

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78

Site Address:	Flat C, 31 Vastern Road, Reading, RG1 8DJ
Description of development:	Proposed installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, and associated BT Phone Kiosk removal.
Application reference:	PL/25/1389
Appellant's name:	Verity Cheyne
Appeal reference:	6002955
Appeal start date:	31/12/2025

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This statement deals with the transport and highway aspects of the proposed development for the "Proposed installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, and associated BT Phone Kiosk removal."

- 1.2 The planning application was validated by the Local Planning Authority on 3rd October 2025 under application number PL/25/1389. The Highway Authority was consulted on the application on 7th October 2025.
- 1.3 The Highway Authority responded to the consultation where concerns were raised in respect of the siting of the proposed BT Street Hub and the impact this would have on the footway width.
- 1.4 The transport and highway reason for refusal relates to refusal reason number 1 stating the following;

"The proposed development would reduce the shared footway/cycleway to an unsafe width, creating conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and compromising accessibility, particularly for vulnerable users. The introduction of a large structure would create pinch points and street clutter, increasing collision risks and opportunities for anti-social behaviour. In addition, the hub would impair CCTV coverage and hinder crime prevention.

As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies CC7, CC8, TR1, TR3, OU3, OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the National Planning Policy Framework.”

- 1.5 The Highway Authority has carefully considered the appellant’s grounds of appeal in respect of the proposed installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and concludes that the development is unacceptable in highway terms.

2.0 HIGHWAY AUTHORITY CASE

- 2.1 The site is located on the A329 Vastern Road, immediately north of Reading Railway Station. The A329 Vastern Road forms part of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) that encircles the town centre. The road accommodates significant volumes of vehicular traffic alongside high pedestrian footfall, reflecting its strategic and urban character.
- 2.2 The site lies within a shared footway/cycleway adjacent to the Station Retail Park. The route performs an important function in facilitating sustainable access to the station, town centre and surrounding commercial uses. In this instance, the proposed Street Hub does not replace an existing BT phone kiosk in its current location but represents a new and additional structure on the shared footway/cycleway.
- 2.3 Local Transport Note LTN 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design sets out national guidance for the design of safe and inclusive cycling and walking routes. Paragraphs 6.5.1 to 6.5.4 of LTN 1/20 advise that:
- Shared use routes in low-flow environments should be a minimum of 3.0 metres wide, and
 - Shared routes with higher pedestrian and cycle flows should be at least 4.0-4.5 metres wide, with greater widths required in constrained urban locations or where conflict risks are high.
- 2.4 Given the proximity of Reading Railway Station, the retail park, and the strategic role of the IDR, the footway/cycleway in this location clearly functions as a high-intensity shared route. Reducing the available width to approximately 2.67 metres would fall significantly below the recommended minimum standards and would be likely to result in increased conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. This is contrary to the core design principles of LTN 1/20, which prioritise safety and inclusivity for all users.
- 2.5 In addition, the narrowing of the route would disproportionately affect vulnerable users, including wheelchair users, people with mobility impairments, those with pushchairs, and people with visual impairments.

- 2.6 Paragraph 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) indicates that development proposals should prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements, and create places that are safe, secure and attractive which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards. The proposal therefore fails to demonstrate that it would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, particularly for non-motorised users, contrary to the NPPF.
- 2.7 Furthermore, the application site is located adjacent to land covered by an approved outline planning application PL/20/0328, which secures the redevelopment of Station Retail Park. That permission includes landscaping and pedestrian/cycle infrastructure improvements along the Vastern Road frontage, intended to enhance the quality of the public realm. The installation of a BT Street Hub within the footway has the potential to compromise the delivery of the public realm improvements envisaged by the extant permission.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The proposed BT Street Hub would result in an unacceptable narrowing of a strategically important shared footway/cycleway on Vastern Road, reducing its width below nationally recommended minimum standards. It is the Highway Authority's view that the proposal would increase the likelihood of user conflict and compromise highway safety and inclusive access. In addition, the installation has the potential to prejudice the delivery of approved landscaping and pedestrian/cycle improvements secured under planning permission PL/20/0328. The proposal therefore conflicts with Local Transport Note 1/20, the National Planning Policy Framework, and Reading Borough Local Plan policy TR3 and it is recommended that the appeal is dismissed.