



Members of the North Warwickshire Borough Council Planning & Development Board

By email

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

Dear Councillor,

**Land off Marsh Lane, Hams Hall Application for a Proposed Truckstop – planning application  
ref: PAP/2020/0295**

I write with regard to the above planning application for development of a new HGV Truck Stop facility close to Hams Hall (ref: PAP/2020/0295 – *Land West of Hams Hall Roundabout and south of Marsh Lane, Curdworth*). The application was submitted in June 2020, and will be presented to the Planning Board for determination on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Ahead of that meeting I write on behalf of the Applicant to express some key points of direct relevance to the discussion and decisions which lie ahead.

A significant amount of time has passed since the application was submitted (over 2 and a half years ago). During this period some key elements of the context for the proposals have changed.

The economic, amenity, safety challenges and risks associated with a shortage of HGV parking and overnight facilities remain significant problems in the area around Hams Hall. This context was a major factor behind the application being submitted in 2020, and remains relevant today. Indeed, since the submission of the application, awareness of the various challenges resulting from the lack of parking facilities and amenities for HGV drivers has become more pronounced both nationally and locally. During this time, the Government has sought to intervene to address the negative implications of a lack of facilities, not only for the well-being of HGV drivers, but also because of the wider adverse impacts on the distribution industry which has a key role in the functioning of the national economy at all levels.

A number of new strategies, letters and statements at both the local and national level have been released which are now relevant material considerations to the determination of this planning application. At the local level, the adoption of the new North Warwickshire Local Plan has led to a significant change in the planning policy context for this application. Specifically, Policy LP34 reflects the well-established issues associated with a lack of HGV parking, and explicitly '*gives weight to*' proposals which would increase the provision of parking.

In addition, various Ministerial Statements and other policy based measures from government (including a new national long-term plan for freight) explicitly underline the need for, and importance of, new and better truckstop and HGV parking facilities. This suite of documents, many of which post-date the submission of the application, explicitly stress the need for a positive planning policy response and prioritise proactive decision making to help address the shortage of dedicated, high-quality HGV parking facilities. This is an important part of the context in which the Committee is being asked to determine the application.

In summary, the context is that the proposed development close to Hams Hall is in an area suffering some of the most acute shortages of HGV parking in the UK and forms one of the national 'hotspot' areas identified by government in 2018. The Council has identified that there is a problem which needs addressing and has introduced a local policy which actively encourages and gives weight to proposals to deliver new parking facilities. The updated national context also sets an explicitly positive context for decisions relating to new HGV roadside and parking facilities.

You will no doubt be aware of some local concerns or perceptions regarding local traffic or other potential transport issues, but these concerns or assumptions are not supported by the evidence submitted, nor by the views of those bodies charged with protecting or maintaining road safety and in assessing and managing overall traffic levels and impacts: there are no objections from either National Highways or WCC Highways, and this is made clear in the report to the Planning Board.

However, the site remains in the Green Belt, and the Council is required to take a balanced and informed judgement on any harm caused by these proposals with regard to national as well as local planning policies, and with consideration given to the benefits and all other material considerations.

The Planning Officer's report emphasises the 'finely balanced' nature of the judgement required taking into account the substantial benefits and the clear support found in the material considerations as compared to any 'harm' caused by the proposals. There are no objections from any statutory or technical consultee, including the Council's environmental health officers (EHO) who have scrutinised the submitted details and evidence with regard to any likely local impacts regarding noise, lighting and other potential effects. The submitted evidence shows only highly localised and largely negligible impacts, with no adverse noise or lighting impacts likely from the proposals on the village of Curdworth. Those conclusions have not been challenged or disputed by the Council's technical consultees. It will ultimately be for Members of the Planning & Development Board to weigh up the various planning issues regarding likely effects based on the evidence and advice of your consultees, and all relevant material considerations, to make a final and defensible judgement and decision.

For your information, I attach recently submitted letters of support on behalf of BP UK, and Shell UK Ltd, two national operators of HGV and other roadside facilities who have expressed an interest in operating this site should it be consented. These letters arrived too late to be referred to in the Committee Report, albeit may form part of an update to the meeting. This clear market interest in developing and operating such facilities is further evidence of the opportunity to address the issues associated with a lack of HGV facilities, especially in this area which experiences some of the most acute shortages nationally. It also helps convey the nature and quality of the end-product which would be delivered if approved. Working with these interested parties the Applicant remains very positive about the strength of both the planning and 'need' evidence and arguments, and the ability to provide this development with negligible adverse local impacts.

I appreciate the requirement for you to retain an open mind in advance of determining the application. I hope this letter, and the attached, is of some interest and help in summarising some key aspects of the scheme, and is of assistance as you consider and weigh up all relevant issues ahead of determining the application.

Yours sincerely



Steve Harley  
Director

On behalf of the Applicant (Caesarea Development Holdings Ltd).

Encs.



BP Oil UK Limited  
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Middlesex,  
TW16 7BP

23rd January 2023

Mr J Brown  
North Warwickshire Borough Council  
Head of Development Control Services  
The Council House  
South Street  
Atherstone  
Warwickshire  
CV9 1DE

Dear Mr Brown

**Proposed Truckstop at Marsh Lane, near Hams Hall Distribution Park, Curdworth – Planning Application ref PAP/2020/0295**

We are actively involved in the operation of roadside refuelling facilities that supply low-carbon fuels for use in heavy goods vehicles. As fleet owners and operators transition their fleets towards low carbon vehicles, they will need flexible access to a variety of low carbon fuels. Operators are also increasingly seeing the value in providing access to convenient amenities for drivers to improve wellbeing, loyalty and retention. bp has a vision to create a national network of low carbon mobility hubs on warehousing and industrial complexes and along key logistics corridors. In collaboration with Gasrec (in which bp is a shareholder), we are putting in place a network of facilities that will provide low carbon fuels (biogas, renewable diesel, electric charging and hydrogen) alongside HGV parking and driver welfare facilities.

Together, bp and Gasrec provide an integrated and single source solution to meet the multi- energy needs of fleets and warehouses and the convenience needs of the people who work in them. We operate the largest bio-LNG station in Europe, the station is located within a logistic park and supplies renewable biogas to a large proportion of park operators. It has enabled companies like DHL, Sainsbury, Tesco and UPS (amongst others) to reduce their CO2 emissions by more than 80% versus diesel.

We are writing in support of the above planning application. In short, the truckstop is situated in an ideal location for such a facility, where we are aware of high levels of demand associated both to the wider role of the West Midlands region in the UK logistics sector, but also specifically given the presence of the Hams Hall Distribution Centre in the immediate vicinity.



We have been approached by the Applicant and are in ongoing discussions about being the future operator of the site. Our reasons for being interested in operating the site, and for supporting the application, are set out below:

- The most important aspect to a successful truckstop is its location; truckstops need to be located close to the routes or sources of HGV demand, and where vehicles can enter and exit the site and carry on with their journeys safely and efficiently. We have mapped the main transport routes to determine the optimum locations for low carbon refuelling hubs to create a UK wide network. The site being close to a) a key Junction of the M42 and b) Hams Hall is an ideal location for a truckstop where there is clear evidence of need and demand for purpose-built facilities. A new site in this location is required in response to the strategic role this part of the West Midlands plays in terms of the national distribution and logistics network and will supplement the existing but limited supply of facilities on the M42 corridor. There would be benefit for drivers as they do not need to take any protracted diversion from their route/destination due to the proximity with the motorway junction, nor do they need to pass through any villages on their route from Junction 9.
- Our understanding is that there is a significant need for HGV spaces and facilities to cater for the number of vehicles entering and exiting Hams Hall which are continually parking within the estate and on roads/lay-bys nearby, a situation which suits no-one and creates a range of safety and amenity issues for local road users, residents and HGV drivers. We are not aware of any facilities which address the need at or close to Hams Hall and for this reason we have a genuine interest in this site to operate a new truckstop and are confident that this would be a well-used facility, underlined by its location within one of the national 'Hotspots' where the shortage is most severe.
- There is increasingly a widespread awareness of the pressing need for additional truckstops in the country to provide the basic needs of drivers. This has been a long-standing issue, but we note the increasing reporting of the issue in the press and note the Government's welcome responses aimed at accelerating delivery of more facilities. It seems to us that this will be a persistent issue and problem surrounding the industry affecting the welfare of those within it until more facilities get the go ahead in the right places.
- Truckstops are much more than a place to park an HGV overnight - they are 'home away from home' for thousands of HGV drivers working long shifts often across consecutive days. We are encouraged, having reviewed plans and documents regarding the application, and our facilities would deliver all the welfare facilities (bathroom, showers, hot/cold food etc.) needed on-site. These are high-quality, managed sites with safety and security measures designed into the scheme from the outset which offers reassurance to the drivers and their employers who use them and local residents who are sometimes concerned about the potential for poor management resulting in amenity impacts. We are fully aware of the positive effect our facilities can have environmentally and socially by taking HGVs away from local roads, industrial estates and lay-bys and would expect this site to have similarly positive effects once operational.



- As a company we are doing much to deliver sustainable development through our roadside developments and the inclusion of EV chargers is very much welcomed, as it is immediately adjacent to a key generator of HGV traffic which reduces the diversion needed by drivers wishing to make use of the facility.

For the reasons stated above we reiterate our interest in operating a truckstop at this location and would support it being approved by the Council so we can work with the Applicant to deliver much needed facilities to safeguard the well-being of the drivers and support this key sector of the local, regional and national economy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AJ', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Andy Johnson

Real Estate Manager

Truck Decarbonisation and Low Carbon Mobility Hubs

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25<sup>th</sup> January 2023

J Brown  
North Warwickshire Borough Council  
The Council House  
South Street  
Atherstone  
CV9 1DE

Dear Mr Brown

**Shell U.K. Limited - Proposed Truckstop at Marsh Lane, near Hams Hall Distribution Park, Curdworth**

**Planning Application Reference PAP/2020/0295**

I confirm that we are instructed by our client Shell U.K. Limited in relation to this potential truck stop facility.

Our client is actively involved in the operation of truck stops and roadside facilities including approximately 500 petrol filling stations including several dedicated HGV parking facilities.

We are instructed to write confirming our client's support for the proposed development. We are of the opinion that the truck stop is situated in an ideal location for such a facility where we are aware of high levels of need associated both to the wider role of the West Midlands region in the UK logistics sector, but also specifically given the presence of the Hams Hall Distribution Centre in the immediate vicinity.

Our client has been approached by Applicant and is in ongoing, subject to contract discussions regarding the acquisition and operation of the proposed development.

Our client notes the following key points in support of this application:

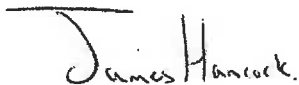
- The most important aspect to a successful truck stop is its location; truck stops need to be located close to the routes or sources of HGV demand, and where vehicles can enter and exit the site and carry on with their journeys safely and efficiently. The site being close to a) a key Junction of the M42 and b) Hams Hall is an ideal location for a truck stop where there is clear evidence of need and demand for purpose-built facilities. A new site in this location is required in response to the strategic role this part of the West Midlands plays in terms of the national distribution and logistics network and will supplement the existing but limited supply of facilities on the M42 corridor. There would be benefit for drivers as they do not need to take any protracted diversion from their route/destination due to the proximity with



the motorway junction, nor do they need to pass through any villages on their route from Junction 9.

- Our client considers that there is a significant need for HGV spaces and facilities to cater for the number of vehicles entering and exiting Hams Hall. Due to the current lack of facilities these vehicles are often required to park within the estate and on roads/lay-bys nearby, a situation creates a range of safety and amenity issues for local road users, residents and HGV drivers. We are not aware of any alternative proposals or facilities which address the need at or close to Hams Hall and for this reason we believe that a truck stop facility could be run successfully as a going concern in this location. This view is supported by the fact that the location is within one of the identified national 'Hotspots' where the shortage is most severe.
- There is increasingly a widespread awareness of the pressing need for additional truck stops in the country to provide the basic needs of drivers. Should the proposal development be approved it is felt that the proposed facilities would go some way to meeting need in this location.
- Truck stops are much more than a place to park a HGV overnight they are 'home away from home' for thousands of HGV drivers working long shifts often across consecutive days. We are encouraged having reviewed plans and documents regarding the application, and our facilities could deliver all of the welfare facilities required on-site to make this a high-quality facility. Our client considers that there are environmental and social benefits in reducing HGV traffic on local roads, industrial estates and lay-bys and would expect this site to have positive effects in this regard once operational.
- The site offers strategic potential for EV charging and other future fuels being in close proximity to the motorway network and HGV destination locations.

Yours faithfully



James Hancock



