

DELEGATED REPORT

Address: Junction of Buckingham Drive and Peppard Road, Reading.

Application No: 152300/TEL

Applicant: CTIL and Vodafone Ltd

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The site is located on the east side of Buckingham Drive and close to the junction with Peppard Road to the south. The existing 12.5m high pole is located within a grass verge directly adjacent to Buckingham Drive to the west. To the east of the pole runs a pedestrian footway whilst beyond this is a larger open grassed area containing a number of trees. The existing structure is designed to mimic the appearance of the surrounding lamp posts, incorporating a projecting lamp, although it is greater in height than the lamp posts and other street furniture in the road. Located 3.5m to the rear of the pole and within the area of green space fronting the pedestrian footway is a single green equipment cabinet (1.7m wide, 0.5m deep and 1.5m in height). The site is surrounded by residential properties.

Proposal:

Proposed base station upgrade including replacement of 12.5m high monopole with a new 12.5m high monopole, 1 x additional equipment cabinets and ancillary works.

Similar to the existing pole, the proposed replacement structure would incorporate a projecting lamp to mimic the appearance of surrounding lamp posts. The replacement pole would not appear significantly greater than in width than the existing. One additional equipment cabinet is proposed whilst it is proposed to re position an existing cabinet next to the replacement pole.

Relevant Policies:

- Chapter 5 (Supporting high quality communications infrastructure) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- LDF Core Strategy Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)
- LDF SDPD Policy DM12 (Access and Highway-Related Matters)
- LDF SDPD Policy DM21 (Telecommunications Development)

Public Consultations:

In relation to this 'prior approval' application, a site notice was erected on site by the Council and neighbour consultation letters were sent to surrounding properties. No responses were received in respect of this application.

Consultations:

Trees - No objections, subject to measures to protect nearby street trees during installation works.

Transport - No objections, subject to informatives.

Relevant Planning History

151256/TEL - Proposed base station upgrade including replacement of 12.5m high monopole with a 15m high monopole and 2 x additional equipment cabinets - Withdrawn.

Appraisal:

Policy

Section 5 (Supporting high quality communications infrastructure) of the NPPF states that advanced high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. Core Strategy Policy CS7 requires new development to exhibit a high standard of design and be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding environment. SDPD Policy DM21 states that telecommunications development will be permitted where it does not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, apparatus should be designed so as to minimise its visual impact and that alternative sites have been fully investigated.

Siting and appearance

The siting and appearance of the two proposed additional and re-sited equipment cabinets are not considered to result in any significant harm to the character and visual amenities of the surrounding area.

The application is a re-submission following withdrawal of application ref. 151256/TEL for a replacement 15m high monopole, following officer concerns regarding the appearance of the larger monopole.

The proposed replacement monopole would be the same height as the existing pole and would not appear significantly wider. Incorporating a lamp post mimic design with projecting lamp it is not considered that the replacement monopole, sited in a similar position as the existing monopole, would result in any significant harm to the visual amenities of the surrounding area. Informatives regarding protection of adjacent street trees shall be attached to the decision notice.

Alternative Sites

The proposal is a replacement mast on an existing mast site. The re-use of existing sites is supported by national policy within the NPPF and does not conflict with the aims of local policy DM21. On this basis, and taking into account the lack of visual harm identified above, it is considered that an alternative site is not required for the proposed development.

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 SDPD Policy DM21 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.

In addition, the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme (MTHR) concluded 11 years of research into mobile phones and health issues with their report of 2012. This determined that there was no association between exposure to mobile phones, or base stations, and an increased risk of developing cancer.

Therefore, any possible health risks associated with this development and the fear and/or stress associated with these perceived risks, are considered to be outweighed by the reassurances provided by the technical information submitted by the applicant. As such, the proposal is deemed acceptable in terms of health related issues.

Other considerations

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the current application) that the protected groups would have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

Conclusion

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

RECOMMENDATION

Approve siting and appearance

I refer to your letter which was received by Reading Borough Council on 23rd December 2015, in respect of proposed base station upgrade including replacement of 12.5m high monopole with a new 12.5m high monopole, 1 x additional equipment cabinets and ancillary works at Junction of Buckingham Drive and Peppard Road Emmer Green, as shown on the submitted drawings and documents:

Drawing no.s

100 H - Site Location Maps

200 H - Existing Site Plan

201 H - Proposed Site Plan

300 H - Existing Site Elevation A

301 H - Proposed Site Elevation B

Supplementary Information Form ref. (CS) 129403 (VF) 86782

Received on 23rd December 2015

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.

Informatives

All works should be carried out in accordance with NJUG Volume 4 'Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees' and the details set out in the email from Aruna Venkatraman dated 10th February 2016 ref. 'RE: App. ref. 152300 - (CS)129403 - (O2)41028 - (VF)86782 - SOR1989 - Cornerstone - Host O2 - ADP Beacon Phase 2 - CTIL CR VF Beacon 083-76'.

No materials or construction equipment shall be stored or sited within the Root Protection Area of the adjacent street tree as shown on drawing no.201 issues H - Proposed Site Plan received on 15th February 2016.

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 £295 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 Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD 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 Council's 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.