

Bassetlaw District Council
Planning Department
Queen's Buildings
Potter Street
Worksop
Notts
S80 2AH

13 October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
RETENTION OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING HUB WITH ASSOCIATED WORKS
MOTO BLYTH, HILLTOP ROUNDABOUT, A1(M) AND A614, S81 8HG
PLANNING PORTAL REFERENCE: PP-12501275**

On behalf of the applicant, The Electric Highway Company Limited (GRIDSERVE), please find enclosed an application seeking planning permission for the retention of an Electric Vehicle Charging Hub (EV Hub) and associated works at the Moto Blyth service station. In addition to this letter, the application is supported by the following documents:

- Application Form;
- CIL Question Form;
- Terra HP 175-350 Charger Data Sheet
- Site Location Plan (drawing no. 7928_160)
- Block Plan (drawing no. 7928_161 A)
- Elevations (drawing no. 7928_162)
- General Site Arrangement Plan (drawing no. 7928_163 A)
- Setting Out Plan (drawing no. 7928_164 A)
- Charger and Power Cabinet Details Sheet (drawing no. 7928_165)
- Substation Detail Sheet (drawing no. ENV2270-SP 2)

Background

GRIDSERVE is a tech-enabled sustainable energy business. GRIDSERVE develop, build, own and operate dependable, low cost, clean energy solutions for critical power infrastructure. To help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible GRIDSERVE deliver net zero carbon solutions for power and transportation which are designed to be better and less expensive than legacy solutions. To facilitate this transition to Electric Vehicles, GRIDSERVE is implementing and building a network of high-power chargers across the country that will provide UK motorists with fast, easy and low carbon charging solutions.

GRIDSERVE is delivering Electric Hubs at strategic locations across the UK and this year will see a significant increase in these sites becoming operational. Many will be located at existing destinations such as retail parks and garden centres and will allow customers to use those amenities whilst being able to access dependable charging infrastructure.

In order to meet the Government's target to deliver high powered EV chargers at every motorway service area across England by 2023, GRIDSERVE is working with service station operators across the strategic road network to rapidly expand charging provision.

In conjunction with the rollout of Electric Hubs across the UK, GRIDSERVE is also rolling out a network of Electric Forecourts® - the new generation of a fuel station. The UK's first Electric Forecourt® opened at Braintree, Essex in 2020 followed by a site in Norwich which opened in April 2022. GRIDSERVE has secured consent for a number of other Electric Forecourt® sites to be delivered to include sites in Gateshead, Uckfield, Plymouth, Stevenage and Bromborough, while Gatwick Airport's Electric Forecourt is due to open later this year.

Local Planning Authorities have a significant role to play in addressing climate change. The RTPI/ TCPA in its latest Climate Crisis Guide (January 2023) confirmed that decision-makers should recognise that energy technologies are rapidly improving and should be prepared to deal positively with the implications of new transport and energy technologies. This includes infrastructure for electric vehicles and the guidance encourages authorities to consider proposals positively.

Site Context

The site forms part of the Blyth motorway service area which is located off the Hilltop Roundabout at the junction of the A1(M) and A614, approximately 1.1km to the north of the village of Blyth.

The application site itself comprises a parking area and adjacent land directly to the south of the main car park at the services situated close to the Travelodge. The immediate area surrounding the site is formed of hardstanding and landscape area around the car park.

The Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the retention of an Electric Vehicle Charging Hub (EV Hub) and associated works. Development work on the GRIDSERVE EV Hub at the site was completed in June 2023 so as to meet the Government strategy for charging at motorway service areas and to avoid operational delays. As constructed, the EV Hub provides 10no. charging bays (including a 2no. oversized bays), as well as associated equipment comprising T175/350 high power charging upstands, power cabinets, 2no. substations, and SCADA & meter cabinets.

Planning Policy

Under Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all development decisions should be made in accordance with the relevant development plan policies, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy

The current national planning policy guidance for making decisions in England is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was last updated in September 2023.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Paragraph 8 outlines the overarching objectives which contribute to sustainable development. These are:

- **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure
- **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 11 further confirms that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Section 9 promotes sustainable transport, and paragraph 110 outlines that development proposals should be assessed as to whether appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes have been taken up; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and any significant impacts on the transport network, or on highway safety, can be mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Paragraph 111 states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Section 14 concerns meeting the challenge of climate change. Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Local Planning Policy

The application site is located within the administrative boundary of Bassetlaw District Council and as such is subject to planning policy contained within the Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD, adopted in December 2011. Policies of most relevance to this application contained within the document are:

- Policy DM4 – Design & Character; and
- Policy DM13 – Sustainable Transport

The emerging Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020-2037 was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2022 and it is currently undergoing examination in public. Given its advanced stage, the following policies contained within the emerging plan are also considered to be of relevance, though as not yet adopted they carry limited weight:

- Policy ST35 – Design Quality;
- Policy ST50 – Reducing Carbon Emissions, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; and
- Policy ST55 – Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

Planning Considerations

The following sections assess the key material considerations for the site and these are discussed in turn.

Principle of Development

This application seeks planning permission for the retention of an Electric Vehicle Charging Hub with associated equipment to meet the immediate charging needs of electric vehicle users travelling along the A1(M) and surrounding road network. The charging hub is located within an existing parking area on previously developed land and it contributes positively towards tackling the effects of climate change.

The development meets with the policy aims of the NPPF set out in paragraphs 112 and 152 and it accords with Policy DM13 (Sustainable Transport) of the adopted Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD. It also meets with the requirements of emerging local plan policies ST50 (Reducing Carbon Emissions, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation) and ST55 (Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel) by providing development in a highly accessible location that helps to facilitate sustainable transport, which in turn reduces carbon emissions to help reduce the impacts of climate change.

Location

The EV Charging Hub has been installed within an existing secondary car parking area at the service area to the east of the Travelodge. This location has been chosen due to its relative separation from the main car park and for its accessibility to and from the main amenity building and adjacent Travelodge.

The location of the EV Hub enables ease of use for those using the service area without impacting on the existing operation of the main car park and on the circulation of vehicles. It also allows for convenient 24/7 access to the charging infrastructure and to the amenities provided within the main building of the service area by those using the chargers.

The associated equipment, including communications, meter housing and substations has been installed on an area of soft landscaping between the car parks and immediately to the north of the charging bays to ensure efficient and high-powered operation of the chargers. The location of the development is the most suitable within the wider service area from an operational perspective and it is also considered acceptable from a planning perspective.

Design and Appearance

The appearance of the chargers and associated infrastructure is detailed within the drawings and product guides provided as part of the application submission. The supporting equipment is required for the type and power of charger provided on site.

The hub and associated equipment has been designed to be functional but unobtrusive when viewed in the context of the existing car park and wider motorway service area. The development is appropriate in terms of scale and is practical for its intended use.

In light of the design and function of the charging hub and its context within an existing motorway service area, the development accords with Core Strategy & Development Management Policy DM4 (Design and Character) and emerging local plan policy ST35 (Design Quality).

Transport

The EV Hub provides charging facilities for users of the adjacent A1(M) in a convenient location alongside the other amenities at the motorway service area. The development does not generate significant additional trips but supports and promotes the use of a sustainable mode of transport for those already on the road. The EV Hub utilises the existing car park access and there have been no changes to existing access arrangements at the motorway service area.

The standard EV charging bays measure 2.5m x 4.9m, with the oversized bays measuring 3.6m x 4.9m. The size of the bays allows for manoeuvrability around a parked vehicle to ensure that all users can access the chargers easily.

The EV Hub represents an additional facility at the service area which does not materially impact upon the operation, capacity or vehicle flow within the main car park. Consequently, the EV Hub does not have an unacceptable impact on highway or pedestrian safety, and it does not result in unacceptable impacts on the wider highway network in line with paragraph 111 of the NPPF. As such the EV Hub is in accordance with policies contained within the adopted Core Strategy & Development Management Policy DM13 (Sustainable Transport) and emerging local plan policy ST55 (Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel).

Noise and Amenity

By virtue of the nature of the development and its location at a busy motorway service area, the EV Hub does not adversely affect the amenity of guests staying at the nearby Travelodge through noise or other disturbance. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

Conclusions

The application seeks planning permission to retain a newly constructed EV Charging Hub with associated equipment at the Blyth Motorway Service Area.

The development has been delivered in line with the Government target to provide additional high powered electric vehicle charging facilities at each motorway service area in England by the end of 2023. It supports local and national objectives of facilitating sustainable modes of transport, while making a significant contribution to GRIDSERVE's mission to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as

possible and address climate change. The provision of an EV Charging Hub at this location is fully in conformance with national and local planning policy and accordingly the application should be granted planning permission without delay.

The application (including relevant form, this cover letter and accompanying documentation) has been submitted electronically via the Planning Portal. We look forward to receiving confirmation of the name of the case officer, the planning application reference number and determination timescales shortly. Should any subsequent clarifications or information be required, please do let us know as soon as possible so it can be provided in a timely manner.

Yours faithfully,



John Shakespear MRTPI
Senior Planner
GRIDSERVE Sustainable Energy Ltd