JMS PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF A PLANNING APPLICATION BY SHELL UK OIL PRODUCTS LIMITED

IN RESPECT OF THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING SERVICE STATION TO PROVIDE REPLACEMENT SALES BUILDING, FUEL FORECOURT, EVC HUB, CAR PARKING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

AT

SHELL WHITEMARE POOL
GATESHEAD
TYNE & WEAR
NE10 8YB

May 2023

Client: Shell UK Oil Products Limited
Project: Redevelopment of Existing Service station, Shell Whitemare Pool
Date: May 2023

JMS Planning & Development Ltd
T: 01986 785038
E: julian@jmsplanning.com

© The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of JMS Planning & Development Ltd

CONTENTS

SECTION 1:	INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION 2:	SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA	2
SECTION 3:	PLANNING HISTORY	3
SECTION 4:	THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL	4
SECTION 5:	BACKGROUND TO ELECTRIC VEHICLE RECHARGING	6
SECTION 6:	PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	12
SECTION 7:	PLANNING ISSUES	20
SECTION 8:	DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT	27
SECTION 9:	CONCLUSIONS	32

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement, also incorporating the Design and Access Statement, has been prepared on behalf of Shell UK Oil Products Limited and is submitted in support of an application for full planning permission for the redevelopment of existing petrol filling station; including the demolition of the existing sales building and forecourt, including canopy, pumps and underground tanks; erection of new sales building and new forecourt (domestic and HGV), including underground fuel tanks; provision of EVC hub and associated infrastructure; provision of car parking spaces and associated works at Shell Whitemare Pool, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE6 8YB.

1.2 It is considered that the submitted application is of significant merit. Namely;

- The application will improve customer offer and experience on site to meet customer demand;
- Improvement to internal site circulation and formalise car parking arrangements; and
- Provide facilities for electric vehicle charging on the site to assist in meeting the Government level objectives to reduce CO2 emissions with air quality benefits.

1.3 This report continues in Section 2 by providing a summary of the site's location and its context, with a brief summary of the planning history for the site within Section 3. Full details of the proposal are set out in Section 4, including a detailed description of the layout and facilities offered upon the site. Additional information on electric vehicle charging is contained at Section 5. A detailed summary of the planning policy position at national and local level is contained within Section 6. Section 7 sets out the justification for the proposal in the context of national requirements, local need, and the policy position. A Statement on Design and Access matters is provided within Section 8, with the conclusions finally drawn in Section 9.

SECTION 2: SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application site is located just north of the A184 Newcastle Road/A194 Leam Lane/A194(M) junction, approximately 10km southeast of Newcastle-upon-Tyne 10km from the coast/South Shields and just 5km from Gateshead.

2.2 The A194, Leam Lane, provides access in a north easterly direction towards South Shields and the coast. The A184 provides access to the A19 immediately to the east and in a westerly direction towards the southern parts of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Gateshead before joining the A1.

2.3 The A194 becomes the A194(M) directly to the south of the aforementioned roundabout where it provides access southwards towards the A1(M) providing links to the south of England.

2.4 The A194 is a dual carriageway with a central reservation in the vicinity of the site with access to it is from the north bound carriageway only, albeit there is a roundabout immediately to the south of the site and about 1km to the north, meaning access to the site is possible from both directions with a small detour.

2.5 The site is bounded by Leam Lane to the southeast, an access road to the Travelodge Newcastle Whitemare Pool and Burger King to the south and Roman Road to the north/northwest. Roman Road provides access to a storage compound located to the rear of the Travelodge Hotel and Burger King, which are to the southwest of the application site.

2.6 The site currently comprises of a domestic forecourt located centrally upon it arranged in a four island starter gate with an HGV lane immediately to the west. The sales building is located to the north of the forecourt and is linked to the forecourt by a canopy link. There is no formal car parking across the site with air and water bays provided to both the north and the south of the site.

2.7 Traffic flows through the site in one direction – south to north, with a right of way access provided to the Travelodge and Burger King from the southern boundary of the site. Cars exiting from the Travelodge/Burger King pass through the forecourt to exit back onto the A194 from the egress located to the north of the site.

2.8 The site area of the application site is 0.33 hectares and the existing shop has a sales area of 100 sqm. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and the open countryside and Green Belt.

SECTION 3: PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 A review of the site's planning history has been undertaken using the South Tyneside's online search system.

Reference	Description	Decision
ST/0712/90/DM	Extension to existing sales building and installation of one 26,000 litre underground storage tank.	Approved 27/07/90
ST/0411/87/DM	Alterations to petrol filling station to provide toilets for disabled, new canopy over forecourt and new shopfront	Approved 19/06/87
ST/0859/84/DM	Extension to provide store to existing petrol station sales building	Approved 24/10/84
ST/0575/83/DM	Proposed LPG installation to existing petrol station	Refused

3.2 There is no further planning history set out on the Council's website, however the above suggests that the site is a long established service station which is now in need of upgrade to meet the latest environmental standards and expectations of motorists.

SECTION 4: THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

4.1 This application is for full planning permission for the redevelopment of existing petrol filling station; including the demolition of the existing sales building and forecourt, including canopy, pumps and underground tanks; erection of new sales building and new forecourt (domestic and HGV), including underground fuel tanks; provision of EVC hub and associated infrastructure; provision of car parking spaces and associated works at Shell Whitemare Pool, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE6 8YB.

4.2 The proposal includes the redevelopment of the wider site to include a new sales building with a gross external area of 230 sqm, increasing the size of the building by 130 sqm. The new sales building will create an improved shopping environment and better facilities for customers, improving their experience visiting the site whilst also creating an improved working environment for those employed at the site. A dedicated bin store is proposed to the north of the sales building.

4.3 The forecourt for both domestic and HGVs is to be replaced. The domestic forecourt will include three pump islands with six refuelling positions (an increase from the current five refuelling positions). HGV provision continues to provide two pumps but a single refuelling bay. The underground fuel tanks are to be replaced and associated fuel infrastructure ensuring the site meets the latest environmental standards.

4.4 The proposal also includes the provision of an eight bay EVC hub with canopy over including an accessible bay with associated infrastructure including substation and GRP cabinet. More details of EVC are contained in the following Section.

4.5 The proposal also seeks to provide formalised car parking across the site with the provision of formal car parking to the south of the sales building, including an accessible space in close proximity to the store entrance. Air/water/vac bay retained to the north of the site by the egress.

4.6 Access arrangement to the site from Leam Lane (A194) remain unchanged with the entrance and egress to the site remaining as existing and flows through the site continuing in a one-way direction south to north. The existing access to the Travelodge/Burger King has been retained and appropriate road markings provided.

Role, Function and Location of Service stations

4.7 Prior to the consideration of this application, it is relevant to consider the context in which the application is submitted, both in terms of current trends within the petroleum industry and the specific reference to the role, function and location

of service stations generally, as well as the specific role and function of the application site.

4.8 The Experian Catalist UK database released in 2023, confirms that the number of petrol forecourts in the UK had fallen to just 8,365, compared to the 1967's all-time high of 39,958 forecourts. This is representative of a downward trend of service station sites in the UK.

4.9 Conversely, the number of registered UK vehicles once again broke records, rising from 33.98 million in the first quarter of 2009 to reach 40.4 million at the end of March 2022, with each forecourt supplying an average of 4,830 vehicles.

4.10 The effect of the above is that fewer service stations are serving more motorists. As a result, those individual service stations which remain and any new facilities are becoming increasingly busier, experiencing a greater volume of visitation rates and a greater throughput of fuel and are, thus, being made to work much more intensively. It is self-evident that the role and function of service stations are geared towards serving the motorist. Depending upon the location of service stations, such developments have the potential to intersect traffic from a wide catchment area.

4.11 Service stations generally offer a range of services. These include the provision of fuels, EVC, car care facilities (such as air/water and car washing) and shops. However, the qualitative demands on service stations are increasing. In particular, existing service stations have to accommodate a greater variety of facilities and provide a high-quality offer to customers and users who are becoming increasingly demanding for enhanced facilities.

4.12 In this respect enhanced on-site sales buildings is a major trend within the roadside market which has evolved in response to accommodate and meet the changing needs and aspirations of consumers.

SECTION 5: BACKGROUND TO ELECTRIC VEHICLE RECHARGING

5.1 Powering more of the cars we drive with electricity is essential to addressing growing CO_2 emissions and air pollution in cities. As more electric car models become available, they will also become more affordable choice for people and businesses.

5.2 There are around one billion cars on the world's roads. Of these around two to three million are pure battery electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). The IEA anticipates there may be three hundred to four hundred million electric vehicles (EVs) on the road out of approximately two billion vehicles by 2040.

5.3 Electric vehicles are cars and other forms of mobility that use an electric motor as their main source of propulsion, rather than a conventional engine. They also have their energy stored in batteries.

5.4 There are three main types of electric vehicles; battery electric vehicles, hybrid electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.

5.5 Battery electric vehicles are all electric cars that rely on their batteries as the only source of energy. Hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles combine electric drive with a conventional fuel engine.

5.6 Unlike traditional cars, which usually refuel at service stations, electric cars have the potential to be recharged at home, at work or on the go. They can also be charged in shared locations such as forecourts, car parks or supermarkets. Speed, availability and the reliability of charging infrastructure are currently the biggest potential deterrents to buying an electric car. Shell believes this could be changed with better access to recharging options, better suited to the needs of customers and their lifestyles. This could include smart, regular chargers, ideal for those charging overnight at their homes or during working hours. It could also include high powered, fast chargers designed for when drivers are between destinations and in need of a quick top-up.

Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (March 2022)

5.7 The Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy published in March 2022 and sets out the Government's vision and strategy to enable and accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in the UK.

5.8 The Prime Minister's announcement in November 2020 that sales of all new petrol and diesel cars and vans would end in 2030, put the UK on course to be the fastest nation in the G7 to decarbonise road transport. Since then, the report confirms that in 2021, 190,000 battery-powered electric vehicles were sold in the UK. This was more than the five previous years combined, and nearly 1 in 8 of all new cars sold. Notwithstanding the uptake in use of battery electric vehicles, the focus on vehicles is only one part of the overall approach to transition into net zero road transport with a second priority being the provision of adequate charging infrastructure.

5.9 In response to the above, the Government's vision is to remove charging infrastructure as both a perceived, and a real barrier to the adoption of electric vehicles and have as a minimum 300,000 public charge points by 2030 – equivalent to almost 5 times the number of fuel pumps on our roads today.

5.10 To deliver this vision and eliminate '*road anxiety*' the Government will focus on the roll out of high-powered chargers on the strategic road network and local on-street parking. The strategy focuses on the delivery of:

- Sufficient charge points ahead of demand to ensure that everyone can find and access reliable public charge points wherever they are;
- Effortless on and off-street charging for private and commercial drivers;
- Fairly priced and inclusively designed public charging;
- Market-led rollout for the majority of charge points;
- Seamlessly integrated infrastructure into a smart energy system; and
- Continued innovation to meet driver's needs.

5.11 One of the key drivers is to step up the delivery of high-powered chargers on the strategic road network for people making longer journeys. To achieve this, the government has allocated £950 million on a Rapid Charging Fund to support the rollout of at least 6,000 high powered charge points across England's motorways and major A-roads by 2035. In particular, the government highlights the role that service area operators and large fuel retailers have in the delivery of this vision stating, 'We will ensure that every motorway service area has at least six rapid chargers by the end of 2023, with some having more than 12.'

5.12 Moreover, the strategy confirms that government will help to reduce the costs to private sector rollout and businesses by tackling barriers to investment and delivery of public charge points, to speed up private sector delivery of much needed EV charging infrastructure.

5.13 One of the key challenges identified in the strategy is the slow pace in which charge point installers can roll out the required infrastructure due to the need of multiple permission, consents and licenses; the lack of plentiful, reliable and fairly priced public charging network, amongst others. Notably, the strategy stresses that there needs to be more local engagement, leadership and planning.

5.14 The report concludes that if the UK economy is to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, it has to decarbonise road transport. The recent rapid increase in both the supply of, and the demand for, EVs means that charging infrastructure now stands as the single biggest challenge to that decarbonisation.

Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (October 2021)

5.15 The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener was presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 14 of the Climate Change Act 2008 in October 2021. In a drive to avoid catastrophic climate change we need to reduce emissions to as near zero as possible with the small amount remaining absorbed through natural carbon sinks such as forests and new technologies like carbon capture. If this goal is achieved, global emissions of greenhouse gases will be 'net zero'. Delivering this requires urgent global action including ending coal fired power generation, retiring petrol and diesel engines from all cars and halting deforestation. These were the steps the UK called for at COP 26 (UN Climate Change Conference held in November 2021).

5.16 The UK is seeking to lead the way having, since 1990, almost halved greenhouse gas emissions, with the UK the first major economy to legislate (in 2019) to reach zero emissions by 2050. The end of petrol and diesel engines is part of this process and almost all major car companies are now developing or producing zero emission vehicles as battery technology improves and costs reduce.

5.17 The strategy supports new investment in vehicle grants and electric vehicles infrastructure to ensure greener vehicles with big improvements in public charge point provision with funding of £280 million as part of a wider investment in public transport and sustainable travel.

5.18 The Government announced an 'Electric Vehicle revolution' in November 2021, which set out the Government's vision for infrastructure roll out and roles for the public and private sectors in achieving these goals. This document focused on electric charging provision at home and workplaces with targets for electric vehicle provision, alongside other green energy initiatives.

State of Switch Report Produced by New Automotive (October 2021 and December 2022)

5.19 New Automotive is an independent transport research organisation founded in 2020 with a mission to support the switch to electric vehicles. Based on their initial research published in October 2021 they estimate that the UK will need 230,000-280,000 public charge points by 2035. However, as at 2021, there were 24,000 public charging stations including over 4,000 rapid chargers in the UK.

5.20 The 2021 report concludes whilst there has been a huge uptake in EV sales over the past 12 months, they believe the targets are only achievable if policy makers commit to the 'electrification' of UK roads and install the necessary infrastructure. They are currently concerned that the most recent trends indicate the popularity of hybrids which may be one of the key issues to overcome in the transition to a complete shift to electric vehicles.

5.21 The updated report published for 2022 acknowledged that whilst internal combustion engines decreased relative to an increase in EV mileage, EVs accounted for just under 2% of total miles driven by the end of 2022, which is a tiny fraction of the UK's total mileage. Interestingly, whilst the new car market stagnated in 2022, the take up of electric vehicles continued to grow and in December 2022 1 in 3 new cars were electric, albeit over the course of the year they accounted for just 17% of new car registrations.

5.22 By the end of 2022 there were 37,261 public chargers on the UK network, meaning the network has grown by around 31% since 2021, and of these just over 20% are rapid chargers. It is hoped that these trends will continue into 2023 with further government support.

Energy White Paper (December 2020)

5.23 On 14 December 2020 the Government published its Energy White Paper which expands on Prime Minister Boris Johnson's announced ten point plan for a green industrial revolution and sets out the steps needed to cut emissions from industry, transport and buildings by 230 million metric tonnes as part of the journey to net zero emissions by 2050.

5.24 The document sets out how the UK will increase deployment of green energy sources in order to meet the 2050 net zero carbon target. The White Paper confirms the Government will support the role out of charging and associated grid infrastructure along the strategic road network to support drivers to make the switch to electric vehicles (EV's). It is confirmed that the UK will end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, ten years earlier than previously planned. The sale of hybrid cars and vans that can drive a significant distance with no carbon emissions will continue until 2035. The Energy White Paper notes that this accelerated transition requires scaling – up the roll out of EV charge points and, in turn, an associated expansion of electricity generation and network capacity to meet the increase in demand for power.

5.25 With the necessary investment in new infrastructure and adoption of smart charging the Government is confident the system will cope with the transition. As part of a £2.8bn package announced in the Prime Minister's ten point plan the Government intends to provide funding of £1.3bn to accelerate the roll out of charge points for EV's in homes, workplaces, streets and on motorways across England, so people can more easily and conveniently charge their cars. The Government will invest £950m of this funding in future proofing grid capacity along with the strategic road network to prepare ahead to accommodate for a one hundred percent take up of zero emission cars and vans.

5.26 There is, therefore, acknowledgement at the highest level of Government of the importance of a comprehensive EV network.

The Role of the Applicant

5.27 As the UK's number one provider of premier fuels with a network of over 1,000 service stations, Shell is encouraging the take-up of electric vehicles by providing rapid charging points on many of their forecourts.

5.28 Whilst charging electric cars at home is often the most convenient and cost effective way to recharge sometimes this option is not either convenient or available. A growing number of Shell forecourts in the UK are offering "*Shell Recharge*" rapid or high powered electric vehicle charging, taking only between 10-30 minutes to fully charge and also provides electric car drivers with a shorter option to just top-up to get to their destination.

5.29 Shell Recharge locations are supplied with electricity from 100% certified renewable sources, as regulated by the Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) scheme by Ofgem. Shell is also working to provide more electricity from sources such as wind and solar power that will allow electric vehicles to run on low carbon power sources. This is part of their wider effort to make electricity a significant part of their business – one that will sit alongside oil, gas and chemicals in the future.

5.30 The application proposal includes for the provision of eight EV charging spaces, including an accessible EVC bay, in the form of a new EV '*hub*' which will have the benefit of improving the energy transition within Tyne and Wear area and the wider area and will offer increased choice and improved customer experience across the wider site, meeting the needs of customers particularly on this important strategic site.

SECTION 6: PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.1 This Section of the supporting Statement sets out national and local planning policy framework relevant to the proposed planning application.

National Planning Guidance

6.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2021 and constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision takers and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (paragraph 2).

6.3 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 7). Reference has recently been added to the 17 Global Goals for sustainable development set by the United Nations.

6.4 Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

- An economic objective – to help build 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 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 a 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 wellbeing; and

- An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making efficient 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.

6.5 These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and application of policies in the framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. It is confirmed that the planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9).

6.6 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10). For decision taking, this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay, and
- Where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless;
    - The application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole (paragraph 11).

6.7 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making (paragraph 12).

6.8 Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (paragraph 38).

6.9 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing (paragraph 47). Local Authorities may give weight to relevant policies and emerging plans according to the stage at which they are at and the extent of unresolved objections (paragraph 48).

6.10 Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and where there are opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future (paragraph 81).

6.11 Planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and practically encourages sustainable economic growth having regard to local industrial strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration; set criteria to identify strategic sites for local inward investment to match the strategy and meet anticipated needs over the plan period; seek to address potential barriers to investment; and be flexible enough to accommodate the needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances (paragraph 82).

6.12 Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors (paragraph 83).

6.13 Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities taking a positive approach to their growth management and adaptation. Policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long term vitality and viability; define extent of town centres and primary shopping areas; retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, reintroduce or create new ones; allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed looking at least 10 years ahead; where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available for main town centre uses, allocate appropriate edge of centre sites that are well- connected to town centres and if these are not able to be identified, set out policies which should explain how identified needs can be met in other accessible locations that are well- connected to the town centre; and recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encouraging residential development on appropriate sites (paragraph 86).

6.14 Local Planning Authorities should apply a Sequential Test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period of time) should out of centre sites be considered (paragraph 87).

6.15 When considering edge of centre or out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well-connected to the town centre. Applicants and Local Planning Authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centres or edge of centre sites are fully explored (paragraph 88).

6.16 When assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, Local Authorities should require an Impact Assessment if the development is over a proportionate locally set floorspace threshold and if there is no locally set threshold the default threshold is 2,500 sqm of gross floorspace. This should include assessment of the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (paragraph 90).

6.17 Paragraph 106 confirms that planning policies should provide for any large scale transport facilities that need to be located in the area, and the infrastructure and wider development required to support their operation, expansion and contribution to the wider economy. The footnote to this paragraph notes that such facilities will include roadside services but that the primary purpose of these services should be to support the safety and welfare of the road user (and most such proposals are unlikely to be nationally significant infrastructure projects).

6.18 Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (paragraph 119).

6.19 The creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps to make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is the effective engagement between applicants, communities, Local Planning Authorities and other interests throughout the process (paragraph 126).

6.20 Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users (paragraph 130).

6.21 Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals (paragraph 132). Development that is not well designed should be refused especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance taking into account local design guides and codes (paragraph 134).

6.22 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (paragraph 137).

6.23 Green Belt serves five purposes, namely:

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
e) To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

6.24 Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances (paragraph 147). When considering any planning application Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. "*Very Special Circumstances*" will not exist unless potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (paragraph 148).

6.25 Paragraph 145 advises that Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt but lists a number of exceptions, which include; extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building; and the replacement of a building, providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces and the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land which will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. It also allows, as an exception, limited infilling

or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings) which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

6.26 Paragraph 150 confirms other forms of development, which are not considered inappropriate within the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land, include:

- Local transport infrastructure, which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.

The Development Plan

6.27 To the extent the Development Plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, a decision must be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

6.28 The site falls within the jurisdiction of South Tyneside Council. The Development Plan relevant to the application comprises Core Strategy (June 2007) and Development Management Policies (December 2011) There is no Neighbourhood Plan for the site.

6.29 Upon the Core Strategy Key Diagram the site is unallocated and within the Green Belt and Great North Forest and Transport Corridors.

Core Strategy (June 2007)

6.30 Policy ST1 (Spatial Strategy for Tyneside) sets out the spatial strategy for South Tyneside respecting the Key Diagram and confirming that it seeks to regenerate the River Tyne and Coastal Corridors including the Tyne Gateway at South Shields; support development by reflecting the style and functions of the main towns of South Shields, Gallow and Hebburn; promote opportunities along the A90 Economic Growth Corridor; ensure sustainability of settlements by reducing emissions which cause climate change and adapting to its effects, and maximising the reuse of previously developed land in built up areas.

6.31 Policy ST2 (Sustainable Urban Living) provides guidance on the provision of high quality sustainable urban living. This includes ensuring the highest standards of urban design are permitted so that buildings and their settings make a positive contribution to the local areas; diminish the fear of crime and eliminate the fear of crime, respecting of biodiversity and geological features at design stage and also given priority to alternative modes of transport to the

private car. This policy does not make reference to electric vehicles as it predates their mass emergence into the car market.

6.32 Policy E1 (Delivering Economic Growth and Prosperity) confirms the commitment to the allocation of land to meet economic development requirements and seeks to safeguard viable employment sites. Economic development outside these areas will be encouraged in accessible locations.

6.33 Policy SC1 (Creating Sustainable Urban Areas) seeks to deliver sustainable communities with a focus on development within the built up areas in accordance with the spatial strategy.

6.34 Guidance on town centres and other shopping centres is provided in Policy SC2. This policy reflects the town centre first approach to retail development. No thresholds are set for the requirement of Sequential or Impact Assessments.

6.35 Policy EA1 (Local Character and Distinctiveness) confirms that the best qualities of South Tyneside's built natural environment will be conserved including the protection and enhancement of the openness of the Green Belt. The policy also makes reference to the Great North Forest strategies for access, education, enterprise and biodiversity in a forest framework by seeking to conserve and enhance such areas. The site falls within both the Green Belt and the Great North Forest Area within the Great North Forest Area the site is part of the River Don Valley farmland where the objective is to create a well-wooded recreational landscape with a network of green corridors.

6.36 Policy EA3 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) seeks to optimise conditions for wildlife, implement the Biodiversity Action Plan and tackle habitat fragmentation. A number of suggestions are put forward as to how this will be achieved.

6.37 Policy EA5 (Environmental Protection) confirms that to complement the regeneration of the Borough the Council will control new development so that it, inter alia;

- Acts to reduce levels of pollution, environmental risk and nuisance throughout the Borough;
- Ensures that the individual and cumulative effects of the development do not breach the noise, hazardous substance or pollution limits.

<u>Development Management Policies (December 2011)</u>

6.38 Policy DM1 (Management of Development) confirms that in determining all applications under the Planning Acts, the Council will ensure that, where relevant, the development includes new buildings, extensions and alterations to

existing buildings; is designed to convey sensitive consideration of its surroundings and, where possible, enhance its local setting and reinforce local identity having particular regard to scale, proportion, alignment, form, use of materials and architectural detailing. The policy also requires consideration to residential amenity, soft landscaping including trees and hedges, highway capacity/safety and accessibility. The policy also requires development to be designed to achieve lower carbon emissions, to be energy efficient and maximise the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources, plus consideration to air pollution levels. Whilst specific reference is not made to electric vehicles this again is because the policy predates the mass release of electric vehicles onto the market.

6.39 Other policies in this document are use specific or related to specific designations/allocations so not relevant to the proposal.

SECTION 7: PLANNING ISSUES

7.1 This section of the Planning Statement sets out the general planning matters which should form part of the consideration of the determination of this application. Design and access matters are covered within the following section. Accordingly, the following general planning matters are considered below:

- Impact on the Green Belt;
- The principle of development on the site;
- Qualitative needs and benefits of the sales building provision;
- Job creation;
- Retail impact;
- Sequential Assessment;
- Amenity
- Parking; and
- Flood risk.

Impact on the Green Belt – Very Special Circumstances

7.2 As set out in the Planning Policy Section, the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that there are five purposes to the Green Belt. These are to check on restricted large built up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging in to one another; to assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns and to assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land (paragraph 137). Paragraph 147 advises that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances, subject to a number of exceptions which includes local transport infrastructure (paragraph 150).

7.3 It is our view that the development site represents '*local transport infrastructure*' meeting the aims and objectives set out in the NPPF and Development Plan. This is supported by Case Law and in particular Appeal reference APP/W12525/W/14/3001905 – Land at Fenn Roundabout, Burnham Road, South Woodham Ferrers. This related to a proposal on an 'A' road and the Inspector concluded that the Department for Transport Circular 02/2013 in relation to roadside facilities could equally apply to similar facilities on other main roads as there is no logical reason why similar facilities on other main roads should not perform an equally important function (to those on the strategic road network). Given the site's location on the A184/A194/A194(M) roundabout, this site must be considered to be providing '*local transport infrastructure*' and therefore the proposal is not considered inappropriate development.

7.4 The application proposal is also considered in the context of the five Green Belt purposes. The site is currently operating as a service station including a retail sales building, forecourt and canopy with various other associated elements. Accordingly, the site is not a traditional greenfield site, in that it is currently already developed including several structures. The proposal merely seeks upgrade an existing service station facility to create a modern service station meeting the needs of the motorists whilst also create a more comfortable environment for staff and customers.

7.5 The site has no function in restricting the sprawl of large built-up areas as it falls outside the urban area and forms part of linear roadside development adjacent to the A184/A194/A194(M) roundabout providing a valuable facility for motorists in conjunction with a hotel and restaurant. Whilst the immediate area is dominated by the road network, the wider area is rural in character and provides an expansive strip of Green Belt. Accordingly, the site is already developed and the road network, including the A194 and Roman Road to the rear of the site, provides natural development boundaries, therefore the site plays no role in restricting the sprawl of a large built up area.

7.6 As noted above, the site is already developed or previously used land. The service station and wider site is part of a significant band of Green Belt and therefore the Green Belt designation of this specific site, in this circumstance, is not to prevent neighbouring towns merging, albeit the wider designation of the Green Belt in this location meets this objective.

7.7 The third purpose of including land within the Green Belt is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The site, as noted above, is already developed and comprises of hardstanding and includes several buildings and structures. Therefore, the redevelopment of the service station will not result in the loss of countryside or encroachment into the countryside, as it is already developed or previously developed land.

7.8 The site is not located adjacent to a historic town and therefore the role of the Green Belt in this area is not to preserve the setting and special character of the historic town. Accordingly, the allocation of this site as Green Belt does not preserve the setting or character of a historic town.

7.9 Finally, Green Belt land is allocated to assist urban regeneration, encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. As noted above, the site is already developed and there are no other suitable alternative sites which would be appropriate for a service station in this locality. Furthermore, the site is ideally located to meet the needs of motorists being situated the strategic highway network, making best use of an existing service station. Indeed, the abandonment of this site for an alternative site would be detrimental to the Green Belt as a derelict site would have a negative impact upon the Green Belt. As the site is an existing service station with associated elements, the proposal

is a natural evolution of the site and the redevelopment of the site will have no impact on the regeneration of the urban area.

7.10 Whilst Green Belt land is identified as serving five purposes, the application site does not make any significant contribution to these five purposes and is merely part of a blanket Green Belt allocation across this part of the country. Notwithstanding this comment, the importance of the Green Belt is acknowledged and the role that the Green Belt plays in protecting the countryside is accepted.

7.11 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open with the essential characteristics of Green Belts being their openness and their permanence. One must consider the characteristics of the existing site, which is a service station with associated buildings and hardstandings enclosed by roads on three sides and managed landscaping on the fourth side with a hotel and restaurant to the south (with an open storage area beyond) and major road junction. Therefore the openness of the wider site has already been impacted by the existing development upon it and wider uses. Accordingly, the principle of a service station in this location with its associated facilities, is accepted by virtue of the existing position and surrounding uses. It is therefore only the redevelopment of the site and the detail of the proposal, not the principle of use, which raise issues in terms of its impact upon the Green Belt, and particularly its 'openness' and not the principle of the land use. However improving the site's relationship with the Green Belt should be a material consideration in the determination of the application.

7.12 Special circumstances have already been demonstrated in respect of service station requirements to show that the enhanced service station facilities are required to meet the needs of motorists and local residents in an environment where the number of service stations is ever decreasing, whilst the number of cars on the road is increasing. Furthermore, whilst case law suggests roadside facilities can be considered '*local transport infrastructure*' and due to the site's location on the A184/A194/A194(M) junction this would apply to the application proposal which also includes electric vehicle charging. As detailed in Section 5, the provision of electric vehicle charging facilities, is key to the future of electric vehicles and the successful transition away from petrol and diesel vehicles. Currently public provision of EVC, particularly fast chargers in the local area is lacking and their provision is key to the transition to electric vehicles (as discussed in Section 5) which is supported at all levels.

7.13 Based on the above, it is considered that special circumstances do exist to justify the development in the proposed location in accordance with the NPPF and the principles of the development plan which support low carbon use and climate change adaption but are quiet on actual EVCs (due to their age, albeit the support for sustainable travel and improved air quality is evident).

7.14 Against the above consideration it must be noted that the proposal seeks to increase the sales building from 100 sqm to 230 sqm but seeks to remove the existing canopy link but adds a EVC canopy resulting in a reduction in canopy coverage thereby reducing the bulk of the site generally, whilst making best use of the site and improving the visual appearance with localised and wider environmental benefits.

7.15 Given the location of the proposed redevelopment of the service station it is considered the proposal will bring positive benefits in terms of the openness of the site, particularly with the decrease in canopy size and removal of the canopy link, and environment improvements at the site set against the use and structures in the wider area associated with the road network. The benefits of the environmental upgrade to accommodate EVC to meet the needs of motorists, associated with the enhancement of the site through the removal of the ad hoc parking, will have significant benefit to the appearance of the site and wider area, and undoubtedly the appearance of the Green Belt, which cannot be underestimated.

7.16 The NPPF, in paragraph 145, accepts that extension or alterations to existing buildings are allowed in the Green Belt provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Whilst the proposal changes the built form across the site, it is considered the openness of the site will be improved with the removal of the large canopy and its link to the sales building. There are other benefits from the scheme which will have a positive impact on the Green Belt. Relevant Case Law confirms that this issue must be viewed 'in the round' rather than in respect to each individual element.

7.17 It is considered that the scale of the proposal is appropriate as it replaces an existing building/use which is already enclosed and previously developed and is entirely in keeping with the character of the site and wider area. The proposal, combined with the decrease in canopy extent and linkage, means that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt and that the overall appearance of the site and immediate area will be improved.

7.18 It is considered that the proposed development is necessary to meet the needs of motorists travelling on the A184/A194/A194(M). The NPPF confirms the role of roadside services as being to support the safety and welfare of the road user and planning policies should support their operation, expansion, and contribution to the wider economy. The proposal and evolution of the site will ensure that it continues to provide a valuable service, will not create a derelict site within the Green Belt and there will be visual, social and environmental improvements to the area. The scheme also contributes to the economy and respects the Green Belt and maintaining the overall openness of the site. Therefore, the proposal accords with national and local Green Belt policy.

7.19 As noted above, the site also falls within the Great North Forest. As discussed above, in relation to the Green Belt, the site is an existing developed site and does not contribute to the Great North Forest. This position will remain unchanged but the benefits of electric vehicle chargers and support for electric vehicles will assist in improving the environmental conditions on site and in the wider area to the benefit of the forest. In this regard it is considered the proposal accords with Development Plan Policy EA1.

Principle of Development

7.20 The site is located within the rural outskirts of Newcastle and South Shields and is an established fuel station on the A184/A194/A194(M) roundabout providing a valuable facility for motorists travelling I the local area. The continued use of the site as a fuel station should be acceptable.

7.21 The NPPF and Development Plan Policy recognises and promotes the need to support economic development particularly in Development Plan Policies ST1 and E1. The importance of supporting services and sustainable transport is acknowledged and this proposal assists in this goal.

Qualitative Need and Benefits of Improved Sales Building Provision

7.22 It is important that adequate facilities are provided for road users to ensure that their basic needs are met. The provision of updated facilities will better meet the needs of those travelling on the strategic highway network and provide them with the facilities they would expect from a modern Service station facility including EVC facilities which are actively supported at all levels of Governance and will assist in the goals to decrease CO_2 emissions and improving air quality.

7.23 As noted above, enhanced sales buildings are becoming a more and more important part of service stations meeting the needs of road users. Whilst the offer will continue to broadly as existing, the environment internally will be significantly improved and enhanced in line with customer requirements and expectations including the provision of improved toileting facilities (male, female and accessible).

Job Creation Benefits

7.24 The service station currently provides jobs, and the modernisation of the site will create further job opportunities on site, which will be suitable for local residents, particularly residents who wish to be flexible in the hours they work. The proposal will therefore bring a wide range of economic benefits and accord with the role and the focus as contained within the NPPF and the adopted plan.

7.25 In addition to the actual jobs created by the development, further jobs will be created in the construction phase of the development. There will be other spin off linkages to the benefit of the local area during the construction period itself

as, for example, on site construction staff utilise shops and services within the local area during the period of construction.

Retail Impact

7.26 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires an impact assessment only for those developments involving an additional 2,500 sqm gross or more floorspace. The Development Plan (Policy SC2) does not set a floorspace threshold for the requirement of an Impact Assessment. The new sales building will provide some 230 sqm (GEA) and a net retail area of 110 sqm of floorspace which falls below the aforementioned thresholds, therefore an Impact Assessment is not required.

7.27 Notwithstanding this, in light of the very limited scale of the proposal, which merely improves the existing sales building facilities, means no new use is introduced to the site and the site will continue trading broadly as existing. It is not considered that there will be any significant diversion of trade from any single centre or particular retail or commercial unit which is protected under retail policy that would cause a significant adverse impact. Accordingly, it is not considered that there will be any adverse impact arising from the proposal.

7.28 On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal accords with the relevant national and Development Plan policy.

The Sequential Approach

7.29 Given the proposal is for the replacement of an existing sales building associated with a service area and relates only to approximately a 130 sqm increase in GEA, which will primarily be used to create a more pleasant shopping environment with the range of goods staying broadly as existing, it is considered that there is no requirement to undertake a sequential assessment of the proposal as the proposed use is already operating (and authorised) on the site.

7.30 As set out in Section 2 of this report the site is located to the road network at a significant junction, therefore its primary purpose is to serve motorists. It is considered therefore that principle of redevelopment at the site to support its continued use is wholly in accordance with the Development Plan. The service station is ideally placed to serve vehicles on the A184/A194/A194(M) and also meets a local need.

Amenity

7.31 The new sales building will be broadly located on the footprint of the former sales building but extend to the northern boundary of the site. Accordingly, the situation remains largely unchanged in respect of amenity as the site is well

screened from wider uses. The closest noise sensitive to the site is the adjacent hotel but this some 50m plus from the forecourt and the background noise is undoubtedly dominated by the adjacent highway network.

7.32 The new sales building has been designed to have a modern and practical appearance with an extensively glazed front elevation to allow natural light into the building, and natural surveillance into and out of the building across the forecourt. It is considered that the bulk and massing are acceptable. The addition of electric vehicle charging on site brings sustainability credentials to the site with associated air quality benefits and should be welcomed.

7.33 The proposal therefore accords with the NPPF, Development Plan Policy ST2 and DM1.

Parking

7.34 At present there is no formalised parking arrangements for the public using the site, so parking on the site occurred in an ad hoc manner. These proposals will enable the provision of six formal car parking spaces including one DDA space adjacent to the sales building entrance, air/water/vac bay and eight EVC bays including a DDA compliant EVC bay.

7.35 It is considered that the parking for the proposal meets the requirements of the operator who has extensive experience in operating forecourts countrywide. It is considered, based on the operator's needs and extensive experience of operating service station forecourts, that appropriate provision has been made and the proposal accords with Development Plan Policy ST2 and DM1.

Landscaping

Consideration has been given to landscaping on the site and the boundary landscaping is to be retained as far as possible, particularly along the northwest boundary and the northern tip of the site. Given the island character of the site surrounded by busy highways and commercial uses, it is not considered the landscaping is of significant biodiversity value, albeit its importance and role in this Green Belt and Great North Forest location is noted. Some vegetation will be removed to accommodate the EVC bays but there is potential for landscape enhancement to the north of the site should this be required. Accordingly, the proposal accords with the NPPF and Development Plan EA1 and EA3 in this regard.

Flood Risk

7.36 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 so there is low risk of flooding and no further assessment is required.

SECTION 8: DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

8.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared has been prepared on behalf of Shell UK Oil Products Limited and is submitted in support of an application for full planning permission for the redevelopment of existing petrol filling station; including the demolition of the existing sales building and forecourt, including canopy, pumps and underground tanks; erection of new sales building and new forecourt (domestic and HGV), including underground fuel tanks; provision of EVC hub and associated infrastructure; provision of car parking spaces and associated works at Shell Whitemare Pool, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE6 8YB.

8.2 The Design and Access Statement requirements of the site have evolved from an appraisal of the site's context, against the background of its location and proximity to the highway network and developed nature of the site.

8.3 In accordance with the requirements to formally state how design and access issues have been considered (under Section 61 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2014) this document addresses the design principles and concepts that have been applied to development in relation to location, use, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping in relation to the site's context.

8.4 The Design and Access Statement should be read in context with the planning application's supporting reports, drawings and accompanying material.

Site Evaluation

8.5 There are a number of key issues which have informed the design solution for the site's development. Effectively, it balances the site's opportunities and constraints arising from the assessment of the site to deliver a development that achieves high quality design, is sustainable, is economically viable and enhances the established locality.

8.6 The principal constraints can be identified as:

- The need to maintain the existing access arrangements into and out of the site on to the A194 and the access to the adjacent hotel/restaurant site;
- The site's location in the Green Belt and Great North Forest; and
- The need to retain the existing boundary treatments and landscaping where possible.

8.7 There are a number of opportunities afforded by the potential redevelopment of the site that are relevant material considerations in the evaluation of the proposals. In summary these are:

- The site offers an excellent location in terms of visibility and accessibility for motorists travelling on the A184/A194/A194(M);
- The opportunity to provide improved sales building facilities and forecourt which will benefit users of the site and motorists on the highway network;
- The proposal includes the opportunity to provide formal car parking and move away from the current adhoc arrangements; and
- The addition of EVC to the site will assist in the transition from traditional fuels to electric vehicles and is fully aligned with government objectives.

Planning Policy

8.8 A detailed evaluation of the planning policies relevant to this planning application is provided in Section 6 of this Statement. However, in summary the following policies are of particular relevance to the Design and Access Statement and inform this report:

- Paragraphs 7, 8, 10, 11, 119, 126 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021); and,
- Core Strategy (June 2007) Policies EA1; and
- Development Management Policies (December 2011) Policy DM1.

Design Considerations

Use

8.9 The proposed development is for the redevelopment of existing petrol filling station; including the demolition of the existing sales building and forecourt, including canopy, pumps and underground tanks; erection of new sales building and new forecourt (domestic and HGV), including underground fuel tanks; provision of EVC hub and associated infrastructure; provision of car parking spaces and associated work .

8.10 The existing service station is a sui generis use, and the service station is a long established use on site. Accordingly, the principle of the proposal is acceptable in planning policy terms considering the wider established use and the context of the site. Due consideration has been given to the site's location in the Green Belt and this is explored more fully in the Planning Issues Section.

Layout

8.11 The proposed layout of the scheme is shown on the accompanying planning application drawings.

8.12 Whilst the forecourt and sales building will be replaced, they are positioned broadly in the same location as existing. Formal car parking will be provided to the south of the sales building with a dedicated accessible parking space sited closest to the sales building entrance. An EVC hub is provided to the south of the site with an accessible EVC bay. The access and egress will remain as existing. It is expected that there will be an improvement in the vehicular circulation across the site.

8.13 The layout of the scheme has been carefully assessed taking into consideration the site boundaries, the need for the site to be accessible by domestic/HGV vehicles and service/delivery vehicles and to create an attractive and practical environment retaining as much landscaping as possible. The proposed is considered to accord with policies in the adopted Development Plan.

Scale

8.14 The replacement sales building is of an appropriate scale to the existing use of the site and therefore appropriate to its location within the Green Belt and Great North Forest and accords with the NPPF and Development Plan.

Appearance

8.15 The design of the replacement sales building reflects the existing use of the site as a service station, whilst creating an attractive shopfront of a high quality with inviting interior. Large glass windows along the front elevation will allow actively to be seen inside thereby creating visual interest within the development and creating a clean, welcoming environment which is modern, attractive and uncluttered. This will be an improvement on the existing sales building both externally and internally creating a more pleasant environment for customers and those working at the site.

8.16 The proposal includes a dedicated bin enclosure, which will screen the bins creating a neater and tidier site than existing (the bins are currently just located to the rear of the shop).

8.17 The proposal is considered to accord with the NPPF and Development Plan Policy relating to design quality.

Materials

8.18 The proposed materials are shown on the Proposed Building Elevations and reflect the modern and functional requirements of a service station. The introduction of a glazed frontage creates an attractive modern feel to the building, whilst also making the site and building seem lighter and more airy.

Community Safety

8.19 Consideration has been given to creating an attractive safe environment through the development of a high quality public realm with a parking area which is overlooked by the proposed building and activity on the site and adjacent road. The proposed site arrangement ensures natural surveillance across the site and protects the safety of users of the site and wider community. The proposal therefore accords with Development Plan policy.

Landscaping

8.20 The site is an existing developed site. The site comprises primarily of hardstanding with landscaping to the peripheries of the site which has been retained where possible with scope for enhancement if required.

Refuse Management

8.21 Waste from the sales building will be collected by a private contractor as per the existing arrangements. The development proposals include a dedicated bin store to the rear of the sales building offering an improvement over the existing position.

Accessibility

8.22 The applicant is committed to a policy of equality, inclusion and accessibility for those who live and visit the site and has strived to exceed all required standards and achieve a development which promotes inclusion and accessibility.

8.23 The provision of an accessible and inclusive environment has been an integral theme throughout the design process, from its initial conception to its current form. The concept of inclusive design seeks to remove barriers which create undue effort, separation or special treatment which enables everyone to participate equally regardless of gender, disability or age.

8.24 The use of the site for roadside facilities is well-established. The current access arrangements are also well-established. The access to the main highway network has been predetermined by the existing arrangements and remains unchanged.

Inclusive Access

8.25 In respect to inclusive access, all of the service station operators agree that it is not merely physical barriers that can cause difficulties for customers. Employees of all the major national chains receive Disability Awareness Sessions as part of their basic training, to understand the challenges customers with disabilities may face, and to ensure that their needs are met.

8.26 For operational and design reasons the site will remain level, with level access provided to the facilities and between on-site facilities. Services are therefore provided with access that meets the needs of those who are less able bodied, as well as those with pushchairs.

8.27 The proposal includes the provision of improved WC facilities for males, females and an accessible toilet. The proposal also includes an industry first accessible EVC bay which should be welcomed.

Conclusion

8.28 The proposal responds positively to the site's opportunities and constraints, and consideration has been given to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping. Access to and within the site has been carefully reviewed. It is considered that, based on the above, an appropriate and site sensitive design solution has been found, which accords with planning policy within the Development Plan and at a national level.

SECTION 9: CONCLUSIONS

9.1 This Planning Statement, also incorporating the Design and Access Statement, has been prepared on behalf of Shell UK Oil Products Limited and is submitted in support of an application for full planning permission for the redevelopment of existing petrol filling station; including the demolition of the existing sales building and forecourt, including canopy, pumps and underground tanks; erection of new sales building and new forecourt (domestic and HGV), including underground fuel tanks; provision of EVC hub and associated infrastructure; provision of car parking spaces and associated works at Shell Whitemare Pool, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE6 8YB.

9.2 The National Planning Policy Framework identifies the need for planning positively for community facilities and roadside services that support the safety and welfare of road users. Service stations are a vital necessity and provide an important role in ensuring that motorists travel safely especially as the number of vehicles on the roads continues to increase, increasing demand on existing service stations.

9.3 The principle of redevelopment of the site should be accepted given that the site is an existing long-established petrol filling station on the A184/A194/A194(M). The site is within the Green Belt and Great North Forest but is an established use in need of upgrade to meet the evolving needs of motorists, particularly with the addition of EVCs which will assist in the transition from tradition fuels to electric vehicles with associated air quality and environmental benefits.

9.4 Green Belt issues have been fully explored in the Planning Issues Section of this Statement and it is considered the proposal accords with Green Belt policy. The site's location in the Great North Forest has also been considered. The proposal will bring a wide range of economic benefits and accord with the role and the focus as contained within the NPPF and the Development Plan.

9.5 At present there is no formalised parking arrangements for the public using the site. These proposals will enable the delivery of six spaces across the site including one DDA space and air/water bay plus an EVC hub including an accessible bay. Detailed consideration has been given to the layout of the site to ensure the operation of the site and traffic flows through it are optimised.

9.6 It is not considered that the impact on surrounding properties as a result of these proposals will be any greater than the impact of the current service station.

9.7 Based on national and Development Plan policies and the size of the development, retail impact is not a consideration which is material to the application. Notwithstanding this, given the small size of the proposal and its function and existing use on the site it is not considered that the application proposal will have any trade diversion or adverse impact on any designated shopping centre or other retail floorspace of acknowledged importance. Due to the scale of the proposal and its relationship to the existing site, the application of the sequential assessment is not considered to be relevant.

9.8 On the basis of the above, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is forthcoming for this proposal.