

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1354 Full planning permission

Address: Pavement o/s 231 Shinfield Road, Reading , RG2 8HD

Proposal: The proposed installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of associated existing BT payphone(s).

Applicant: Simon Warner

Received date: 24/09/2025

Target Decision date: 19/11/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

Ward: Church Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1359 Consent to display an advertisement

Address: Pavement o/s 231 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 8HD

Proposal: The proposed installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of associated existing BT payphone(s).

Applicant: Simon Warner

Received date: 24/09/2025

Target Decision date: 19/11/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

Two applications have been submitted; one application (PL/25/1354) seeks planning permission for the installation of a BT Street Hub, whilst a separate application (PL/25/1259) has been submitted for advertisement consent. As both applications relate to the same site, I have considered them together to avoid unnecessary duplication.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the footpath outside 231 Shinfield Road. The BT Street Hub will replace the existing BT kiosk positioned on the public footpath. The footpath forms part of the public highway owned and maintained by Reading Borough Council. This application site is positioned on a busy thoroughfare, adjacent to a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing, adjacent to the busy A327 Shinfield Road, opposite a busy traffic signal-controlled junction with Whitley Wood Road and service road serving a row of shops to the east of the BT Hub. The adjacent area is primarily retail with residential properties above the shops, as well as purpose built residential properties, some of which are positioned near to the proposed BT Hub.



Existing streetscene looking east.



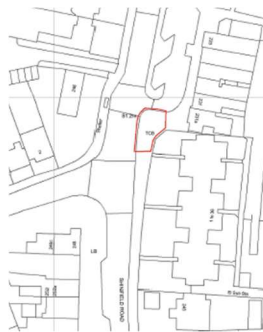
Existing streetscene looking south with proposed location on left.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

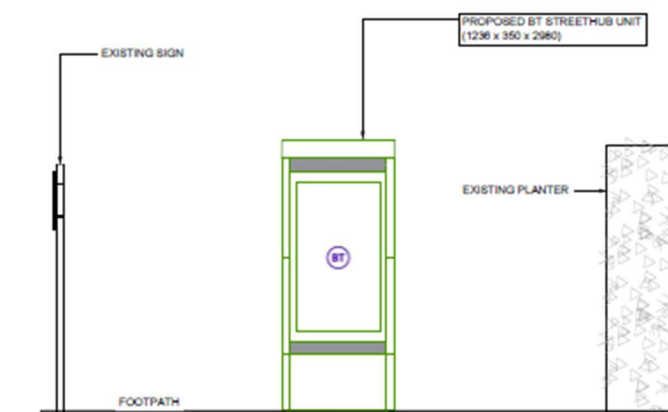
Proposed installation of 1no. black, freestanding BT Street Hub measuring 3m in height, 1.3m in width and 0.35m in depth. The BT Hub will offer Wi-Fi, free UK calls, USB charging and an emergency services button. The units include 2no. digital 75" HD LCD advert screens which provide a range of other digital services as well as advertising to help pay for the unit, the screens will display content at 10-second intervals. The LCD screens automatically dim at nighttime to 600candella. A video camera is built into the unit, those these are not currently connected or used in the UK. The associated existing BT Phone Kiosk is to be removed.

Plans and documents considered for both applications:

Drawing no: 001-rev A-Site Location Maps, dated June 25
 Drawing no: 002-rev A-Proposed Site Plan, dated June 25
 Drawing no: 003-rev A-Existing and Proposed Elevations, dated June 25
 Drawing No: 003-rev A-Proposed BT Street Hub (All Round Elevations) dated April 25
 BT Street Hubs Product Statement V2.0, dated September 2024
 BT Street Hub Planning Statement REA-126 (Mitie Telecoms) dated June 25
 Over Exposure and Glare Evaluation, dated Mar 25
 International Commission on Non-ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Certificate REA-126, dated June 25
 BT Street Hub Developers Notice REA-126 (Mitie Telecoms) dated June 25
 The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements Including Digital Displays-Professional Lighting Guide 05/23
 BT Street Hub Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan-Version 3
 Received by the LPA on 24th September 2025



Site Location Plan



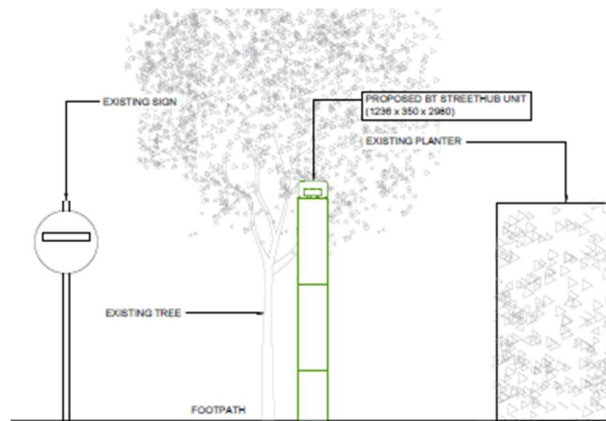
Proposed elevation



Example of a BT Street Hub



Proposed Photomontage



Proposed Side Elevation

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal consultation:

- Access Officer - **Object**

The access officer has concerns that the additional development will create a hazard for persons with disabilities, wheelchair users and the visually impaired. The access officer notes there is already an oversaturation of street furniture at this location. The added issue of cars and motorbikes parking on the footpath to visit the shops and takeaways at this location makes navigating the footpath more difficult, let alone with the new BT hub and its new location closer to the pedestrian crossing. As a pedestrian with accessible needs the additional BT Hub is not welcomed.

- Transport Development Control – **Object**

The A327 Shinfield Road is a busy highway which can be described as an 'arterial route' through Reading, connecting the main town centre with areas of south Reading. High pedestrian footfall and vehicular traffic are therefore commonplace.

The proposed BT Street Hub will be positioned on the footway, in close proximity to the signalised junction of A237 Shinfield Road and Whitley Wood Road, and the junction for the retail parade north of the application site. The proposed location generates numerous turning manoeuvres and pedestrian movements and drivers are required to be fully concentrated in this location.

Given that all advertisements are intended to attract attention, particularly if they are facing on-coming traffic, it is the Highway Authority's view that the proposed sequencing images, would cause distraction for drivers with a consequential risk of rear end shunts. As such, there would be a conflict with Local Plan Policies and paragraphs of the NPPG (highlighted below).

The National Planning Policy Guidance stipulates the following;

Paragraph: 067 Reference ID: 18b-067-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

All advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. For example, at junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, on the approach to a low bridge or level crossing or other places where local conditions present traffic hazards. There are less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on a site within a commercial or industrial

locality, if it is a shop fascia sign, name-board, trade or business sign, or a normal poster panel, and if the advertisement is not on the skyline.

Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

The main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are:

(b) those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature;

(d) those externally or internally illuminated signs (incorporating either flashing or static lights) including those utilising light emitting diode technology:

i. where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road;

ii. which, because of their colour, could be mistaken for, or confused with, traffic lights or any other authorised signals;

iii. which, because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users, particularly in misty or wet weather; or

iv. which are subject to frequent changes of the display;

It is the Highway Authority's view that any additional distraction in the form of illuminated sequencing displays are more likely to affect public safety and increase the risk of incidents within the vicinity of the application site. As such, the proposed advertisement, would be a conflict with Reading Borough Local Plan Policies and paragraphs of the NPPG (highlighted above).

- Environmental Health Officer - **Object**

I have concerns about streethubs being outside residential properties, because they offer free video/voice calls so are likely to cause noise from people talking/laughing loudly with raised voices due to the background noise. It is not the same as a phone booth which is enclosed. This is of particular concern at night.

The agent did respond to our concerns surrounding noise and disturbance to residential properties:

The advertisements on the unit do not generate noise and do not display videos in that sense, rather they will play advertisements (with moving effects if on pedestrianised pavements) which are not generated with sounds.

With regards to the calling facility, it is of note that there are different volume capabilities so that users can have quieter calls when late at night. There is also an option to disable the speaker so that this cannot be used at late times. However, it is anticipated that most calls will be made using the headphone jack so that, generally speaking, only the user of the unit can be heard by those in the vicinity.

Officers acknowledge the response from the agent, though whilst the volume can be controlled officers believe the harm to residential amenity is too great.

- Thames valley Police - **Object**

Street Clutter / Pinch Points

The proposed units are nearly 3m in height and over 1m in width. This introduces a significant obstruction within the streetscene, both for CCTV monitoring (as noted above) but also in terms of movement of pedestrians. In many of the locations proposed, the positioning of the Street Hub will create a significant additional pinch point, where the width of the footpath is reduced, creating spaces where an offender such as a pick pocket is provided a legitimate excuse to be within very close proximity of their target. The height and width of the units also create ideal hiding places, which reduce forward visibility for pedestrians. In addition, it would be impossible for someone walking towards a unit to know if an offender is hiding on the other side of it until they are directly alongside them. The issue of a physical restriction of the width of the footpath is considered to be a particular issue.

- **CCTV & Townsafe Radio – No Objection**

Due to the size and location of the BT hubs and the large LCD display the CCTV team were consulted as glare from the screen can affect the brightness on the CCTV iris, as the camera zooms in and out some LCD advertisements can cause the camera to lose sight of the target subject.

The CCTV and Townsafe Radio team have no objections to this proposal at this location.

External consultation:

- A planning notice for each application was attached to nearby street furniture on 7th October and left in place for a minimum of 21 days for the statutory consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

5. 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.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

PL/25/1354/FUL

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

The 'National Planning Policy Framework' ("NPPF") 2021 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given).

PL/25/1359/ADV

Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest. Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8: (Safeguarding Amenity)

OU3: (Telecommunications Development)

OU4: (Advertisements)

TR3 (Access, Traffic & Highway-Related Matters)

7. APPRAISAL

Visual Amenity

It is considered that the size and prominent location of the proposed BT Street Hub measuring 3m in height by 1m in width along with the double sided 75inch LCD advert screens which will exhibit advertisement content for 10 seconds on rotation, The proposal would exacerbate an undesirable proliferation of visual clutter at this location. The Street Hub would look out of place and incongruent in appearance in the setting.

The proposal is contrary to Policy OU3, Policy OU4 and Policy CC8 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Residential Amenity

Due to the function of making and receiving calls and video calls the proposed development is considered detrimental to the amenity of nearby residents in terms of noise and disturbance. Whilst BT confirm the volume can be controlled, there remains an element of nuisance associated with having a two-way conversation outside in the middle of a street (rather than inside an enclosed kiosk) at times when the streets are quieter. The nearest residential property is sited 10m from the Street Hub. BT confirm the advertisement screen will dim to 600candella at nighttime, though this is far brighter than other advertisements, retail lighting and shopfront advertisements.

The proposed BT Street Hub is considered detrimental to residential amenity and conflict with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Public Safety

The siting of the proposed BT Hub measuring 3m in height by 1m in width along with the double sided 75inch LCD advert screens which will exhibit advertisement content for 10 seconds on rotation, positioned on the public footpath outside 231 Shinfield Road A327 a busy route and thoroughfare, adjacent to a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing and busy junction with Whitley Wood Road, adjacent to a service road serving a row of shops and opposite a bus stop would distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic. This could result in sudden and unpredictable vehicle movements, increasing the risk of collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians.

The siting of the proposed BT Street Hub measuring 3m in height by 1m in width at this location adjacent to other street furniture and signage is considered unacceptable as it would add to the proliferation of clutter and additional obstacles that would be detrimental to the safety of footpath users including pedestrians with accessible needs such as wheelchair users, partially sighted and blind pedestrians.

The proposal conflict with policy TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 and Policies DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and DM22 (Advertisements) of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015) and Paragraphs 067 and 068 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

8. CONCLUSION

Having considered the proposals, and taking all of the information from consultees, officers consider that the proposed siting of the 3m high by 1.3m wide BT Street Hub with double sided 75inch LCD advert screens positioned on the public footpath outside 231 Shinfield Road A327 a busy route and thoroughfare, adjacent to a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing and busy junction with Whitley Wood Road, adjacent to a service road serving a row of shops and opposite a bus stop would be harmful in terms of Highway safety for all users from motor vehicles to able bodied pedestrians, wheelchair users to partially sighted or blind pedestrians.

In addition, the proposals would result in harm to visual amenity due to an unnecessary proliferation of clutter.

The proposed BT hub by virtue of its proximity to residential properties is considered harmful to residential amenity in terms of nuisance noise and illuminated digital advertisement.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal at this site would harm the interests of visual amenity, residential amenity and be harmful to public safety and road users.

9. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

1. The proposed BT Street Hub advertisement display screens by reason of their excessive size, garish appearance and prominent siting would appear as an unattractive and obtrusive feature which would have a visual dominance in the street scene, harmful to the visual amenity of the area. The proposal would exacerbate an undesirable proliferation of visual clutter at this location. The proposal is contrary to Policy OU3, Policy OU4, Policy CC7 and Policy CC8 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.
2. The proposed BT Street Hub advertisement display screens positioned on the public footpath outside 231 Shinfield Road A327 a busy route and thoroughfare, adjacent to a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing and busy junction with Whitley Wood Road, adjacent to a service road serving a row of shops and opposite a bus stop, would distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic. This could result in sudden and unpredictable vehicle movements, increasing the risk of collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians. By virtue of its illumination, orientation, and positioning, would create additional obstacles that would be detrimental to the safety of footpath users including pedestrians with accessible needs such as wheelchair users, partially sighted and blind pedestrians. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy TR3, Policy OU3 and Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Policies DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and DM22 (Advertisements) of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015) and Paragraphs 067 and 068 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).
3. The proposed BT Street Hubs by reason of their user interface and calling facilities could cause unnecessary noise nuisance to residential properties in proximity. The proposed applications would therefore result in harm to residential amenity, contrary to Policy OU3 Policy OU4 and Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.