

Unrestricted Report

ITEM NO: 10

Application No.
15/00263/RTD

Site Address:

Ward:
Ascot

Date Registered:
19 March 2015

Target Decision Date:
13 May 2015

Telecommunications Mast Fernbank Road Ascot Berkshire

Proposal:

Swapout of existing 13.8m Telegraph Pole and replacement with a new 13.8m Jupiter Pole with shrouded antennas and additional cabinet at ground level.

Applicant:

Vodafone and CTIL

Agent:

Mr Chris Jefferies

Case Officer:

Sarah Fryer, 01344 352000

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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 therefore as proposed the mast complies with the above criteria.

However, as the proposal is adjacent to a classified road, in a prominent location, and it is proposed to change the design of the mast 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 Fernbank Road, opposite the junction with Darwall Drive within a residential area. The mast is sited on the highway verge, which slopes up away from the road and in front of a low wall with a hedge behind. The site is outside St Christopher Gardens a three storey sheltered housing complex, which is set back from the highway behind an enclosed grassed amenity area. The area has a variety of existing street furniture including lamp posts, telegraph poles and an electric substation.

4. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

Application 10/00256/RTD Installation of a 14.85m telecommunications mast with associated equipment cabinet. Refused 21.06.10

Application 14/00068/RTD Replacement of existing 13.8m high monopole and internally shrouded antennas with new 13.8m high monopole, 1 no. additional cabinet with ancillary development. Approved 03.03.14

Application 14/00080/RTD Replacement of existing 12M column with a 15m dual user replica telegraph pole with associated equipment cabinet and ancillary development (including meter cabinet). Approved 28.02.14

5. THE PROPOSAL

This application seeks prior approval to replace the existing 13.8m telegraph style mast with a 13.8m Jupiter pole, and an additional equipment cabinet measuring 1.3m by 0.7m and 1.6m in height to be located to the south of the mast. The application form indicates that the mast would be painted brown whilst the equipment cabinet would be green. The only change is therefore the appearance of the mast from a telegraph style to a Jupiter pole.

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 also to 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 antennae 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 520m from LVS School and 650m from Ascot Heath C of E School. The mast is located directly in front of St Christophers Gardens, a sheltered housing complex.

6. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

One objection has been received raising concerns that a new mast may interfere with and block television signals.

7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

None received

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 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 seeks consent to change the external appearance of the mast resulting in the antennae being confined to the top 2.1m which would increase in width from 30cm to 50cm. The proposal would be sited in the same location as the existing mast and would be painted a brown colour, the same colour as the existing mast. It is not considered that the additional 20cm to the width of the antennas and change in appearance would be so detrimental on the visual appearance as to sustain a reason for refusal.

The additional cabinet would be located to the south of the mast within the street verge and painted green, the same colour of the existing cabinets. This element while adding an additional structure in the area, would be sited in an area where there are existing street cabinets and the siting back from the footpath and against an existing wall and established hedge results in a non-intrusive structure not considered harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

The proposed design of the mast and equipment cabinet is considered to comply with BFBLP 'saved' Policy EN20, and CSDPD Policy CS7 and therefore is considered to be acceptable.

11. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

BFBLP 'Saved' Policy EN20 (criterion vii) 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.

As the location of the mast would remain the same and with no increase in height proposed, it is not considered that the proposal would detrimentally affect the amenities of neighbouring residents.

The proposed equipment cabinet would be sited within the verge against the existing wall adjacent to existing cabinets, and therefore it is not considered that this would detrimentally affect the amenities of nearby residents.

One objection has been received raising concerns that the proposal would block television signals to the neighbouring retirement home. This is not a material consideration in the determination of this 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, criterion vii, of the BFBLP and the NPPF.

12. HIGHWAY SAFETY

CSDPD Policy CS23 states that the LPA will seek to increase highway safety. This policy is considered consistent with the NPPF.

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.

13. 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.

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

15. CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed new mast of a different design but in the same location and of the same height as 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. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and details received by the Local Planning Authority on 18.03.15:
Drawing number 100 issue V1; 300 issue V1; 301 issue V1; 200 issue V1; 201 issue V1.

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.
02. The applicant is recommended to use anti-graffiti paint on the equipment cabinets.

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