

Unrestricted Report

ITEM NO: 15

Application No.
15/00135/RTD
Site Address:

Ward:
Ascot

Date Registered:
13 February 2015

Target Decision Date:
9 April 2015

Telecommunications Mast New Road Ascot Berkshire

Proposal:

Replacement of existing 15m monopole with a 20m t-range telegraph pole on existing foot foundation. Replacement of existing harrier cabinet with a new cabinet on existing foundation.

Applicant:

Telefonia Ltd

Agent:

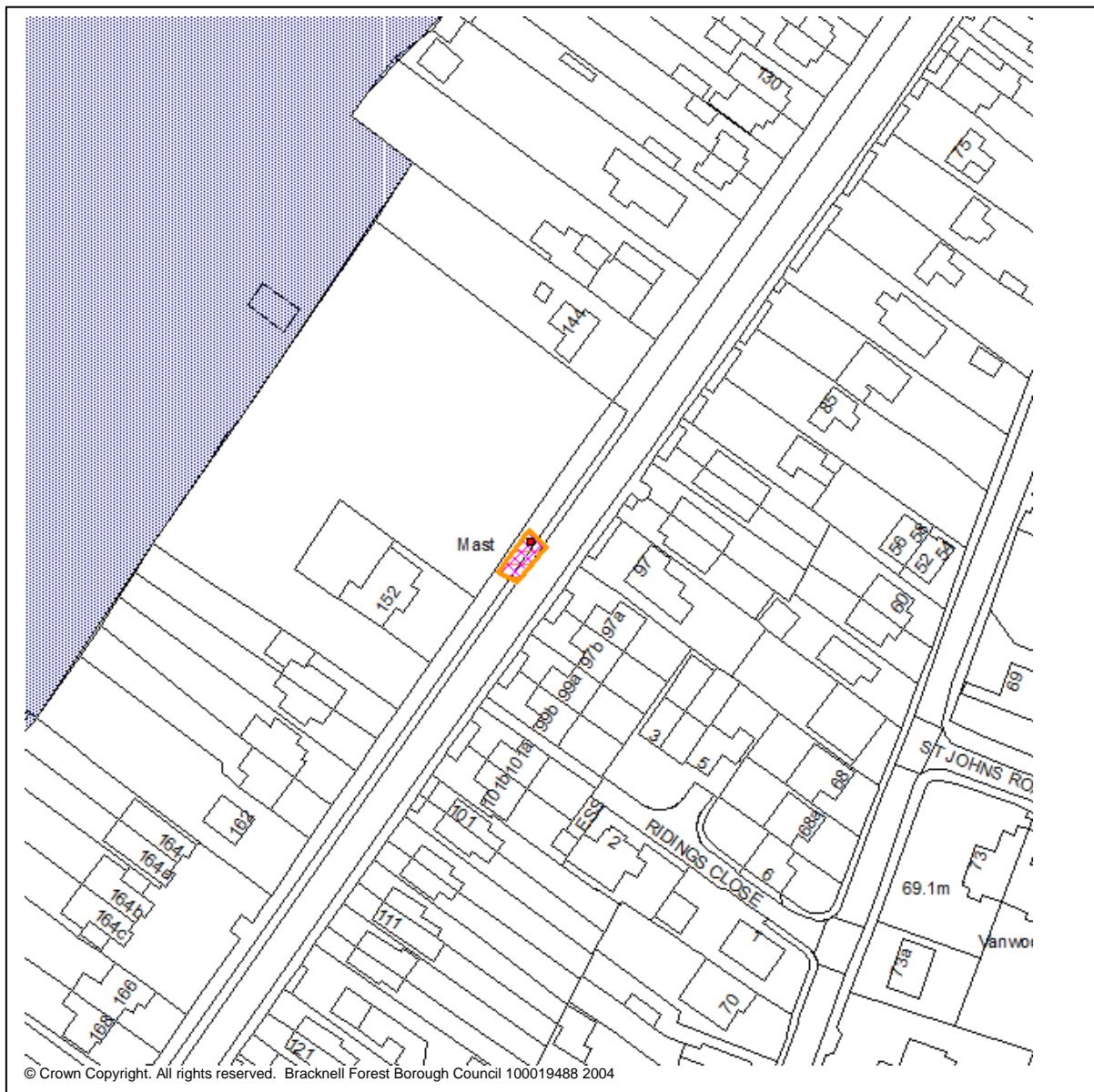
Mr Chris Jefferies

Case Officer:

Sarah Fryer, 01344 352000

Development.control@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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



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 classified road 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 on the west side of New Road, Ascot. The site is surrounded by mature and semi-mature trees with residential properties across the road to the east. To the south and north, past the trees are larger residential properties whilst there is woodland to the west.

The land to the west of the site was allocated for housing and was subsequently granted planning permission in 2013. To date no work has started on site.

4. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

Application 10/00339/RTD- Installation of telecommunications mast (15m High Jupiter Streetworks monopole one new root foundation) Approved 01.07.2010

5. THE PROPOSAL

This application seeks prior approval to replace the existing 15m monopole with a 20m t-range telegraph pole. The application also involves the replacement of an existing equipment cabin. Currently the antenna are stacked on-top of one another within the top 3.5m of the mast where the width of the mast increases from 0.3m to 0.5m. The proposed mast would have a uniform width with the antennas contained within the top

4.5m. 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 70m from Edith Rose Nursery Ascot and 160 m from the grounds of the Papplewick School and 365 m from Ascot Heath C of E School.

6. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

One letter of objection has been received in respect of the proposed development. The reasons for objection can be summarised as follows:

- Proposal results in a more prominent pole resulting in an eyesore and an unsightly view.
- May also impact the value of my property
- How safe is the enlarged proposal?

7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways Officer

Has no objection to 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 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.

Whilst 'Saved' Policy SC4 of the BFBLP is not entirely consistent with Section 5 (supporting high quality communications infrastructure) of the NPPF in respect of 'need', it also states at point (iii):

"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."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 proposal would increase the height of the mast by 5m, from 15m to 20m, and involve an overall reduction in the width. The proposal would be located in the same location as the existing mast, within a gap in development, and with trees either side providing some screening. Whilst the increase in height will result in a structure taller than the trees and surrounding street furniture, the proposed dark colour results in the mast not being a prominent feature within the streetscene. No additional cabinets are proposed, therefore the proposal would not be considered to appear visually cluttered in the street scene.

The proposal is for a telegraph pole style mast which is clad in a brown textured plastic giving it the appearance of a telegraph pole. Telegraph poles are a feature of the area, but within New Road, they are all on the opposite side of the road to the proposal. The mast would also be taller than a standard telegraph pole with the result that the finish of the mast to replicate a telegraph pole would make it appear incongruous. It is considered that the current dark grey finish assimilates the mast into the background and is effective in reducing the impact. It is therefore proposed to condition the finish of the mast to be a dark grey colour, as the existing mast. The applicants have indicated that they are content with this approach.

As such, subject to a suitably worded condition, it is not considered that the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would be in accordance with Policy CS7 of CSDPD, 'saved' Policy EN20, 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 15m west of 97A New Road. The slender nature of the installation, in the same location as an existing mast, and even with the increase in height the proposal is not considered to result in an intrusive appearance to warrant a 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. This policy is considered consistent with the NPPF,.

The increase in height from 15m to 20m would not impact on highway safety. The equipment is located on the highway verge and there is no material change in the access arrangements for maintenance of the mast.

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

12. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Section 5, Para 46 of the NPPF 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 mast 5m higher than the existing structure 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, 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:-

01. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, prior to the erection of the mast, details of the finished colour of the mast shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The mast shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.
02. Plans considered in determining this application:
Drawings 100 Issue A, 200 Issue A, 201 Issue A, 300 Issue A, 301 Issue A received 13.02.2015.

Informative(s):

01. During the installation of the apparatus, should traffic management (signs etc) be required to be sited on the highway, Wayne Scott Traffic Manager for Bracknell Forest Borough Council should be contacted prior to the installation.

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