

Case Officer: Sarah Greenall

Applicant: EZ Charging Ltd

Proposal: Electricity kiosk and 8no charging stations for Electric Vehicle Charging

Ward: Bicester East

Councillors: Councillor Dallimore, Councillor Mould and Councillor Wallis

Reason for Referral: Application affects Council's own land

Expiry Date: 27 January 2022

Committee Date: 13 January 2022

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION: DELEGATE POWERS TO GRANT PERMISSION
SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS FOLLOWING EXPIRY OF CONSULATION PERIOD**

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

1.1. The application site is located centrally within Bicester, just to the east of the Town Centre and forms part of a public car park accessed from Victoria Road. The application site is a small part of the car park to its western side closest to the entrance to the town centre forming 16 car parking spaces. Planning permission was previously granted to provide 12 car parking spaces (ref: 21/00986/F).

2. CONSTRAINTS

2.1. The application site is within proximity to the Bicester Conservation Area which is to the west.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1. The application seeks planning permission for the provision of an electrical kiosk to facilitate charging stations for electric vehicles to be positioned on the central kerb'd feature within the car park (separating spaces). 8no charging posts are proposed (serving the 16 spaces that sit within the application red line area). Planning permission was granted in May 2021 (reference: 21/00986/F); the current application seeks to add an additional 2 kiosks providing 4 more spaces over that approved.

3.2. The electrical kiosk is proposed to be 2.25m high, 2.7m wide and 0.6m deep with a black finish. The charging posts are proposed to be 1.74m high by 0.65m by 0.44m. The units are a light colour with black detailing.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

21/00986/F:

Electricity Kiosk and 6 no. charging stations for Electric Vehicle Charging.

Permitted 19.05.2021

5. PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

- 5.1. No pre-application discussions have taken place with regard to this proposal.

6. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

- 6.1. This application has been publicised by way of a site notice displayed near the site, and by letters to nearby residential properties. The final date for comments is **13 January 2022**.

- 6.2. No comments have been raised by third parties at the time of writing this report; however, it is noted that the consultation period is due to end after the committee date and any comments submitted up to this date will still be considered.

- 6.3. The comments received can be viewed in full on the Council's website, via the online Planning Register.

7. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

- 7.1. Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council's website, via the online Planning Register.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

- 7.2. BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL: No comments received at the time of writing this report

OTHER CONSULTEES

- 7.3. OCC HIGHWAYS: **No objection**

- 7.4. CDC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH: No comments received at the time of writing this report

8. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 8.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 8.2. The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Part 1 ('CLP 2015') was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council in July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031. The CLP 2015 replaced a number of the 'saved' policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the development plan. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District's statutory Development Plan are set out below:

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 2011 - 2031 PART 1 (CLP 2015)

- SLE4 – Improved Transport and Connections
- ESD1 – Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change
- ESD15 - The Character of the Built and Historic Environment
- Bicester 5 – Strengthening Bicester Town Centre

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 1996 SAVED POLICIES (CLP 1996)

- C28 – Layout, design and external appearance of new development

8.3. Other Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Cherwell District Council's 2020 Climate Action Framework

9. APPRAISAL

9.1. The key issues for consideration in this case are:

- Principle of development
- Design, and impact on the character of the area including conservation area setting
- Transport impact
- Residential amenity

Principle of Development

- 9.2. The application relates to the provision of an electrical kiosk and EV Charging points. The principle of the development has previously been considered acceptable (ref: 21/00986/F) and it is not considered that the addition of 2 kiosks to provide 4 more spaces would result in the principle of the development being unacceptable. The application documentation provides the background to this proposal describing that the Government has accelerated the transition to electric vehicles to 2030 and by 2025, it is estimated that there will be 25,000 battery electric vehicles driven on the roads of Oxfordshire. As part of Cherwell District Council's Climate Emergency declaration, it has prepared a Climate Action Framework which, amongst other measures shows support for electric and active travel as the new normal as a measure to contribute towards the District achieving net zero emissions by 2050.
- 9.3. Park and Charge Oxfordshire is a partnership project between Oxfordshire County Council, SSE, Zeta, Urban Integrated and the University of Oxford who are leading the way to help local District Council's across Oxfordshire provide electric charging hubs to accommodate this growth. The project is funded by Innovate UK and is proposed to provide hubs to meet demand as take up grows. The location of the initial car parks for the hubs have been chosen so that the charging points are close to residential areas with little off-street parking. The charging points are bookable overnight so they can be used by local residents who might otherwise have difficulties charging their electric vehicle and which are available to visitors otherwise.
- 9.4. This particular site is within Bicester Town Centre; the Development Plan aims to strengthen the town centre by supporting shopping, leisure and main town centre uses. The site is part of an existing car park and the plan is to set aside 16 parking spaces for EV use, with a kiosk to link to the charging points.
- 9.5. The principle of providing EV charging points in existing car parks is considered acceptable as it would facilitate infrastructure to support visitors and residents move to a more sustainable form of transport and this would contribute to mitigating the

impacts of climate change, reducing air pollution and to help the Council achieve its targets for a net zero carbon District by 2050. The proposal therefore complies with Policies SLE4 and ESD1 of the CLP 2015.

Design and Impact upon the character of the area including conservation area setting

- 9.6. Policy ESD15 sets out the expectation that development should complement and enhance the character of its context and meet high design standards.
- 9.7. The kiosk is to be positioned adjacent to existing car parking spaces which would be upgraded and advertised appropriately as being for EV use. The position of the EV charging points would be accessible centrally to the 16 spaces. The proposals would be visible within the context of an existing town centre car park and surrounding urban area. The infrastructure items proposed are modest in size and would therefore not appear prominent or out of keeping with its context. It is not considered that the addition of 2 kiosks would result in any additional harm to the character or appearance of the area.
- 9.8. The site is outside of but close to the boundary of the Bicester Conservation Area. However, given the context for the development, it is considered that the proposal would conserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 9.9. On this basis, Officers consider that the proposal would be acceptable in design terms and therefore complies with Policy ESD15 of the CLP 2015.

Transport Impact

- 9.10. The proposal would remove 16 parking spaces from general use and dedicate them for EV vehicles; however, as ownership rates of EV vehicles increase, the demand for them will increase. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) advise that the conversion of some Local Authority managed parking spaces to EV charging spaces is fully supported by policies within the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2021).
- 9.11. The LHA also advise that the proposals are unlikely to have any adverse impact upon the local highway network in traffic and safety terms, OCC therefore do not object to the granting of planning permission.

Residential amenity

- 9.12. Policy ESD15 sets out that development should consider the amenity of both existing and future development. In this case, there is some distance to nearby residential properties and given their nature and the aforesaid spatial relationship the proposals are unlikely to cause impacts to residential amenity. As such, the proposal complies with Policy ESD15 in this respect.

10. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 10.1. The proposal complies with the relevant Development Plan policies and guidance listed at section 8 of this report, and so is considered to be sustainable development. In accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, permission should therefore be granted.

11. RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION – DELEGATE TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT TO GRANT PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO:

- i. **THE EXPIRY OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD, IF THERE ARE NO FURTHER COMMENTS RECEIVED WHICH RAISE NEW ISSUES NOT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE IN THEIR DECISION MAKING; AND**
- ii. **THE CONDITIONS SET OUT BELOW (AND ANY AMENDMENTS TO THOSE CONDITIONS AS DEEMED NECESSARY)**

CONDITIONS

Time Limit

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Compliance with Plans

2. Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents: drawing numbers OPAC-SSE-CM-XX-DR-E-0001 Rev 06, ACR-O-VOWH-LE-1400_01 D, ACR-O-VOWH-LE-1400_02 D, ACR-O-VOWH-LE-1400_03 D, ACR-O-VOWH-LE-1400_04 D and ACR-O-VOWH-LE-1400_05 D, and image showing the 'EZC-_CPC1_SYSTEM_SPECIFICATION'.

Reason – For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.