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Reading Borough Council
Planning Department
Council Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

1 September 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Application by Motor Fuel Limited for the Provision of a Valeting Facility to include Three Jet Wash Bays, Two Service Bays and Associated Works at Thames Valley Service Station, George Street, Caversham, Berkshire, RG4 8DH.

I have been instructed by MFG (Motor Fuel Limited) to submit a planning application for the provision of valeting facility to include three jet wash bays, two service bays and associated works at Thames Valley Service Station, George Street, Caversham, Berkshire, RG4 8DH.

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-**14935169**) and, in addition to the plans and documents submitted below, I would be grateful if you could take into account the contents of this letter which explains the background to the proposal and discusses the planning issues.

The following documentation is submitted with this application:

- (i) Planning Application Form Completed;
 - (ii) Relevant Ownership Forms Completed;
 - (iii) Site Location Plan Ref: FPS-MFG-708-PL-104;
 - (iv) Existing Block Plan Ref: FRS-MFG-708-PLG-105;
 - (v) Proposed Block Plan Ref: FRS-MFG-708-PLG-106;
 - (vi) Existing Site Layout Plan, Ref: FPS-MFG-708-PLG-100;
 - (vii) Existing Site Elevations, Ref: FPS-MFG-708-PLG-101;
 - (viii) Proposed Site Layout Plan, Ref: FPS-MFG-708-PLG-102;
 - (ix) Proposed Site Elevations, Ref: FPS-MFG-708-PLG-103;
 - (x) Jet Wash Screens and Plant Room Ref: FPS-MFG-708-PLG 107;
 - (xi) Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Alltree Consultancy dated 20 March 2026 Ref: 801222;
 - (xii) Proposed Arboricultural Works ref: SY26-446-ARB-PW dated 17.07.26;
 - (xiii) Noise Report prepared by Sharpes Acoustics Dated: 25 August 2026;
- and

- (xiv) Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy prepared by Moss Consulting Engineers dated 31 March 2026 ref: 26-0059-MCE-XX-XX-RP-C-7081-S2-P01.

The application fee has been paid directly via the Planning Portal.

Site and Surroundings

The Application site is located on George Street/B3345 to the north of Reading Town Centre. St. George's Street/B3347 provides access between Reading City Centre and the Station, northwards towards Cavendish and its urban hinterland.

To the south of the site is the Christchurch Meadows with associated recreation facilities, including play areas, tennis court and car parking. To the north of the site are the rear gardens of the properties on Queen's Road which also extend to the rear/east of the site. On the opposite side of George's Street is a commercial building which sits on the back edge of the pavement.

The application site comprises of an operational service station with a centrally located forecourt arranged in a four-square arrangement providing fuelling positions for eight vehicles with a sales building to the south. A car wash is located immediately to the east of the forecourt with a jet wash positioned in the south eastern corner. The area along the eastern boundary of the site was last used for car hire purposes and comprises of hard standing but is currently vacant.

The site is largely flat and square in character and is surrounded by leylandii trees along the eastern boundary and partly along the north and southern boundaries.

The site is located in Flood Zone 2, so is submitted with the necessary flood risk assessment and it is not subject to any heritage or ecological constraints.

Planning History

The site has a longstanding history as a Service Station with multiple applications for the evolution and alterations to the site.

The most recent application on the Site was submitted for the "*creation of a charging zone, erection of EV chargers, erection of canopy, three jet wash bays, sub-station enclosure and associated forecourt works*" Ref: 230603. This application was withdrawn by the Applicant on 10th August 2023 and no further details are available on the Council's website.

Permission was granted for a canopy height increase from 4.0m to 5.1m under Ref: 170657 (approved July 2017). In 2016, application was submitted for the retention of an ATM on the south elevation of the sales building which was approved on 17th November 2016 under Ref: 161827.

In addition to the above, there have been a number of applications for advertisements over the course of time, but no more recent applications which would prohibit the granting of the current proposal.

The Proposal

The proposal is for three wash bays and two service bays to be located along the eastern boundary of the site. The proposal also includes a small area of plant, positioned to the north of the jet washes. Details of the proposal can be found on the submitted drawings. The proposed jet wash and service bays are to replace the former car hire facility.

There are no other changes proposed to the forecourt or to the access and egress to the site.

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in August 2026 and constitutes guidance for Local Planning Authorities and decision-takers. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (paragraph 3). The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 15). The NPPF also refers to the 17 Global Goals for sustainable development set by the United Nations (paragraph 16).

Paragraph 17 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 well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible community facilities, public service infrastructure and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- An environmental objective – to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy; and to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).

According to Policy 'S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development' decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:

- a) Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;
- b) Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and
- c) In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay.

Policy 'S4: Principle of development within settlements' asserts that proposals inside settlements should be approved unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against national decision making policies. Adverse effects are likely to outweigh benefits where development would:

- Conflict with development plan allocations or safeguarded land uses, unless there is no reasonable prospect of the allocated use coming forward or safeguarding is no longer appropriate.
- Harm areas protected under Policy HC7 (existing recreational land and facilities), Policy HC8 (Local Green Space), Policy N6 (areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity), Policy N4 (Protected Landscapes), or Policy L2(1)(d) (development within residential curtilages).
- Result in the loss of undeveloped land used for cemeteries, burial grounds, water storage or flood risk management, unless suitable compensatory provision is made without increasing flood risk.
- Fail to comply with national decision making policies that require refusal in specific circumstances.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that all applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The statutory development plan comprises the Reading Local Plan adopted November 2019. On the proposed map, the site is within an Air Quality Management Area (policy EN15). A partial update to the Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2025 and hearings closed in February 2026. The outcome is awaited; however, the emerging policies are broadly similar to those detailed below.

Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) confirms that a positive approach to the consideration of development proposals will be taken that reflects a presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. Where appropriate, the Council will work actively with applicants to jointly find solutions that means that proposals can be approved wherever possible.

Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) along with Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks to ensure that proposals are designed to incorporate measures which are designed to use energy, water, minerals and materials and other natural resources appropriately with care, and take account of the effect of climate change and make appropriate adaptations.

Policy CC7 (Design in the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that development is of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located, and has due consideration of layout (urban structure and urban grain); landscape; density and mix; scale, height and continuity; and architectural details and materials.

Applications will be assessed with consideration to character, continuity and enclosure, quality of the public realm and the provision of green infrastructure and landscaping, even movement and permeability, legibility, adaptability and diversity.

Policy CC8 (Safe Guarding Amenity) seeks to ensure that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties, or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight and daylight, visual dominance and overbearing effects of development, harm to outlook, noise and disturbance, artificial lighting, vibration, dust and fumes, smell, crime and safety and wind (in the case of tall buildings).

It should be noted that the meadow to the south of the application site is protected by Policy EN7 (Local Green Space and Public Open Space). The proposal has no impact on this area.

Biodiversity and the Green Network is covered by Policy EN12 which confirms that such areas should be protected and that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, providing a net gain where possible.

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) confirms that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. Redevelopment should make provision for tree retention within the Application Site.

Policy EN15 (Air Quality) confirms that development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality. Where a development would be detrimental to air quality it would not be permitted unless the effect can be mitigated.

Policy E16 (Pollution and Water Resources) confirms that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging the environment and sensitive receptors to land, noise or air pollution and where it would result in no deterioration of ground and surface water quality, and where infrastructure is in place to accommodate development.

Policy EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment) confirms that The Council require that noise from equipment (plant noise) should be at least 10dB below the existing background noise level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) seeks to ensure that due consideration is given to flood risk and wherever possible, development should be designed to reduce flood risk both on and off site.

Planning Discussion

The proposal merely seeks the installation of valeting facilities replacing a former car rental area on an existing and established service station. The proposal complements the existing authorised use on the site making best use of the land in a sustainable location.

The valeting facilities are located discreetly upon the site on the eastern (rear) boundary. There are no sensitive uses in the immediate vicinity of the site. Residential properties to the north of the area are physically separated by their rear gardens and boundary screening.

The Application is submitted with a Noise Report which concludes that the noise levels are 10dB below background at noise sensitive locations so accords with policy EN17. Further details are set out in the submitted noise report.

In visual terms the site is well screened to the rear by the eastern boundary planting, and this has been retained. Following the completion of the Tree Survey and Arboricultural report the scheme was amended to better respect the roots and to ensure the retained trees were not damaged by the proposal. Accordingly, the submitted Tree Report should be read in conjunction with the Proposed Arboricultural Works plans which reflect the latest scheme layout (and not the layout which is included in the Tree Report). This confirms that the root protection zones are respected and therefore the proposal is in line with policy EN14 and EN15.

Given the nature of the site and the wider area, and its location, it is considered that the proposed use is acceptable in amenity terms, and no harm arises from the proposal.

The Application is submitted with a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage details which confirm that the Proposal is acceptable in these terms and due consideration has been given to the risk of flooding and drainage upon the site, so therefore, accords with Policy EN18.

It is noted that the site falls within an Air Quality Management Area which is covered by Policy EN15. Due to the nature of the proposal, providing a variety of facilities for existing customers, it is not considered that the proposal has any adverse impact on air quality and therefore, accords with the principles of Policy EN15.

Based on the above it is respectfully requested that planning permission is forthcoming for the proposal.



We look forward to receiving acknowledgement of this application and should you have any queries please contact me on 07770 328674 or jackie@jmsplanning.com.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Ford', is written over a faint, light blue circular watermark.

Jackie Ford
JMS Planning & Development

Encs