

South Gloucestershire Council  
Department for Environment and Community Services  
PO Box 1954  
Strategic Planning  
Bristol  
BS37 0DD

12<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)**  
**INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING FACILITIES WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**MOLLIES MOTEL AND DINER, CRIBBS CAUSEWAY, BRISTOL, BS10 7TL**  
**PLANNING PORTAL REFERENCE: PP-12474457**

On behalf of the applicant (GRIDSERVE Sustainable Energy Ltd), I hereby enclose an application for the installation of additional electric vehicle charging facilities and associated infrastructure at Mollies Motel, Bristol. The application is supported by the following reports and documents.

- Application Form and Certificates;
- T184 Charger Specification and Information Sheet;
- Site Location Plan (ref. 8806.12-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1010);
- Existing Site Plan (ref. 8806.12-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1011);
- Existing Sectional Elevations (ref. 8806.12-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1013)
- Proposed Site Plan (ref. 8806.12-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1012);
- Proposed Sectional Elevations (ref. 8806.12-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1014).

### **Background**

GRIDSERVE Sustainable Energy Ltd 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 many are now operational. EV Hubs are typically located at existing destinations such retail parks and garden centres allowing customers to use those amenities whilst being able to access dependable charging infrastructure.

In conjunction with the rollout of EV Hubs across the UK, GRIDSERVE has developed the Electric Forecourt® to meet existing and growing infrastructure demands of electric vehicle users, owners and operators. Designed as the new generation of 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's most recent Electric Forecourt® opened at Gatwick Airport in December 2023, while planning

permission for several other sites, including those in Plymouth, Gateshead, Basildon, Markham Vale and Stevenage has also been secured.

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 application site is located at Mollies Motel, Bristol. Mollies Motel comprises three main buildings which include overnight accommodation and a restaurant. Parking for the Mollies Motel and Diner is located in the south of the site, near the diner and reception, and a larger parking area for overnight guests is located to the north of the site. Mollies Motel is accessed off a roundabout intersecting the A4018 (Cribbs Causeway) and Lysander Road with an exit directly onto the A4018. Development including a Miller & Carter restaurant and a Travelodge is located to the east of the site and the M5 is situated to the north.

The application site itself is located within the car park situated to the front of the Mollies Motel & Diner site. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of flooding from any source. The site is within a wider area indicated on the councils Policies Map as undesignated open space, however the application site is within an existing developed site. The site does not contain or lie adjacent to any heritage assets.

### **Planning History**

Permission for the existing Mollies Motel and Diner at the site was originally granted in October 2017 (ref. PT17/2332/F). The permission approved the demolition of an existing hotel on the site, allowing for the construction of the motel, diner, car parks and associated works. This permission was subsequently amended under non-material amendments and variations which included the addition of electric vehicle charging spaces and associated infrastructure. This development has been built out and subsequently an extension to form a gym for hotel guest has been approved (ref. P21/02678/F) and an application for a single storey extension to form flexible event space for the motel and the erection of a detached external store building and associated works is currently under consideration (ref. P23/03542/F).

### **The Proposal**

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of additional electric vehicle charging facilities and associated infrastructure within the car park at Mollies Motel & Diner.

Currently there are 7 no. EV charging bays in the road fronting car park serving Mollies Motel & Diner. Further EV charging is provided in the car park to the rear for overnight customers. The application seeks to install an additional 6 no. EV charging bays served by T184 chargers including 1no. oversized bay.

The equipment required for the additional charging bays to function comprises 3no. T184 charging upstands, a packaged substation with metering housing, LV Feeder cabinet and SCADA cabinet. The associated equipment is proposed to be fenced, as shown on the drawings, to match existing fencing at the site. The equipment is appropriate for the anticipated dwell time for visitors to the diner and those using the motel.

## **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) (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 114 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 115 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. Paragraph 116 states that development should be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations .

Section 14 relates to meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. Paragraph 157 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.

The Government confirmed in its Autumn Statement 2023 that it intends to remove unnecessary planning constraints and consult on amendments to the NPPF to ensure the planning system prioritises the rollout of EV chargepoints, including EV charging hubs.

### Local Planning Policy

The application site is located within the administrative boundary of South Gloucestershire Council. The relevant documents of the Development Plan comprise the Core Strategy (2013) (CS) and the Policies, Site and Places Plan (2017) (PSPP). The council also has a number of adopted Supplementary Planning Documents. The new Local Plan is in preparation however is at an early stage and therefore not a material consideration for this application. The policies considered to be of most relevance to the proposal are:

- Policy CS1 – High Quality Design
- Policy CS2 – Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS4a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CS5 – Location of Development
- Policy CS8 – Improving Accessibility
- Policy CS26 – Cribbs/ Patchway New Neighbourhood
- Policy PSP3 – Trees and Woodland
- Policy PSP5 – Undesignated Open Spaces within Urban Areas and Settlements
- Policy PSP8 – Residential Amenity
- Policy PSP16 – Parking Standards

### **Climate Change**

The council declared a climate emergency in July 2019. Since, the council has published its Climate Emergency Strategy and its Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan 2023 to 2024. The Climate Emergency Strategy sets out that reducing carbon emissions will involve switching from diesel and petrol vehicles to electric vehicles. In March 2023 the council published its Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy which states that the council recognises that reliable and accessible charging infrastructure is essential to encourage EV ownership.

### **The Planning Appraisal**

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

#### Principle of Development

Mollies Motel & Diner is a popular roadside stop-off destination along the A4018 and close to Junction 17 of the M5.

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of additional electric vehicle charging spaces and associated equipment to meet the immediate charging needs of visitors to the diner and motel, and of those already passing the site.

The charging bays will be provided within an existing car parking area with the associated infrastructure located on a small area of low level landscaping within the existing built confines of the Mollies Motel & Diner site.

Further provision of EV charging on the site will contribute positively towards addressing climate change and meeting local and national EV charging objectives.

The development meets with the policy aims of the NPPF set out in paragraphs 116 and 157, and it clearly aligns with Policies CS4a (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) and CS5 (Location of Development) of the Local Development Plan by providing sustainable vehicle technology in a highly accessible location that helps to facilitate sustainable transport, assist in the transition

towards zero emission vehicles, and in turn, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions to help reduce the impacts of climate change.

### Location

The provision of additional EV charging facilities in place of existing parking bays will enable the ease of use for those charging vehicles without impact on the rest of the car park or the circulation of vehicles around the site. The location of the additional EV charging bays will also allow convenient access to the charging facilities for customers of the diner and motel.

The associated charging equipment will be installed on nearby amenity landscaping to ensure efficient and high-powered operation of the chargers and reduce the loss of parking at the site. The installation of equipment in this area will have a negligible impact upon the landscaping around the car park and it will not interrupt any pedestrian walking routes or vehicle circulation areas.

The location of the development is the most suitable within the site from an operational perspective, and it is also considered acceptable in planning terms.

### 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 chargers will utilise Mollies branding and will match the appearance of those already on site, thus helping to provide a cohesive and uniform overall scheme which will be seen in the context of the existing motel and diner.

The supporting equipment is required for the type and power of chargers provided on site. The infrastructure is proposed in a small area of landscaping off the car park, with the substation located behind an existing billboard, limiting its impact on the character and appearance of the site. Further, the associated infrastructure is proposed to be fenced to match existing fencing at the site. The equipment has been designed to be functional and unobtrusive and when considered in the wider context of the car park and existing built development and is considered to be appropriate in terms of scale and appearance.

In light of the design and function of the proposals, the development will not be seen as being overly dominant or out of character with its surroundings, and it therefore accords with Policy CS1 (High Quality Design) of the Local Development Plan.

### Landscaping and Trees

The provision of the EV charging facilities within existing car parking areas will mean that the majority of landscaping around the wider site will be maintained and unaffected by the application proposals. It is acknowledged, however, that a small amount of soft landscaping will be developed to facilitate installation of electrical equipment.

The electrical equipment will be installed adjacent to and to the southeast of the proposed chargers. These locations have been selected for their distance from mature vegetation as well as their accessibility by maintenance teams. The installation of this equipment will have a negligible overall impact on the landscaping around the site. Three young trees would be relocated near the hub site to accommodate the chargers and associated infrastructure, as shown on the submitted plans. Protective barriers will be installed around any trees considered at risk from damage by contractors, and any adjacent areas of landscaping disturbed by the development will be restored following completion of works.

As such the development is considered to comply with Policies CS1 (High Quality Design), CS2 (Green Infrastructure) and PSP3 (Trees and Woodland) of the Local Development Plan.

#### Residential Amenity

The additional EV charging bays are proposed within the existing car park, which is separated from the overnight accommodation provided on the wider site and is a significant distance from residential properties in the wider area. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect the amenity of residential properties and therefore complies with Policy PSP8 (Residential Amenity) of the Local Development Plan.

#### Highways and Transport

The development proposal will provide the additional facilities for visitors to the diner and motel to charge their electric vehicles at a convenient location. The development will not generate significant additional trips on the road network, but will help support and promote the use of sustainable modes of transport for those already on the road.

The proposals will not require material changes to the layout of the surrounding car park and will utilise the existing access to the site from the A4018. Existing pedestrian routes within the car park and wider site will also be maintained.

The EV bays match the size of the other car parking bays in the car park and an oversized bay is proposed to allow for manoeuvrability around the vehicle to ensure users can access the chargers easily.

The EV Hub design will result in a small reduction in the number of parking spaces (1 space), however this will not materially impact upon the operation of the car park which will have sufficient retained capacity. Consequently, the development will not have an unacceptable impact on highway or pedestrian safety and it will not result in unacceptable impacts on the wider highway network in line with paragraph 115 of the NPPF and Policies PSP16 (Parking Standards) and CS1 (High Quality Design) of the Local Development Plan. In providing additional facilities to charge electric vehicles, the development also accords with the councils Climate Emergency Strategy and Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.

#### Drainage and Flooding

The application proposals are considered acceptable from a flood risk and drainage perspective. The application site is situated in Flood Zone 1 so is at a low risk of flooding from any watercourse, and it is also within an area assessed by the Environment Agency at 'very low risk' of surface flooding.

The additional charging facilities will be provided within existing car parking areas at the site so will utilise existing drainage arrangements, while the very minor increase in hard surfacing necessary for the associated infrastructure will not increase the risk of flooding on site or elsewhere.

#### **Conclusions**

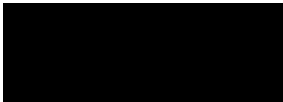
The application seeks planning permission to install additional EV charging facilities with associated equipment within the car parking area at Mollies Motel & Diner.

The development will help support the local and national objectives of encouraging 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

Hub in this location is fully in conformity with national and local planning policies and the proposal should, therefore, be supported by the Council and be approved 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,



**Hannah Post**  
**Senior Planner**