

Unrestricted Report

ITEM NO: 11

Application No.
15/00015/RTD
Site Address:

Ward:
Crowthorne

Date Registered:
8 January 2015

Target Decision Date:
4 March 2015

MAST 3028 High Street Crowthorne Berkshire

Proposal:

Installation of new 4.5 head frame with 6no replacement antenna on existing monopole, raising its height to 18.4m. New remote radio unit to head frame and 1 no. equipment unit plus ancillary works.

Applicant:

CTIL and Vodafone

Agent:

Damian Hosker

Case Officer:

Michael Ruddock, 01344 352000

Development.control@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 (GPDO) 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-

(ba) in the case of the alteration or replacement of apparatus already installed (other than on a building or other structure, on article 1(5) land or on any land which is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest) -

(i) the mast, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced -

(aa) exceed a height of 20m above ground level;

(bb) at any given height exceed the width of the existing mast at the same height by more than one third.

The proposed installation would not exceed a height of 20m and would not exceed the width of the existing mast by more than one third and as such the mast complies with this.

However as the proposal is adjacent to a car park and the mast would be increased in height it is necessary to assess the siting of the mast in terms of highway safety and its visual appearance and as such Prior Approval is therefore required.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located within a car park to the rear of the Co-Operative food store which borders the car park to the west. The car park is bordered to the east by the rear of properties fronting Napier Road and Cambridge Road, and to the north by Peninsula Place which is located on Napier Road. Palgrave House is located to the south of the site, fronting Cambridge Road.

4. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

Application 625267 - Prior determination application to replace existing monopole mast and Omni antennas with a 15m monopole mast, 3 no polar antennas, no2 dish antennas, radio equipment cabin - APPROVED 1999

5. THE PROPOSAL

This application seeks prior approval to replace the headframe on the existing 15m high mast. The new headframe would increase the height of the structure from 17.4m to 18.4m and would increase the width of the antenna from 1.2m to 1.7m. No new cabinets are proposed, and the new equipment would be housed within the existing

cabinet. The mast would be shared by two companies, Vodafone and Telefonica (commonly known as O2) and the location of the mast would remain as existing.

The proposed installation would provide an upgrade to maintain continued coverage and capacity of the existing networks for Vodafone and Telefonica 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 (LPA) 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 mast is located over 250m from the nearest primary school - Crowthorne Church of England Primary School on Dukes Ride.

6. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

Two letters of objection have been received in respect of the proposed development. The reasons for objection can be summarised as follows:

- As existing the mast has an adverse impact on the visual amenity of Crowthorne, and increasing the height of the structure and the width of the antenna would exacerbate this.
- The surrounding area is more residential than when the mast was initially approved in 1999.
- The mast would result in a detrimental impact on the residents of neighbouring properties.
- Concerns regarding the health of people living in close proximity to such masts.

7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Crowthorne Parish Council has provided a consultation response, and recommends approval.

No internal consultations were required.

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 applications the Council must only consider the impacts in terms of the character and appearance and highway safety 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. The Character Area Assessment SPD (adopted 2010) provides guidance to supplement Core Strategy Policy CS7 and is a material consideration.

'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 new headframe would increase the overall height of the structure by 1m. The height increase from 17.4m to 18.4m is not be considered to appear so visually intrusive within the street scene as to warrant refusal of the application given the location of the mast would remain as existing and a mast has existed in this location since 1999. The mast itself would not be widened, and the antenna would only be widened by 0.5m, from 1.2m to 1.7m. No additional cabinets are proposed, therefore the proposal would not be considered to appear visually cluttered in the street scene.

The site lies within Area C: Crowthorne Centre of the Character Area Assessment for Crowthorne, which gives recommendations regarding the building line on the High Street and keeping the public realm free of clutter. It is not considered that the replacement of a headframe on an existing phone mast would alter the scale of development in this area and as such it would not be contrary to the aims of the SPD.

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, the Character Area Assessment and the relevant part of 'saved' Policy SC4 of the BFBLP which is consistent with the NPPF.

BFPLP 'Saved' Policy EN20 refers to the need to not adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding properties and adjoining areas. This is considered to be consistent with the general design principles laid out in paras. 56 to 66 of the NPPF, and para. 66 in particular where applicants are expected to work closely with the surrounding community and generate designs that take into account their views.

The location of the mast would remain the same, approximately 17m from Peninsula Place to the north which is the closest residential property to the site. In view of this separation distance, the height increase from 17.4m to 18.4m would not be considered to appear so intrusive to surrounding properties as to warrant refusal of the application.

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.

11. HIGHWAY SAFETY

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

The increase in height from 17.4m to 18.4m would not impact on highway safety. The equipment is located within a car park and would not be located within a sight line.

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.

12. 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.

13. 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, the issue of need is not a planning consideration and therefore in this respect 'Saved' Policy SC4 of BFBLP is inconsistent with national policy.

14. CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed new headframe, increasing the height of the structure from 17.4m to 18.4m would not adversely impact upon the character or appearance of the surrounding area to such a degree that refusal of the application would be warranted. Furthermore, no highway safety implications would result from the proposal. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy CP1 of the SALP, Policies CS7 and CS23 of the CSDPD, '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 it is recommended 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 Proposed Location Maps no. 100 received by Local Planning Authority on 8 January 2015

Drawing entitled Proposed Location Plan no. 201 received by Local Planning Authority on 8 January 2015

Drawing entitled Proposed Elevation no. 301 received by Local Planning Authority on 8 January 2015

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