearance of the proposed store, it will be engineered to be one storey and comprise a modern design which will introduce a positive enhancement to the site and surrounding area.
- 4.10 It is proposed that the unit will operate on a 24hrs basis.
- 4.11 Finally, the proposed development will result in economic benefits in

the form of significant job creation in the form of circa 8 FTE positions.

## 5. Planning Policy Context

5.1 The policy framework against which the application will be assessed comprise the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Solihull Local Plan

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012 and updated in July 2021. The document consolidates national planning policy guidance (including all previous Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance) and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

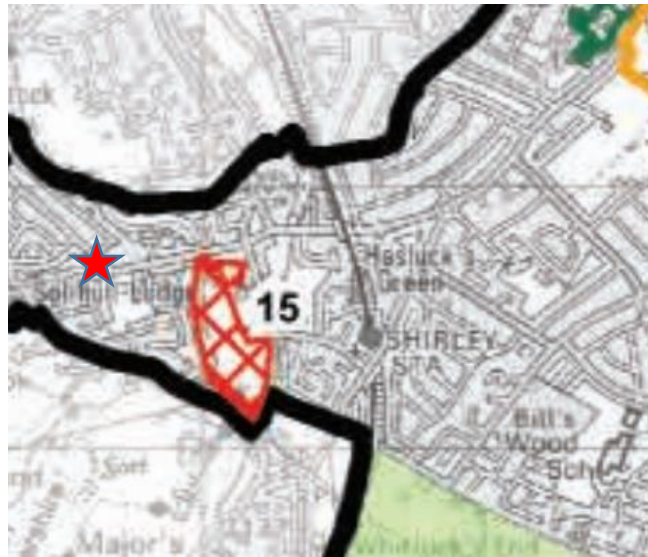
5.3 The overall emphasis of the NPPF is to reiterate the Government's key objectives of facilitating economic growth and securing sustainable development. These overarching policies seek to integrate the needs of planning and transport whilst focusing development in the most appropriate locations, thereby protecting and enhancing the environment.

5.4 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF defined 'sustainable development' and highlights that it has three interrelated dimensions: economic, social and environmental as follows. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles.

- *An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support economic growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;*
- *A social role - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and supports its health, social and cultural well-being; and,*
- *An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy."*

- 5.5 Importantly, these roles should not be undertaken in isolation but should be seen as mutually dependent.
- 5.6 The NPPF is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future (paragraph 148).
- 5.7 The NPPF, at Paragraph 119 states: *Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.*
- 5.8 Paragraph 85 states: *Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.*
- 5.9 Paragraph 87 states: *Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main City centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main City centre uses should be located in City centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.*
- 5.10 Another key consideration outlined in Section 11 of the NPPF is making effective use of land, highlighting the importance of ensuring that developments make good use of sites that are underutilised. It also highlights the need to make such sites accessible by a range of transport, including options that suit those with limited ability and disabilities.
- Solihull Local Plan**
- 5.11 The Solihull Local Plan was adopted by the Council in December 2013 and comprises the principal document against which applications for this area are assessed.

5.12 As shown on the Proposals Map extract below, the site constitutes white land (unallocated) within the settlement boundary:



5.13 The following policies and proposals contained within the Local Plan are considered relevant to the proposal:

| Policy Reference         | In relation to  |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>National Policy 1</b> | National Planning Policy Framework Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development |
| <b>P2</b>                | Maintain Strong Competitive Town Centres  |
| <b>P7</b>                | Accessibility and Ease of Access  |
| <b>P8</b>                | Managing Demand for Travel and Reducing Congestion                                  |
| <b>P15</b>               | Securing Design Quality   |
| <b>P19</b>               | Range and Quality of Local Services   |

5.14 The key policy in relation to the proposed development is Policy P2 (*Maintain Strong, Competitive Town Centres*). The policy outlines the Council will maintain strong and competitive town centres. Town centres will be the focus for all new developments including retail and other commercial development in line with the town centre first approach of the NPPF.

5.15 Notwithstanding, the final section of the policy titled Main Town Centre Uses Elsewhere states:

*“Proposals for main town centre uses elsewhere, that do not accord with the policies and proposals of this plan, will be considered in the light of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. Elsewhere*

*there is a presumption against development unless it is promoted by the policies and proposals of the Plan. This approach is justified by the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, the opportunities available for development in the Borough's town centres by findings of the Council's Retail Capacity Study"*

- 5.16 In accordance with the above, given the site is out of centre, a sequential assessment of alternate sites within nearby centres would be required. There is no locally set Retail Impact Assessment threshold below the NPPF level of 2,500m<sup>2</sup>. As the proposal is significantly below this threshold a Retail Impact Assessment does not accompany this application.

**Supplementary Planning Documents**

- 5.17 The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) adopted by Solihull Council are considered to be of relevance to the proposed development.

- Vehicle Parking Standards and Travel Plans SPD (2006)
- Shopfronts and Signs SPG (1995)

## 6. Sustainable Economic Development

- 6.1 Sustainable development is identified in NPPF as a golden thread running through the planning system.
- 6.2 The application site comprises land occupied by an existing Esso PFS and convenience store at High Street, Shirley. The existing PFS is underperforming. EG Group, a market leader in the provision of fuel sale throughout the UK are seeking an alternative use in order to avoid the prospect of long-term vacancy at the site.
- 6.3 The site is brownfield in nature within the settlement boundary. This application proposes the redevelopment and decommissioning of it in order to provide a small-scale convenience store for local “top up” shopping, which will be occupied by Asda.
- 6.4 The site is free from any planning history which could be considered detrimental in the context of the application to which this statement relates.
- 6.5 The decommissioning of petrol filling stations is a time-consuming cost hungry process. There are few prospective uses which would enable the viable redevelopment to be undertaken and a positive use brought forward at such sites.
- 6.6 The proposed development is therefore considered a positive use of a potentially long-term vacant site, which will result in a series of benefits for the local community, in addition to economic benefits by way of job creation.
- 6.7 The site is located in a highly sustainable and accessible location. This is evidenced upon in the Transport Note which forms part of the application package.
- 6.8 As shown on the proposed elevational drawings, the design/appearance of the units will be modern. The proposed development is proportionate within its surroundings and the site more generally and is fit for purpose as a “top up” shopping facility.
- 6.9 It is considered important for the image of the site in general that it is in occupation and providing the employment generation which it has the potential to provide – avoiding the prospect of a long-term vacancy.
- 6.10 The proposed unit will allow for the employment of circa 8 people. The economic benefits arising from the proposed development are



therefore significant and form a material consideration in the determination of the application to which this statement relates.

- 6.11 It is likely that staff will be locally based and benefit from a training and employment programme. Therefore, should the application be approved, the development will make a positive contribution towards local employment provision.
- 6.12 Further to the above, the Covid-19 health crisis has had a direct impact upon the property market through the disruption of both existing property transactions and proposed development and construction projects. The full 'demand-side' impact upon the wider economy is yet to unfold. Notwithstanding, the Bank of England and Office of Budget Responsibility have both predicted that the UK could face its deepest recession in over 200 years.
- 6.13 The crisis has had an immediate impact on the use of employment floorspace. Whilst a number of national stores have recently announced closures resulting in job losses, terms have been agreed with Asda to occupy the site subject to receipt of a satisfactory planning permission. It is therefore not speculative and the full-time employment positions identified above can be delivered in an expedient manner upon receipt of planning permission.
- 6.14 Further to the above, the following is of note in respect of the UK economy and retail sector looking forward:
- The UK economy is expected to shrink by 11.3% this year and not return to its pre-crisis size until the end of 2022.
  - The government's independent forecaster, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expects the number of unemployed people to surge to 2.6 million by the middle of next year.
  - The unemployment rate to be expected to reach 7.5%, its highest level since the financial crisis in 2009.
  - The OBR said the coronavirus pandemic had "*delivered the largest peacetime shock to the global economy on record*", while recent restrictions across the UK had taken "*the wind out of an already flagging recovery*".
  - The OBR also predicted a 2% decline in the UK's economic output while driving up inflation, unemployment and public borrowing.
  - In July 2020, the Centre for Retail Research identified – "*Our new forecast is that total retail sales in 2020 will fall overall by -4.6% compared to 2019 (or a reduction of £17,281m). The level of retail sales will not regain last year's level (2019) until 2022.*"
  - In respect of bricks and mortar retailers, the prediction states – "*The Centre for Retail Research forecasts that the lockdown will have a severe impact on the retail sector, most of which was in a poor state even before*

*coronavirus. It will survive a long lockdown only with great difficulty. Department store groups, fashion and footwear, large general stores as well as the smaller independents are most vulnerable. We estimate that in 2020, a total of 20,622 stores will close (against 16,073 in 2029) and job losses will rise to 235,704 people (against 143,128 last year)."*

- 6.15 It is therefore concluded that the proposed development comprises sustainable economic development which will continue to enable sustainable economic growth in a highly sustainable location.

## 7. Appraisal

7.1 In this section, an appraisal of the proposed development is provided. The following observations set the context for the appraisal:

- The site is strategically located with immediate access to a wide highway network including High Street, the A435 and the A34.
- The existing PFS is underperforming and therefore, EG Group, a market leader in the provision of the sale of fuel is seeking an alternative use for the site in order to safeguard its positive use;
- The application proposes the redevelopment and decommissioning of the site in order to provide a small-scale convenience store to be occupied by Asda. It is not speculative;
- The proposed development will result in significant economic benefits in the form of circa 8 full time positions;
- The unit is not of a scale to give rise to retail impact considerations and will fulfil a “top-up” shopping function. It will provide a convenient walk to facility to serve residents in the locality;
- The site is highly prominent and therefore it is considered important that it is in positive use and providing jobs/services;
- As existing, the site includes a Spar store comprising 101m<sup>2</sup> therefore an increase in sales floor area of 56m<sup>2</sup> is proposed.

7.2 The application proposes the demolition and decommissioning of the existing PFS and linked convenience store and erection of replacement convenience store and associated works at the Esso PFS, High Street, Shirley. Evidence of compliance with relevant policy at a local and national level is provided below.

### **Compliance with National Policy 1 (*National Planning Policy Framework Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development*)**

7.3 The NPPF states that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development. At the heart of national planning policy is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As its title suggests, National Policy 1 of the Solihull Local Plan sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

7.4 Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will

be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Within this section of the statement it will be demonstrated that the proposed development accords with relevant policies.

- 7.5 Section 11 of the NPPF (*Making effective use of land*) states that planning policies and decisions should give “*substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land*”. The application site constitutes brownfield land as it is previously developed and has permanent structures built within it. The application site is contaminated and the decommissioning of petrol filling stations is a time consuming and cost hungry process. It is therefore considered the proposed development should be looked upon favourably.
- 7.6 Further to the above, it has been evidenced in Section 6 of this Statement that the proposed development comprises Sustainable economic development which will enable the continued positive use of the site in addition to job creation.

**Compliance with Policy P2 (*Maintain Strong, Competitive Town Centres*)**

- 7.7 The Local Plan follows the town centre first approach. Town centres will be the focus for all new developments including retail and other commercial development in line with the approach set out in the NPPF. Main town centre uses include retail, professional and financial, cafés/restaurants, public houses, hot food takeaways, leisure and entertainment, arts, culture and tourism.
- 7.8 The final section of Policy P2 outlines proposals for main town centre uses outside of the town centre will be considered in the light of the requirements of the NPPF. It is accepted that the site would be classified as out of centre in respect of retail policy. As the site is out of centre, a sequential assessment of alternate sites within nearby centres is required and accompanies this application. There is no locally set Retail Impact Assessment threshold below the NPPF level of 2,500m<sup>2</sup>. As the proposal is significantly below this threshold – comprising just 6.2% of this threshold – a Retail Impact Assessment is not required.
- 7.9 Given the small-scale nature of the proposed store, the catchment area for it to trade within is limited in the extreme. To this end, it is considered that the area will be limited to a 10-minute walking radius. In a practical sense, the catchment area will likely be even more restricted.

- 7.10 The above is evidenced via innumerable small-scale convenience store offerings from national supermarket operators throughout the UK which trade in harmony with each other within, on the edge of and indeed outside of retail centres. Such stores are overwhelmingly used by customers on foot, living in close proximity to such operations.
- 7.11 Further to this, EG Group is not aware of any existing, committed or planned public and private investments within relevant centres which could be adversely affected by the proposed redevelopment of the existing PFS and linked Spar store to provide a small-scale convenience store.
- 7.12 Given the size of the unit proposed and performance of similar scale convenience units throughout the UK, the proposed store will fulfil a “top up” shopping role which will overwhelmingly be used by residents living in close proximity to the site.
- 7.13 The store will also provide dedicated car parking facilities in addition to publicly accessible EV Charging spaces of which there is limited availability within the surrounding area.
- 7.14 In accordance with the above, the proposal accords with Policy P2 and the development of the site in order to provide a small-scale convenience store is in accordance with prevailing policy.

**Compliance with Policy P19 (*Range and Quality of Local Services*)**

- 7.15 Policy P19 identifies Solihull’s variety of local centres and makes reference to Parades and Local Shops. It states local retail parades and local shops providing for day to day needs, including those serving villages will be sustained, all new development will need to be sensitive to local character and enhance the public realm. The policy proceeds to explain that shops, facilities and services are encouraged to develop and modernise in a sustainable way that encourages their retention.
- 7.16 The application site includes an existing convenience store which is considered to be a local store providing day to day needs within a walkable distance for local residents and users of the facility.
- 7.17 The proposed development aims to ensure that the provision of a convenience store remains on site. The existing PFS is underperforming and consequently, the applicants are seeking an alternative use in order to avoid the prospect of a long-term vacancy at the site.
- 7.18 It is considered that this is in accordance with Policy 19 as it allows the application site to modernise in a sustainable way whilst retaining the convenience store on site.

7.19 The proposal is also sensitive to the local character of the area and will significantly enhance its public realm. The existing store is considered to be tired in appearance, the proposal therefore will allow for its revitalisation. As existing, the convenience store comprises 101m<sup>2</sup> and does not include a 'back of house'. The development proposal includes a minor increase of 56m<sup>2</sup> of tradeable floor area, this is broadly 50% increase in sales space and considered de minimis in scale. In regards to the footprint of the building this will be an increase of 101m<sup>2</sup> which is significantly below the NPPF Retail Impact Assessment threshold of 2,500m<sup>2</sup> comprising just 4% of this threshold. The proposed development is therefore considered to be of a scale appropriate to the setting of the site and its proposed use.

7.20 It is therefore considered that the proposed development meets the requirements of Policy P19.

**Compliance with Policy P7 (*Accessibility and Ease of Access*)**

7.21 Policy P7 states all new development should be focused in the most accessible locations and seek to enhance existing accessibility levels and promote ease of access. Proposed offices, retail and leisure development should be located in town centres, or other established location including Birmingham Business Park, Blythe Valley Business Park, Birmingham Airport and NEC as defined in Policies P1, P2 and P19. Elsewhere, they should be within a 400m walk distance of a bus stop served by a commercially run high frequency bus service.

7.22 Whilst the application site is located outside of the town centre and those established locations listed above, it has been evidenced that the proposed development is accessible via a range of public and sustainable transportation option. It is within 400m of a bus stop served by a commercially run high frequency bus service. The bus stop is received by the following West Midlands National Express services:

- 2
- 49
- 863

7.23 The map below illustrates the location of existing EV Charging Points within the surrounding area. The proposed development includes provision for EV Charging Points on site which is limited within the area therefore meeting a local need and encouraging sustainable modes of transport.



7.24 With all of the above taken into consideration, the proposal is in accordance with Policy P7.

**Compliance with Policy P8 (*Managing Demand for Travel and Reducing Congestion*)**

7.25 Similar to the above, Policy P8 states all development proposals should have regard to transport efficiency and highway safety. As the proposal utilises the existing vehicular access and exits on site, the proposed development is not considered to result in a significant increase in delay to vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists or a reduction in safety for any users of the highway or other transport network.

7.26 The policy hopes to ensure new development reduces the need to travel e.g. by promoting linked trips and encouraging mixed use development where appropriate. It has been reiterated throughout this statement that the proposal is for a small-scale convenience store which will act as a “top up” function and work in conjunction with existing facilities of the surrounding area. It is also ideally located within a residential settlement which will reduce the need for these residents to travel.

7.27 There is provision for parking and servicing in line with the accompanying SPD.

7.28 It is considered the proposal will encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport as the routes to the site from the nearest bus stops is minimal and of good quality, attractive for all users.

7.29 It is therefore considered the proposal is in accordance with Policy P8.

**Compliance with Policy P15 (*Securing Design Quality*)**

7.30 Policy P15 provides a set of design principles for applicant to adhere

to, concerning the scale and visual appearance of the building as well as its environmental performance, impact on flood risk and the natural environment, its integration with its surrounding and neighbouring public spaces.

- 7.31 The design of the proposed development is illustrated within the drawings which form part of the application package. The drawings show a modern design which will comprise an aesthetically pleasing development. It is considered the proposal conserves and enhances local character and is of a scale, massing and density appropriate for its intended use.
- 7.32 The existing PFS and linked store is tired and in need of updating, accordingly, the proposed development will represent a significant improvement in comparison to the existing development. This proposal is seeking an alternative use in order to avoid the prospect of a long-term vacancy at the site and its possible deterioration and abandonment.
- 7.33 Given the prominence of the site at High Street near Shirley Town Centre, it is considered the proposed unit will contribute to the site and comprise a strong design statement which is an enhancement than its existing outlook.

#### **Other Material Planning Considerations**

- 7.34 A comprehensive suite of documents has been submitted as part of this planning application package. Accordingly, a summary of other considerations is provided below:

##### Economic Considerations

- 7.35 A summary of economic considerations is provided in Section 6 of this statement. Notwithstanding, it should be reiterated that although the proposal is not strictly an economic proposal, it will create approximately 8 new jobs for local people. The importance of sustainable economic development is a golden thread running through planning policy at national level.

##### Highways

- 7.36 DTP have produced a Transport Note to accompany the application to report on the anticipated highways and transportation issues related to the proposed development.
- 7.37 The report confirms:

*The proposed redevelopment of the site consists of the demolition of the existing PFS and construction of a new convenience store with associated car parking. The proposals include the closure of the north-eastern*



*access to Yardley Wood Road, with the footway and verge reinstated. No changes are proposed to the existing northern access to Yardley Wood Road or the southern access to Shirley High Street.*

*A review of the highway accident data for the site access locations and adjacent highway has been reviewed and identified no pre-existing patterns or trends of incidents that could be impacted by the redevelopment proposals.*

*As part of the redevelopment a total of 13 car parking spaces will be provided inclusive of mobility impaired and EV charging spaces. This level of provision is consistent with the local parking standards. The servicing arrangements for the site will remain essentially unchanged with vehicle tracking provided to demonstrate the largest anticipated service vehicle can be accommodated within the site.*

*A review of the sites accessibility by non-car modes of travel has identified that a very good level of access would be available. A trip-generation assessment has been undertaken which demonstrates that the proposals, would result in a significant reduction in vehicular activity during the highway peak periods.*

*It is therefore considered that the redevelopment would have a beneficial impact on the operation of the local highway network as vehicle movements associated with this site would be significantly reduced. On the basis of this TN, it is concluded that there are no reasons why the proposed redevelopment of the site should not be granted planning permission on highways grounds.*

#### Drainage

- 7.38 A Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Goodsons and forms part of the application package. The report confirms the acceptability of the proposal in respect of surface water and foul drainage requirements.

#### **Conclusion**

- 7.39 It has been comprehensively evidenced that the proposal will result in significant economic benefits in the form of job creation. Further to the appropriate retail assessments have been undertaken – there are no sequentially preferable sites and the impact of the proposal will be minimal. The proposed store is located in an edge of centre location and will complement existing facilities in the area.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1 This Planning, Design, Access and Retail Statement has been prepared on behalf of EG Group to accompany a full application proposing the demolition and decommissioning of the existing PFS and linked convenience store and erection of replacement convenience store and associated works at Esso PFS, 94-96 High Street, Shirley, Solihull.
- 8.2 The existing PFS is underperforming. EG Group, a market leader in the provision of fuel sale throughout the UK are seeking an alternative use in order to avoid the prospect of a long-term vacancy at the site.
- 8.3 It has been evidenced within this statement that the impact arising from the proposed development will be minimal linked to the small scale of the unit proposed. There is no locally set Retail Impact Assessment threshold below the NPPF level of 2,500m<sup>2</sup>. As the proposal is significantly below this threshold – comprising just 4% of this threshold – a Retail Impact Assessment does not accompany this application.
- 8.4 A sequential assessment has been undertaken to demonstrate that there are no preferable sites which are suitable, viable or available in the relevant centres.
- 8.5 The proposal will result in significant economic benefits in the form of 8 FTE positions. This comprises a material consideration in the determination of the application.
- 8.6 This Statement has demonstrated that the development, as proposed, that it is compliant with relevant policies contained within the adopted District Local Plan and is considered to be in accordance with the document.
- 8.7 Further to the above, a comprehensive suite of relevant supporting documents is included within the application package. The documents identify the accessibility of the proposal in respect of relevant material considerations.
- 8.8 In conclusion, the proposed development will result in a series of benefits including significant economic benefits. It is therefore respectfully requested that the Council grant planning approval for the proposed development.