

## Unrestricted Report

### ITEM NO: 8

Application No.  
**15/00346/RTD**  
Site Address:

Ward:  
Crowthorne

Date Registered:  
16 April 2015

Target Decision Date:  
10 June 2015

## Junction Of Ellis Road and Old Wokingham Road Crowthorne Berkshire

Proposal: **Replacement of existing 17.5m high monopole, with a new 20m high monopole.**

Applicant: Telefonica UK Ltd

Agent: Mr Charles White

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 16, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (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-

(c) in the case of the alteration or replacement of apparatus already installed (other than on a building or other structure, on article 2(3) 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 increase the height 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 east side of Old Wokingham Road, opposite the junction with Ellis Road. To the east there are mature trees and open countryside, however this site is allocated as a mixed use development and benefits from outline permission. To the west the site faces a residential estate located with Wokingham Borough Council.

### **4. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY**

06/00426/FUL Submission of details of siting and appearance for the erection of a 17.5m high telecommunications mast with associated equipment cabin. Refused- due to highway safety concerns relating to servicing vehicles parking opposite a junction (Allowed on appeal)

### **5. THE PROPOSAL**

This application seeks prior approval to replace the existing 17.5m mast with a 20m dual stack Jupiter mast. The plans also show an additional equipment housing cabinet located on the southern side of Ellis Road. However this is located within Wokingham

Borough and therefore cannot be considered under this application. The application form indicates that the mast would be painted green.

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 690m to the south east of Hatch Lane Primary School.

## **6. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

To date one representation has been received objecting the proposal on the following grounds:

- o Mast is already offensive within the landscape
- o Parking of maintenance vehicles causes a nuisance to local residents.

## **7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

Wokingham Borough Council – no comments.

## **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 for an increase in height of 2.5m to the mast to accommodate additional antennas resulting from an additional operator using the mast. To ensure that adequate coverage is maintained and no additional masts are required it is necessary to increase the height of the mast. The replacement mast would be sited in the same location as the existing structure, utilising the existing foundations and fixing bolts. The siting within the verge, and where the mast would be seen against a backdrop of trees, offers adequate screening reducing the impact of the proposal on the streetscene. The proposed green finished colour would further assimilate the mast into the surroundings and it is recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure that the mast is finished in this colour.

The proposed design of the mast is considered to comply with BFBLP 'saved' Policy EN20, and CSDPD Policy CS7 and accordingly 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.

The proposed mast would be sited opposite a road junction and not directly opposite any residential dwellings. Given its located within the highway verge, against a vegetation belt, it is not considered that the proposal would detrimentally affect the amenities of neighbouring residents.

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 2.5m taller than the existing structure, adjacent to an existing mature wooded area 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 16.04.2015:  
Drawing numbers 100 issue A, 200 issue A, 300 issue A, 301 issue A.

02. The mast hereby approved shall be finished in Fir Green RAL 6009 and shall be maintained as such.  
Reason: In the interest of the visual amenity of the area.  
(Policies; CSDPD: CS7, BFBLP EN20)

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](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk)