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**Subject:** Formal Objection to Planning Proposal Ref: 25/01812/EIA – Multi-Energy Refuelling Facility and Driver Welfare Unit at Land Adjacent to 11 Cowley Way, Sheffield, S35 1QP

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of a multi-energy refuelling facility and driver welfare unit (Use Class Sui Generis) at Cowley Way, Smithywood Business Park, Sheffield (Planning Ref: 25/01812/EIA). While Sheffield City Council’s screening opinion concludes that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required, I believe this conclusion overlooks a number of significant planning, environmental, and strategic concerns.

### **1. Redundancy of Facilities – Questionable Need**

There is a clear overprovision of HGV support and fuelling infrastructure in the area. Most notably, the new motorway services at Junction 33 of the M1, a short distance to the south, already provide comprehensive refuelling, rest, and driver welfare facilities for both conventional and low-carbon vehicles. This site is modern, accessible, and specifically designed to serve strategic transport needs.

The proposed development at Cowley Way lies within the same corridor, offering duplicated services without any clear strategic justification. Approving an additional site of this scale risks inefficient use of industrial land and contradicts the principles of sustainable development promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Sheffield’s own planning strategy.

### **2. Traffic and Transport Impacts**

The development would introduce a significant volume of additional HGV and van traffic onto the local road network. Cowley Way already serves large industrial units, and further intensification risks:

* Increased congestion on local roads;
* Reduced road safety due to additional HGV manoeuvres;
* Detrimental effects on local infrastructure and maintenance needs.

While a Transport Assessment is proposed as part of the full application, it should not replace proactive planning to prevent cumulative overloading of infrastructure. Existing developments and committed traffic growth have already brought this area near capacity.

### **3. Air Quality and Noise Pollution**

Although the proposal is framed as part of a decarbonisation effort, the facility will still result in an overall increase in vehicle emissions, especially given the heavy-duty nature of the vehicles served. This is contrary to regional air quality goals and could impact:

* PM2.5 and NOx levels in surrounding communities such as Chapeltown and Ecclesfield;
* Local health outcomes, especially given the long operating hours and proximity to the M1;
* Noise levels from idling engines, fuelling operations, and jet-wash facilities, particularly at night.

These issues were not properly addressed in the screening opinion and warrant full environmental assessment.

### **4. Visual and Landscape Impact**

The screening opinion acknowledges the site’s open hillside location, with long-range visibility from various vantage points. However, it underestimates the visual impact of the proposed development. This would include:

* Large areas of concrete hardstanding and vehicular infrastructure;
* High-security fencing and lighting;
* Industrial-style buildings and associated signage.

Such visual intrusion would degrade the landscape character of the area and create a precedent for unsightly, high-impact development on other nearby open sites.

### **5. Ecological and Ground Risk Considerations**

The site may not fall within an ecological designation, but it does comprise scrub and grassland on a former coal mining site. These habitats can provide value for invertebrates, birds, and small mammals. No Preliminary Ecological Appraisal or Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment has been presented to date.

In addition, the historic coal mining activity beneath the site raises concerns about ground stability, potential contamination, and subsurface risk. A Coal Mining Risk Assessment is mentioned but not yet available for public scrutiny. These are risks best assessed within a formal EIA process.

### **6. Sustainability and Planning Policy Concerns**

The proposal appears speculative and conflicts with several planning objectives:

* Sustainable transport and land use principles (as per the NPPF);
* Sheffield’s strategy to protect existing industrial land for diverse employment needs;
* The need to avoid piecemeal development that duplicates existing regional infrastructure.

A new HGV fuelling site in such close proximity to a major existing motorway service area suggests a lack of coordination with regional transport and logistics strategy.

### **7. Lack of Community Consultation and Oversight**

This proposal is progressing without meaningful public engagement. Given the size (2.51 hectares), the 24/7 nature of operations, and the environmental and infrastructure implications, robust consultation and full environmental scrutiny are essential.

Relying on a basic planning application process—absent an Environmental Impact Assessment—risks inadequate transparency and community oversight of a development with significant long-term consequences.

### **Conclusion**

This development is unnecessary, poorly justified, and poses multiple risks to the surrounding environment, infrastructure, and strategic planning vision of the city.

Given the:

* Proximity to existing equivalent facilities on the M1 at Junction 33 and J38/39 (Woolley Edge) and the 6 local refuelling stations within 2 miles of the proposed site
* Intensified traffic and pollution impacts;
* Landscape and ecological sensitivity of the site; and
* Insufficient justification of public need;

I strongly urge the Council to reconsider its screening opinion and require a full Environmental Impact Assessment. At the very least, a comprehensive public consultation and expanded review of the development’s cumulative impact should be carried out before any planning application proceeds.

Yours faithfully,  
 **[Your Full Name]**