

ITEM NO:

Application No.
15/01038/RTD
Site Address:

Ward:
Crown Wood

Date Registered:
16 October 2015

Target Decision Date:
10 December 2015

**Telecommunications Mast Savernake Way Bracknell
Berkshire**

Proposal: **Replacement of existing 11.7M phase 3 monopole with 12.5M phase 5 monopole and 1 no. additional equipment cabinet.**

Applicant: H3G Ltd and EE Ltd

Agent: JN Planning Consultants

Case Officer: Matthew Miller, 01344 352000

development.control@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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



OFFICER REPORT

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Prior Approval is sought for a 12.5 metre high telecommunications mast, to replace an existing 11.7 metre high mast.

1.2 The proposal is not considered to result in an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area due to the nominal increase in size and its setting adjoining an area of woodland. It would not result in an adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties due to the separation distance involved. It is not considered that the proposal would result in an adverse impact on highway safety in comparison to the existing situation, which does not create a risk to highway safety. Furthermore it is not considered that there are any grounds for refusal of the proposal based on perceived health risks.

1.3 It is therefore recommended that the siting and appearance of the development proposed be approved.

RECOMMENDATION
Delegate to the Head of Planning to grant Prior Approval as per the recommendation in Section 12 of this report following the expiration of the consultation period.

2. REASON FOR REPORTING APPLICATION TO COMMITTEE

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

3. PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Class A(a), Part 16, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 deals with permitted development for telecommunications development.

3.2 Class A(a) relates to the installation, alteration or replacement of any telecommunications apparatus. Sub-section A.1 states that development is not permitted by Class A (a) if-

(c) in the case of the alteration or replacement of an existing mast (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 20 metres above ground level

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

(ii) where antenna support structures are altered or replaced, the combined width of the mast and any antenna support structures would exceed the combined width of the existing mast and any support structures by more than one third.

3.3 The proposed mast would not exceed 20 metres, and at any given height would not exceed the width of the existing mast at the same height by more than a third. As such the proposal complies with the above. The GPDO also allows for cabinets where they do not exceed 1.5 square metres in ground area. The ground area of the additional proposed cabinet would not exceed 0.65 square metres.

3.4 However as the proposal is sited in close proximity to the highway it is considered necessary to assess the siting of the mast in terms of highway safety, and as such Prior Approval is required to ensure that there is no detrimental impact upon highway safety.

4. PLANNING STATUS AND SITE DESCRIPTION

PLANNING STATUS
Within defined settlement
Blanket TPO surrounding site

4.1 The site is located within a predominately residential area, to the immediate south of the roundabout connecting the highways of Savernake Way, Mendip Road, and the access to Savernake Park. An existing 11.7 metre high telecommunications mast is present, bordering pedestrian footways to the front (west) and northern sides. Two telecommunications cabinets are sited immediately behind (east) of the mast.

4.2 The site is bordered to the north and south by trees which form part of a larger woodland area. The trees immediately surrounding the site are subject to a blanket Tree Preservation Order (TPO) (reference: TPO 106).

4.3 The nearest dwellings are sited within the highway of Draycott to the west. There is a minimum separation distance of 17.5 metres to the rear boundaries of these properties, and 25 metres to the dwellinghouses proper.

5. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

5.1 The site history can be summarised as follows:

05/00207/RTD

Submission of details of siting and appearance for the erection of 11.7m. high telecommunications mast with 3no. antennae and 1no. associated equipment cabin.
Refused (2005)

05/00873/RTD

Details of siting and external appearance for the installation of 11.7m telecommunications mast with three antennas and associated equipment cabin.
Refused (Appeal Allowed) (2006)

5.2 In addition to the above additional telecommunications cabinets have been installed within the site in 2012, under permitted development rights.

6. THE PROPOSAL

6.1 This application seeks Prior Approval for a replacement telecommunications mast, measuring 12.5 metres in height and 0.3 metres in diameter. The replacement mast would be sited 1.3 metres to the south of the existing mast.

6.2 In addition an equipment cabinet is proposed to be installed to the east of the mast, measuring 1.3m (l) x 0.5m (w) x 1.5m (h).

6.4 The proposed replacement mast constitutes '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 applicant has submitted these details for approval and the Council has 56 days in which to consider them. If no decision is made within the timeframe the application will be deemed as approved.

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

6.6 The applicant has stated that an increase in the mast height is required to upgrade existing coverage to provide 4G services, and to continue to provide adequate service to more than one telecommunications operator.

7. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

Bracknell Town Council:

7.1 No comments received at time of writing.

Other representations:

7.2 No representations have been received at time of writing.

[Officer Comment: The consultation period expires on 16 November 2015. Any further comments received past the deadline of the Committee Report will be included on the Supplementary Report. The application will then be delegated to the Head of Planning in view of any comments received between the Planning Committee of 12 November and the 16 November deadline].

8. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highway Officer

8.1 The Highway Officer raises no objection.

8.2 No further statutory or non-statutory consultations have been required.

9. MAIN POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

9.1 The key policies and guidance applying to the site are:

	Development Plan	NPPF
General policies	CP1 of SALP, CS1 & CS2 of CSDPD	Consistent
Design	CS7 of CSDPD, Saved policy EN20 and SC4 of BFBLP	Consistent (SC4 consistent with regards to character and appearance considerations)
Trees	Saved policy EN1 of BFBLP	Consistent
Highway safety	CS23 of CSDPD	Consistent
Telecommunications Provision	Saved policy SC4 of BFBLP	Not consistent in terms of need(see sections 10.24 – 10.26 of report).
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)		
(None)		
Other publications		
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) Community Infrastructure Levy.		

10. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 The key issues for consideration are:
- i. Impact on character and appearance of the area
 - ii. Impact on residential amenity
 - iii. Impact on highway safety
 - iv. Health implications
 - v. Need
 - vi. Community Infrastructure Levy

i. IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF AREA

10.2 As stated within section 6.6 of the report, a taller replacement telecommunications mast is required to improve and upgrade existing coverage. No alternative sites have been considered in view of the proposal being an upgrade to an existing site.

10.3 The proposed mast would be taller than the existing mast by 0.8 metre, and would be increased in diameter by 0.1 metre. The increase in diameter and height of the replacement mast would nominally increase its visual prominence in the street scene when viewed from Savernake Way and Mendip Way; however the increases are modest and therefore it is considered that it would not appear unduly prominent in the street scene, in comparison to the existing mast.

10.4 Although the proposed mast would be adjacent to an existing roundabout, its visual prominence would be mitigated by the presence of existing trees on either side which form part of a larger amenity woodland area. These existing trees would allow for the proposed mast to be partly screened and assimilated into the street scene.

10.5 As the existing mast is not externally treated (i.e. through colour finishing) it is not considered necessary that the proposed replacement mast be treated in view of its nominal increase in dimensions.

10.6 The proposed additional telecommunications cabinet would not appear visually prominent in the street scene, due to the siting of the cabinet within an existing compound set away from the highway some 25 metres.

10.7 Trees subject to TPO 106 adjoin the site. The proposed cabinet would be sited on existing hardstanding, however the proposed mast would be sited closer to existing trees to the south. Although the proposed mast would occupy a small ground area, further tree protection details have been requested in order to fully assess the impact of the proposal on protected trees. The assessment of this will be included in the Supplementary Report.

10.8 Given the relocation of the replacement mast in an alternative location to that of the existing mast, a planning condition would be required in the event of prior approval being granted for the replacement mast that the existing mast is removed once the new mast is operational.

10.9 It is therefore considered that the development would not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, including its Green Belt setting, in accordance with CSDPD Policy CS7, BFBLP 'Saved' Policies EN20 and SC4, and the NPPF, subject to tree protection details.

ii IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

10.10 It is not considered that the proposed mast and associated equipment cabinet would have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties within Draycott to the west, considering the separation distance of 17.5 metres to the rear boundaries of these properties

(at the shortest point), the presence of the intervening highway of Savernake Way, and the presence of the existing mast.

10.11 Furthermore it is not considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the residential properties to the east within East Stratton Close, as it would be significantly screened by existing trees.

10.12 It is therefore considered that the development would not result in an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, in accordance with BFBLP 'Saved' Policy EN20 and the NPPF.

iii. IMPACT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY

10.13 Savernake Way is a residential distributor road which is subject to a 30 miles per hour speed limit.

10.14 The Highway Officer has been consulted on the proposal, and advises that as the proposed mast would be 0.8 metre higher and 0.1 metres wider in diameter than the existing mast, it is not considered that it would result in an adverse impact on highway safety. Furthermore, no risk to highway safety has been evidenced through the siting of the existing mast.

10.15 The mast would be relocated southwards, resulting in it being sited further away from the neighbouring footway to the north, and from the roundabout.

10.16 It is noted that two previous applications on the site for telecommunications masts were refused in 2005 (references 05/00207/RTD and 05/00873/RTD), on grounds of impacts on highway safety. However, application 05/00873/RTD was allowed at appeal on the grounds that the development would not have resulted in an adverse impact on highway safety as to have justified the refusal of the application, and this forms a significant material consideration. The Highway Officer has taken a view consistent with this appeal decision.

10.17 The proposed additional cabinet would be sited at the back of the adjoining footpath in line with existing cabinets.

10.18 The Highway Officer advises that the applicant seek consent from the Council's Traffic Manager for conducting any works that may be required on the public highway. The applicant is to be advised of this by way of informative.

10.19 It is therefore considered that the development would not result in an adverse impact on highway safety, in accordance with CSDPD Policy CS23 and the NPPF.

iv. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

10.21 The ICNIRP is an independent scientific body which has produced an international set of guidelines for public exposure to radio frequency waves.

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

10.23 It is therefore considered that there are no grounds for refusal of the proposal based on perceived health risks, and as a result the proposal complies with the NPPF.

v. NEED

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

10.25 However, para. 46 of the NPPF states that 'Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, [or] question the need for the telecommunication systems'.

10.26 The applicants have outlined the need to provide improved telecommunications services in this location in sections 6.6 and 10.1 of this report. However, the issue of need is not a planning consideration and therefore in this respect 'Saved' Policy SC4 is inconsistent with national policy.

vi. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

10.27 Bracknell Forest Council introduced charging for its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 6th April 2015. CIL is applied as a charge on each square metre of new development. The amount payable varies depending on the location of the development within the borough and the type of development.

10.28 CIL applies to any new build (except outline applications and some reserved matters applications that leave some reserved matters still to be submitted), including extensions of 100 square metres of gross internal floor space, or more, or new build that involves the creation of additional dwellings. In this case the proposal is not CIL liable as it would not constitute the creation of internal floor space.

11. CONCLUSIONS

11.1 It is considered that the proposal would not result in an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area, the amenity of the surrounding properties, on highway safety, or on public health. It is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with Development Plan Policies SALP Policy CP1, CSDPD Policies CS1, CS2, CS7, and CS23, BFBLP 'Saved' Policy EN20, and the NPPF. With regard to 'Saved' Policy SC4 limited weight is given to this policy for the reason given in section 10.26 of the report.

12. RECOMMENDATION

That the application be delegated to the Head of Planning to grant Prior Approval following the expiration of the consultation period for the siting and appearance of the development subject to compliance with the following conditions:

01. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out only in accordance with the following approved plans received by the Local Planning Authority on 16 October 2015:

BRF003 -001 Rev. B 'Site Location'
BRF003 -002 Rev. B 'Proposed Site Plan'
BRF003 -003 Rev. B 'Proposed Elevation A'
BRF003 -004 Rev. B 'Antenna Details & Config'

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

02. The existing 11.7 metre high mast shall immediately be removed following the installation of the replacement mast hereby permitted once it is operational.

REASON: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

[Relevant Policies: BFBLP 'Saved' Policy EN20, Core Strategy DPD CS7]

Informative(s):

01. 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.
02. The applicant is advised that consideration should be given to the use of anti-graffiti paint on the proposed cabinet.
03. The National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) publish clear guidance on the work methods required to minimise damage to trees in the execution of excavations and works of the type required by the installation of phone masts. The publications are available as free downloads from the following website: www.njug.org.uk/category/3/pageid/5/
These standards should be applied to the execution of approved works.

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