

20/00502/FUL

**LAND FRONTING CAR PARK ACCESS, BELLINGHAM
LANE, RAYLEIGH**

**INSTALLATION OF A RAPID ELECTRIC VEHICLE
CHARGING POINT**

APPLICANT: **ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**
ZONING: **TOWN CENTRE/CONSERVATION AREA**
PARISH: **RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL**
WARD: **WHEATLEY**

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That planning permission be approved, subject to the applicants and owners entering into an agreement under Section 106 of the Act to the following heads of terms:

- a) To pay for the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders consultation and implementation, including the provision of the associated signing and lining.

And to following conditions:

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the following approved plans: 07201506; 07201507; Block Plan; Location Plan; Existing Block Plan; Proposed Block Plan.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is completed out in accordance with the details considered as part of the planning application.

- (3) The proposed development shall not be occupied until such time as the vehicle parking area indicated on the approved plans has been laid out in the associated parking bays. The vehicle parking area shall always be retained in this form. The vehicle parking shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles using the charging facility and that are related to the use of the proposal unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that on street parking of vehicles is provided in accordance with policy DM8 of the Development Management policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

2 PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS

- 2.1 The application currently before the Development Committee is for the construction of the installation of a rapid electric vehicle charging point.
- 2.2 Rochford District Council (RDC) has been granted funding to install electric vehicle (EV) charging points across the district. A number will be installed as 'permitted development', not requiring planning permission. However, whilst some of the chargers do not require planning permission, the current proposal represents one of those chargers requiring planning permission.
- 2.3 In conjunction with RDC, Essex County Council and a third party supplier, a mix of 'fast' and 'rapid' chargers are proposed to be installed in Council car parks. One rapid charger is proposed to be installed in Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh.
- 2.4 This application relates to one rapid charger to be located within the footway of the island along Bellingham Lane to the foreground of Mill Arts and Events Centre. The island has a footprint of some 29.8m². The charging point would measure 0.94m in width, a depth of 0.41m and a height of 1.78m.
- 2.5 Associated electricity feeder pillars, signage and line markings will also be put in place, as appropriate. The current double yellow lines that abut the island would be removed and a single yellow line would mark out a parking bay area for those using the charging points by hackney carriages and private hire vehicles only. This will not become a taxi rank. A Section 50 street works application has been submitted to Essex County Council and Essex Highways which includes a proposal to change the existing double yellow lines to parking bays.

3 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Site and Context

- 3.1 The site is in Bellingham Lane within the Rayleigh Conservation Area and Rayleigh town centre. The proposed charging point would be located within the highway of Bellingham Lane. The island is located between the through

road of Bellingham Lane and the circulation roundabout that is used to access Mill Arts and Events Centre car parking areas. The footpath is opposite the rear of shops that serve Rayleigh High Street, as well as a convenience store 'Rayleigh Food and Wine' that is accessed through Bellingham Lane.

Relevant Planning History

- 3.2 No relevant planning history.

4 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

Rayleigh Town Council

- 4.1 Based on the information provided to this Planning and Highways Committee the Town Council objects to this application due to the road having double yellow lines and there are no car parking spaces in the area proposed. It is situated in the Rayleigh Conservation area, in close proximity to the Windmill.
- 4.2 There are 2 public car parks in the vicinity which would be a better site for the charging points.

Historic Buildings and Conservation Advice

- 4.3 The application site is within the Rayleigh Conservation Area; it is currently a pedestrian island located in Bellingham Lane, fronting a small green area by the community centre. The proposed location for the electric vehicle charger will be on this island, close to the existing road signage.
- 4.4 Given that the proposal will be located in a 'backland' area, surrounded by buildings which do not make a positive contribution to the Rayleigh Conservation Area and that the only feature of positive contribution is the open and green space of the area, I have no objection to the proposal.
- 4.5 The only identifiable harm, if any at all, could be through the utilitarian aesthetic of the proposal; however, this is considered to be at the lowest possible level. Given its location it is considered that this is acceptable.

Essex County Council Highways

- 4.6 The Highway Authority is currently undertaking several trial charging locations throughout the county. This proposal follows the same principle as those other locations. As the facility will be situated in the highway then the developer will require to apply for the relevant permit / S50 licence to undertake works in the highway. The facility will remain the responsibility of the developer for maintenance / connectivity / liability and no cost shall be met by the HA.
- 4.7 From a highway and transportation perspective the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority, subject to the following conditions being applied:

1. The developer to pay for the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders consultation and implementation, including the provision of the associated signing and lining.

Reason: To prevent parking indiscriminate parking not associated with the proposed use in the interests of highway safety and policy DM1 of the Highway Authority's Development Management policies February 2011.

2. The proposed development shall not be occupied until such time as the vehicle parking area indicated on the approved plans has been laid out in the associated parking bays. The vehicle parking area shall always be retained in this form. The vehicle parking shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles using the charging facility and that are related to the use of the proposal unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that on street parking of vehicles is provided in accordance with policy DM8 of the Development Management policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

Economic Development – Rochford District Council

- 4.8 We would support this application, as it accords with the general town centre and Economic Development policies in the Core Strategy, the Rayleigh Town Centre Area Action Plan and Economic Growth Strategy, in making Rayleigh a more attractive location to visit for shopping, leisure and business purposes and is an important step in ensuring Rayleigh is welcoming to drivers of electric vehicles, who will be an increasing segment of the market in years to come. Such points feature on a national online database called 'ZapMap', meaning everyone with an electric vehicle can see there is a charging point here to stop off at. In this way, such charging points can attract visitors to town who may not have previously visited, and whilst they are charging there is the potential for them to visit local shops, cafés etc, supporting wider high street vitality. Given the location of the charger, there is also potential to support Rayleigh's tourism offering, being close to the Windmill, Rayleigh Mount National Trust site and a short walk from Rayleigh Town Museum.
- 4.9 We have been involved in a number of ongoing discussions about the future of town centres in the district and it is imperative that our high streets embrace technological change and do not become stuck in the past – EV charging points are one small step forward in this respect.
- 4.10 It should be noted that whilst we support the principle of the charger, we are not making comment on the exact siting of it in relation to pavement, parking spaces etc, and would defer to ECC Highways on these specifics.

5 CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of the Development

- 5.1 Rayleigh is one of the largest towns in the district. The Retail and Leisure Study for Rochford District produced in August 2008 identified Rayleigh as the district's strongest town centre and demonstrated a significant future requirement for additional comparison floor space. It is recommended that development should be intensified in this town.
- 5.2 At the same time, air quality tests showed exceeding limits of particulate matter in the district. The Core Strategy states the Council's aspiration to increase air quality and decrease the impact of air pollution on the residents of the district. Electric vehicles are considered a tool to reduce air pollution. The proposal would assist in achieving this goal and would accord with policies ENV5 and RTC1 of the Rochford District Core Strategy (2011).

Impact on Character of the Area – namely the Conservation Area

- 5.3 The application site is within the Rayleigh Conservation Area. The NPPF states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
- 5.4 Historic Buildings and Conservation Advice has been received from Essex County Council Place Services. They have considered that given the siting would be within a 'backland' area, surrounded by buildings which do not make a positive contribution to the Rayleigh Conservation Area and that the only feature of positive contribution is the open and green space, no objection is raised.
- 5.5 The only identifiable harm, if any at all, comes by way of the utilitarian aesthetic of the proposed charging point. However, this is considered by Built Heritage advice at the lowest possible level. Given the location, they consider this acceptable.
- 5.6 The proposal would not affect the open green space, known as the 'mound'. The proposed charging point would be modest in size. The charging point would be wrapped in a black coating in order to have a more sympathetic approach to the Conservation Area. Additionally, the public benefit by way of the sustainable energy source that electric charging points allow and the benefit to air quality within the district would outweigh the minor harm that would result to Conservation Area. On balance, it is considered that the charging points would provide a wider public benefit that would outweigh the potential harm to a Conservation Area that in the site location contributes little to the wider historic environment of Rayleigh.

- 5.7 The proposed application would provide a better siting than the previous application refused within Rayleigh High Street (reference: 19/00089/FUL). This was considered a highly sensitive area and the previously proposed charging point would have been to the detriment of the Conservation Area. The current application site does not fall within a footpath such as the previous application and there are vehicle movements all around the island. The island is more of a passing place rather than a prominent footpath such as Rayleigh High Street. Additionally, the site has been identified as contributing very little to the Rayleigh Conservation Area, unlike Rayleigh High Street which contributes significantly towards the historic fabric of Rayleigh. Therefore, the revised location of the proposed charging point would be considered acceptable.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 5.8 The site of the equipment would be for the most part surrounded by commercial premises. To the south-west of the site is Homeregal House – a residential home with independent living facilities. The charging units would not generate any unacceptable levels of noise whilst in use and would not disturb the use of the ‘mound’/green space often enjoyed by the residents of Homeregal House. At present, there are often cars unlawfully parked along the island footpath on the double yellow lines. The proposal would help to control the parking of this area by permitting only cars using the charging points and for a maximum of 1 hour.

Highway Safety

- 5.9 The proposal would involve two bays in which cars can temporarily park to use the charging points. Each bay would have a depth of 5m and a width of 2.5m. With an unallocated 1.5m between the two bays to compensate for any oversized vehicles. The existing island is met by double yellow lines, the restrictions of which are often ignored. The proposed bay would create formal parking restricted to the use by electric charging vehicles. This would improve the informal parking of the area. The proposed bays limited to cars using the charging point would be considered acceptable.
- 5.10 The proposed electric charging point would be sited on the island footpath within Bellingham Lane. This island is used as a footway for pedestrians travelling along Bellingham Lane. The island in question has two dropped kerbs at either end to allow for wheelchairs and pushchairs to pass by. The footpath abutting the shops would not be able to accommodate a wheelchair and a pedestrian, as such the island collects the shortfall for this.
- 5.11 The island has a width of 2.5m and the charging point would have a width of 0.75m. The average width of a wheel chair is 0.635m and a double pushchair can be up to 0.9m wide. With the charging point in place, it would leave 1.75m of the footpath. This would be considered to provide ample space for pedestrians, wheelchairs and pushchairs to pass by.

- 5.12 The Highway Authority is currently trialling several charging locations. The proposal follows the same principle as those other locations, which would be considered acceptable from a Highway Authority view. As the facility will be situated in the highway, the development will be required to apply for a permit/S50 licence to undertake works in the highway. The applicant is aware of this and has begun the process of such.
- 5.13 No objections are therefore raised in relation to transport or highway safety. The Highway Authority has not identified any issues or harm that would result from the proposed development.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The minor harm that would result from the proposed electric charging point to the Conservation Area would be outweighed by the public benefit of the proposal. The proposal would contribute positively towards the aim of cleaner air quality for the residents of the district. The proposed parking bays and charging point would not impact on transport or highway safety.

Marcus Hotten



Assistant Director, Place and Environment

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

National Planning Policy Framework (2019) - Ensuring the vitality of town centres; Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change; Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Rochford District Council Core Strategy (2011) – CP1, CP2, ENV5, RTC1

Rochford District Council Development Management Plan (2014) – Policy DM1, DM29, DM31

Rochford District Council Local Development Framework Allocations Plan (February 2014)

Parking Standards Design and Good Practice (2010)

Rayleigh Town Centre Area Action Plan (2015)

Background Papers

None.

For further information please contact Katie Fowler on:-

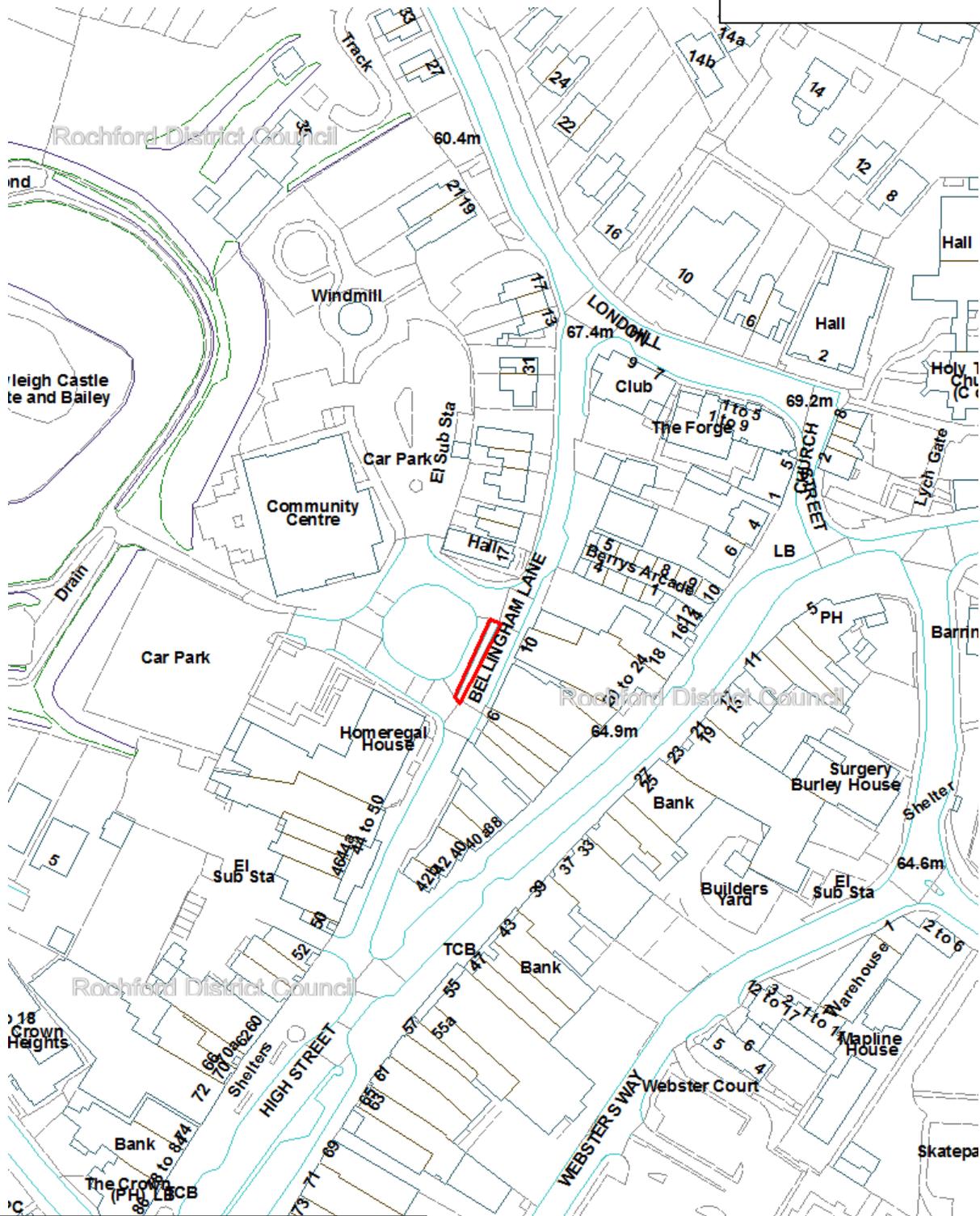
Phone: 01702 318039

Mobile: 07780 80 222 623

Email: katie.fowler@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

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