

Unrestricted Report

ITEM NO: 11

Application No.
14/00080/RTD
Site Address:

Ward:
Central Sandhurst

Date Registered:
27 January 2014

Target Decision Date:
23 March 2014

Land Opposite Byways Crowthorne Road Sandhurst Berkshire

Proposal:

Replacement of existing 12M column with a 15M dual user replica telegraph pole with associated equipment cabinet and ancillary development (including meter cabinet).

Applicant:

Vodafone Ltd

Agent:

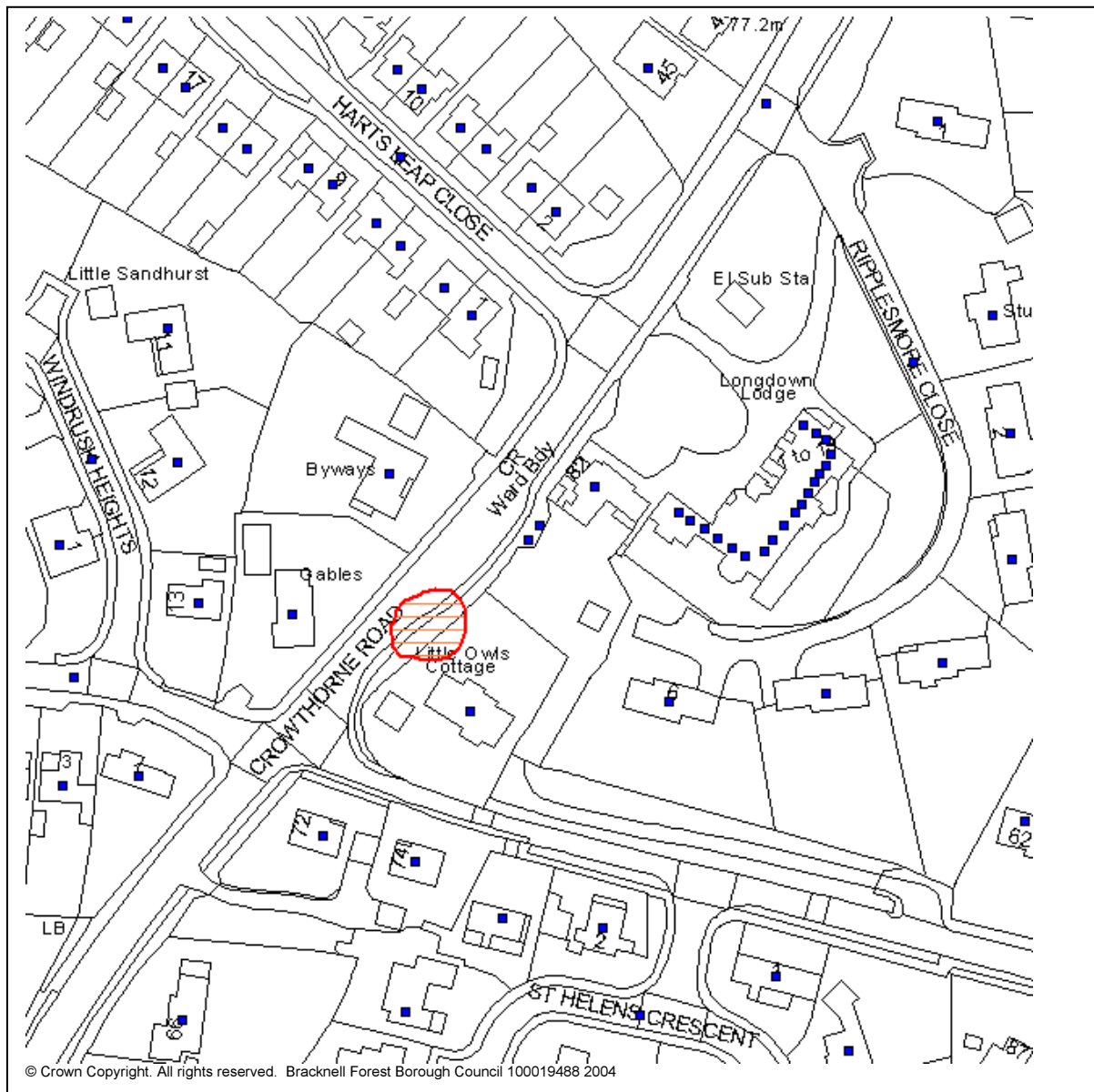
Mono Consultants Ltd

Case Officer:

Sarah Horwood, 01344 352000

environment@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Site Location Plan (for identification purposes only, not to scale)



OFFICER REPORT

1. REASON FOR REPORTING APPLICATION TO COMMITTEE

This application has been reported before the Planning Committee as the application has to be determined within 56 days.

2. PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

Class (a) A, Part 24, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 deals with permitted development for telecommunications development.

Class (a) A relates to the installation, alteration or replacement of any telecommunications apparatus.

A.1 states that development is not permitted by Class A (a) if-

(b) in the case of the alteration or replacement of apparatus already installed (other than on a building or other structure), the apparatus, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced, exceed the height of the existing apparatus or a height of 15m above ground level, whichever is the greater.

The proposed mast would not exceed 15m and as such the mast complies with this. The GPDO also allows for cabinets where they do not exceed 1.5 sqm. The ground area of the proposed cabinet would be under this size criteria. However as the proposal is in close proximity to the highway and the replacement mast would be increased in height by 2.5m over and above that of the existing mast subject to this upgrade, it is necessary to assess the siting of the mast and associated cabinets in terms of highway safety and its visual appearance and as such Prior Approval is therefore required.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site for the proposed replacement mast lies on the eastern side of Crowthorne Road and is primarily a residential area characterised by a mix of styles of properties. The proposed mast would be sited on an existing grass verge adjacent to the boundary wall of the residential property known as Little Owls Cottage, Wellington Road. There is an existing telegraph pole on the grass verge and to the north-west of the site is a pedestrian traffic crossing. There are further street light columns and numerous highway signs in close proximity to the site.

4. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

11/00239/RTD refused at the Planning Committee on 27 May 2011 for installation of a 12.5m high replica telegraph pole with 3 no. antennas for O2 and 3 no. antennas for Vodafone with associated equipment cabinets and ancillary development.

Following the issue of the decision notice, it was brought to the Council's attention that the application had not been determined within the 56 day determination period and therefore benefitted from deemed consent and could therefore be installed. The mast was subsequently installed.

5. THE PROPOSAL

This application seeks prior approval to erect a 15m high galvanised steel monopole, clad with timber effect GRP painted brown with 6no. antennas which would be concealed in a cylindrical shroud.

1no. additional cabinet and 1no. additional meter cabinet are also proposed. The cabinet would be 0.7m wide by 1.3m long at a height of 1.45m. The proposed meter cabinet would be 0.25m wide by 0.65 long at a height of 1.01m. These would be painted green.

The proposed mast would replace an existing 12.5m high mast and would be sited in the same location as that of the existing mast. It would be the same width as the existing mast. Existing cabinets already in situ would also be retained.

The proposed mast would be upgraded to maintain continued coverage and capacity of the exiting networks for Vodafone and Telefonica (formally O2) but to also cater for future 4G coverage demands. For information, 4G services are intended to improve mobile broadband, allowing greater capacities of data to be shared with faster speeds.

The mast and associated antennas are 'permitted development', but the developer must apply to the Local Planning Authority to ascertain whether prior approval is required for the siting and appearance of the development. In this instance the applicants have submitted these details for approval and the Council has 56 days in which to consider them.

The applicant has submitted a certificate, which confirms that the proposed mast meets ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) guidelines.

The proposed mast would be located some 245m from the nearest primary school - Uplands Primary School to the south-east located on Albion Road.

6. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No representations have been received at the time of printing of this report. Any representations received will be reported in the supplementary report.

7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways officer: No adverse impact would result to highway safety as a result of the proposal.

8. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Development Plan for this Borough includes the following:

Site Allocations Location Plan 2013 (SALP)
Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2008 (CSDPD)
'Saved' Policies of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan 2002 (BFBLP)
Bracknell Forest Borough Policies Map 2013

9. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

In assessing RTD application the Council must only consider the impact upon highway safety and the impact upon the character and appearance of the area through siting and appearance of the development. As such the principle of the development is not required to be assessed.

10. IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF AREA

Policy CS7 of the CSDPD and 'saved' Policy EN20 of the BFBLP relate to design considerations in new proposals and are relevant considerations. These policies seek to ensure that developments are sympathetic to the character of the area. This is consistent with the NPPF.

'Saved' Policy SC4 of the BFBLP states:

"Planning permission for network telecommunications development will be permitted provided that... There is no reasonable possibility of erecting antennas in an existing building or structure or of sharing facilities...The development must be sited so as to minimise its visual impact, subject to technical and operational considerations."

This principle of mast sharing is also reinforced in the NPPF - Section 5 which relates to supporting high quality communications infrastructure.

The proposal would be for an upgrade to an existing mast and would also constitute a mast share between Vodafone and Telefonica (commonly known as O2).

The area is residential in character with residential properties facing onto Crowthorne Road. Crowthorne Road contains many street lights, telegraph poles, highway signs, traffic lights and trees along the length of the road. The existing mast subject to this application has been in situ for approximately 2 years. The height increase of the replacement mast of 2.5m, from 12.5m to 15m, is not considered to appear so visually intrusive within the street scene as to warrant refusal of the application given the replacement mast would be sited in the same location as the existing mast and would be the same width as the mast it would replace, being slim-line in appearance.

Furthermore, the proposed design of the replacement mast as an imitation telegraph pole is considered an appropriate design in this location, sited next to an existing telegraph pole. It is similar in appearance to the existing mast which it would replace. The mast would be timber effect and coloured brown and as such when viewed against existing street furniture would not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the surrounding area.

The 2no. proposed additional cabinets would be sited 4.5m from the replacement mast. Although there are existing cabinets within close proximity to the mast, the cumulative impact of the structures are not considered to appear so visually cluttered as to warrant refusal of the application and would concentrate development within one area.

As such, the proposal would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would be in accordance with Policy CS7 of CSDPD, 'saved' Policy EN20 and parts of 'saved' policy SC4 of the BFBLP which is consistent with the NPPF.

11. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

'Saved' Policy EN20 of the BFBLP states that developments should not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding properties. This is consistent with the NPPF.

The proposed replacement mast would be located in the same position as that of the existing 12.5m high mast, approximately 7m from Little Owls Cottage, Wellington Road at the closest point to the south-east, 20m from Gables and Byways, Crowthorne Road to the west and 40m from 82 Crowthorne Road to the north-east.

The existing mast is 12.5m high and the replacement mast would be 15m high - 2.5m higher than the existing mast. However, given the replacement mast would be the same width as

the existing mast it would replace and would be similar in design, it is not considered that this height increase would appear so unduly overbearing and visually intrusive to surrounding residential properties as to warrant refusal of the application.

The proposed replacement mast would be sited 7m from the flank wall of Little Owls Cottage. The mast meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure and as such, it would be unreasonable for the application to be refused on health grounds.

As such, the proposal would not be considered to affect the residential amenities of neighbouring properties and would be in accordance with Saved Policy EN20 of the BFBLP and the NPPF.

12. TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS

CSDPD Policy CS23 states that the LPA will seek to increase highway safety.

The application proposes to upgrade the equipment installed under application number 11/000239/RTD and install two additional cabinets on the grass verge at the rear of the footway on Crowthorne Road north of Wellington Road. The equipment will not encroach upon visibility splays. The telecoms installation lies within the confines of the existing traffic signal controlled crossing on Crowthorne Road which is a classified local distributor road subject to a 30mph speed limit. There is a bus lay-by immediately to the north of the site.

The existing restrictions in the area should restrict how operatives park. Considering the limited amount of visits that can occur to such sites and that there is quite a wide section of tarmac behind the footway/cycleway which could accommodate a vehicle without compromising the space for pedestrians, the scheme is considered acceptable. Wellington Road is one way and thus visibility would not be affected when a maintenance/operative vehicle is parked on the pavement. The space left around the crossing when operatives are working would be adequate.

As with the previous application for this site, an informative should be added to any approval that advises the applicant of the illegal status of parking on the zig zag lines on the crossing and within the bus stop to highlight that maintenance vehicles should not park in these locations.

In summary, no highway safety issues would result from the proposal and it would be in accordance with CS23 of the CSDPD and the NPPF.

13. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Section 5 of the NPPF relates to supporting high quality communications infrastructure. Para 46 states "Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not...determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure".

The applicant has submitted a certificate, which confirms that the proposed mast meets ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) guidelines.

The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) is an independent scientific body which has produced an international set of guidelines for public exposure to radio frequency waves.

These guidelines were recommended in the Stewart Report and adopted by the Government, replacing the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) guidelines.

It is considered; therefore, that there are no grounds for refusal based on perceived health risks.

14. NEED

'Saved' Policy SC4 of BFBLP refers to telecommunication development being permitted provided there is a need for the development.

Para 46 of the NPPF also relates to need of telecommunications infrastructure. "Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system".

As such, issue of need is not a planning consideration and therefore in this respect 'saved' policy SC4 of BFBLP carries limited weight.

15. CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed replacement telecommunications mast at a height of 15m and additional cabinets would not adversely impact upon the residential amenities of adjoining properties or appear so visually intrusive to be detrimental to the surrounding area. Further, no highway safety implications would result from the proposal. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies CS7 and CS23 of the CSDPD, Policy CP1 of SALP, 'saved' Policy EN20 of BFBLP and the NPPF. With regard to 'saved' policy SC4 limited weight is given to this policy for the reason given above.

Therefore recommend that prior approval be granted for the development.

RECOMMENDATION

The siting and appearance of the development proposed be **APPROVED** in accordance with the plans as stated below:-

Drawing entitled Site Location Maps no. 100 received by Local Planning Authority on 27 January 2014

Drawing entitled Site Plan no. 200 received by Local Planning Authority on 27 January 2014

Drawing entitled Proposed Site Elevation no. 302 received by Local Planning Authority on 27 January 2014

Drawing no. 2111 received by Local Planning Authority on 27 January 2014

Informative(s):

01. The applicant is advised that it is illegal for any maintenance vehicle to park on the zig zag lines on the crossing on Crowthorne Road or within the bus stop on Crowthorne Road when undertaking maintenance works.

02. The applicant is advised to seek consent from the Council's Traffic Manager for any works on the highway. The Traffic Manager can be contacted at the Environment Department, Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, RG12 1JD, telephone 01344 352000.

Doc. Ref: Uniform 7/DC/Agenda

The application file to which this report relates can be viewed at the Council's Time Square office during office hours or online at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk