

DELEGATED REPORT - Application No: 200674/TELE

Address: Junction of Milford Road and Cremyll Road

Proposal: Erection of a 20m column with ground-based cabinets and ancillary development.

Case Officer: Matt Burns

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site is located on the east side of Millford Road at the junction with Cremyll Road within an industrial estate in the Richfield Avenue Core Employment Area to the north of the centre of Reading. The site is surrounded by a number of two storey buildings and warehouses in a range of employment uses.

Proposal:

The application seeks prior approval under Part 16 (Communications) of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) for the erection of a 20m column with 4 ground-based cabinets and ancillary development.

Relevant Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

Chapter 10 (Supporting high quality communications)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Policy OU3 (Telecommunications Development)

Policy CCS7 (Design and the Public Realm)

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

Policy TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)

Consultations:

RBC Transport - No objection.

RBC Natural Environment - No objection.

Public Consultations:

The following properties were notified of the application by letter:

- 10 Cremyll Rd
- Units 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77 Milford Rd

No letters of representation have been received.

Relevant Planning History:

152187TELE - Replace 10m phase 2 monopole with a 12m phase 4 monopole with additional equipment cabinet - Prior Approval Granted

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Appraisal:

This application has been submitted under the Prior Approval procedure under Part 16, Class A.3 (3) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has 56 days in which to decide whether prior approval is required or not. If prior approval is required, such approval can either be given or refused by the LPA.

The proposed mast and associated equipment complies with Part 16, Class A.1 and Class A.7 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended in November 2016 as the mast would not exceed (excluding antenna) 20 metres in height on land which is on a highway as required by A.1 (1) and the proposed cabinets would not be greater than 1.5 sqm for each structure as required by A.1 (7) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2016.

Principle of development

Part 16 Class A (as amended by the 2016 GPDO) only allows LPAs to determine whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development.

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan Policy OU3: Telecommunications Development, proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:

- They do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area or on the significance of a heritage asset;
- The apparatus will be sited and designed so as to minimise its visual impact by the use of innovative design solutions such as lamp column ‘swap-outs’ or concealment/camouflage options; and
- Alternative sites and site-sharing options have been fully investigated and it has been demonstrated that no preferable alternative sites are potentially available which would result in a development that would be less visually intrusive.

Siting and Appearance

In addition to Policy OU3 above Policy CC7 requires development to maintain or enhance the character of the surrounding area. Policy TR3 seeks that development does not adversely

impact on the highway network and Policy EN14 seeks to protect existing trees from damage or removal.

The proposed 20m high monopole and 4 equipment cabinets would be located on the pedestrian footway (highway land) on the east side of Milford Road. The equipment would replace an existing 12m high monopole and 5 equipment cabinets located 20m to the north on the same pedestrian footway on Milford Road. The proposed new equipment is required in order to assist with meeting the Government's aims to roll out 5G technology and the applicant has confirmed that 20m is the minimum height required for the monopole in order to support 5G.

The site is predominantly surrounded by warehousing and industrial buildings and the proposals would replace an existing, albeit smaller monopole structure and series of equipment cabinets. In general terms the industrial character of the site is considered suitable for such infrastructure development. The increased prominence of the proposed 20m monopole which would be 8m taller than existing is not considered to result in any significant harm to the visual amenity and industrial character of the immediate locality within the estate.

The height of the proposed monopole would clearly result in increased visibility from outside of the industrial estate setting. Notably to longer range views from the residential properties to the east such as Denbeigh Place, Addison Road, York Road and Newport Road. Whilst the monopole would also be wider than the existing 12m high mast the structure is still relatively narrow in form and is not considered to appear overly obtrusive or harmful to longer range views. In overall terms the benefits of the monopole in terms of meeting the aims of the NPPF to roll out 5G technology are considered to outweigh the visual impacts on the surrounding area.

The submitted plans indicate that the existing 12m high monopole and 5 equipment cabinets are to be removed from the site as part of the proposed works. The plans indicate that the existing equipment would be removed within 3 months of the date the new equipment becomes operational. The 4 proposed new replacement cabinets would result in a reduction in number of cabinets on the street and those proposed would be of similar scale to and are not considered to result in any adverse visual impact due to their small scale. The submitted information indicates that the cabinets would have a green colour finish. Given the proposed plans confirm the timeframe within which the existing monopole and cabinets would be removed from the site and the land restored to its former conditions, it is not considered that the proposed new equipment would result in an unacceptable level of visual clutter at street level.

Alternative Sites

The proposal would accord with the requirements of the Paragraph 115 of the NPPF and Policy OU3 in that the works propose an upgrade to an existing telecommunications base station to

be shared between operators (EE Ltd, Emergency Services Network and H3G LTE) as opposed to creating a new base station in an alternative and non-established location. In visual terms the industrial estate location of the pole is also considered to be preferable to siting the structure within a residential setting.

Transport

The proposed site at the junction of Cremyll Road and Milford Road is an established telecommunication installation. All of the equipment will be located on highway land. Whilst the location is within an established telecommunication area, the current proposal adds additional cabinets on a new section of the pedestrian footway which is fairly narrow. Whilst at 1.4m the proposal would bring the footway width below the recommended 1.5m the location is not within a busy pedestrian route and a footway width of 1.4m is considered acceptable. Visibility splay drawings have also been submitted which demonstrate that the siting of the proposed equipment would not be detrimental to visibility from the two warehouse accesses adjacent to the site. RBC Transport raise no objection to the proposal which are not considered to result in any adverse highway impacts.

Health Issues

The NPPF states that “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, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure”. The supporting text to Policy OU3 states that “ICNIRP declarations should be based on the cumulative effects of electromagnetic fields emitted by other nearby base stations and antennae as well as the proposed development”.

The applicant has provided an ICNIRP certificate to support this planning application. This certifies that the proposed development (which also takes account of the cumulative effect of emissions from the proposed installation and all nearby base stations) would be in full compliance with the requirements of the radio frequency (RF) public exposure guidelines of ICNIRP. Therefore, the ICNIRP certificate complies with current Radio Frequency exposure guidelines, as defined in the EU Council recommendation of 12 July 1999 on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0 Hz to 300 GHz).

The ICNIRP guidelines continue both to exclude known health risks and to minimise unascertained health effects. The ICNIRP guidelines are the most up-to-date and relevant tool to ascertain the acceptability of telecommunications development within the planning process. Bearing in mind the Government's view on mobile phone masts and health issues, as expressed in the NPPF, it would not be appropriate for this Council to substitute its own “opinion” on health issues for that expressed by ICNIRP.

On balance, the suggested health risks associated with this development and the fear and/or stress associated with these perceived risks are outweighed by the reassurances provided by the technical information submitted by the applicant. As such, the possible health implications of such apparatus are not considered sufficient reason to refuse prior approval.

Conclusion

The proposal complies with Local and National Policy guidance on the siting and appearance of new telecommunications equipment and therefore prior approval is granted.

RECOMMENDATION

PRIOR APPROVAL GIVEN

I refer to your application which was received by Reading Borough Council on 18th May 2020 in respect of the erection of a 20m column with ground-based cabinets and ancillary development at the Junction of Milford Road and Cremyll Road as shown on the submitted drawings and documents:

Drawing no.s

RDG025 - 460 Visibility Splay Detail rev E

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 29th July 2020

RDG025 - 215 Max Configuration Site Plan rev E

RDG025 - 002 Site Location Plan rev E

RDG025 - 265 Max Configuration Elevation rev E

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 30th July 2020

Site Specific Supplementary Information ref. 71423

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 18th May 2020

I am writing to advise that Reading Borough Council as local planning authority hereby GIVE approval for the siting and appearance of the development proposed in the above-mentioned application in accordance with the submitted drawings and documents.

Informatives

As per The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A you are advised:

The development must, except to the extent that the local planning authority otherwise agree in writing, be carried out—

- where prior approval has been given as mentioned in sub-paragraph in accordance with the details approved;
- in any other case, in accordance with the details submitted with the application.

The development must begin—

- where prior approval has been given, not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which the approval was given;
- in any other case, not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which the local planning authority received the application

IF1: Positive and Proactive Working - approval

The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to determine the application within the prescribed timescale for the decision to be issued.

IF5: Terms

Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this approval. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.

Works affecting the highway

Any works affecting the highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should be made aware that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/ltp/General.asp?id=5X9452-A782F664> (within the Transport Strategy area of the Transport Section on the Reading Borough Web Site).

Telecom Applications

The Highway Authority will require a fee for carrying out site visits, technical approval of the proposal drawings, liaison with our electrical streetlight provider and site visits during the installation works on this traffic sensitive street.

The Highway Authority will require detailed traffic management plans to be returned to the Streetworks Co-ordinator at Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU for approval prior to works commencing.

The Highway Authority will require a pre-start site meeting with the telecomm provider, and their installations electrical engineer with our streetlighting electrical provider to agree electrical installation safety and to co-ordinate the works between all parties.

The Highway Authority will require the provision of a site specific method statement and safe working procedure to detail how the Councils streetlighting contractor can safely secure the site to carry out routine maintenance on the streetlight apparatus.

The Highway Authority will require the provision of suitable duct access to the column base for the separate power supply to the streetlighting apparatus.

