

Recommendation Report for

REF NO: BR/153/20/TEL

LOCATION: Verge outside 124 Victoria Drive
Bognor Regis
PO22 9LQ

PROPOSAL: Prior notification under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A for the instillation of new 19m monopole supporting 6 no. antennas with proposed equipment cabinets & ancillary development.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION

The proposal relates to the installation of a monopole 19m in height supporting 6 no. antennas with a wrap around equipment cabinet at the base of the column, installation of 3 no. new equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto.

- 19 m high EE/H3G phase 8 street pole on new root foundation
- proposed EE/H3G wrap-around cabinet built around base of proposed street pole
1700mm x 700mm x 16000mm
- proposed H3G HUAWEI APM5930 equipment cabinet to be installed on new combined root within
a metre from the wrap: 500mm x 600mm x 1200mm attached to
- foundation proposed H3G COMMScope BOWLER equipment cabinet to be installed on new
combined root foundation 1600mm x 700mm x 1800mm
- proposed H3G LINK AC Ph1 cabinet to be installed on root foundation
1200mm x 500mm x 1200mm x 1600mm (W x D x H)

The application falls to be determined under the provisions of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended in respect of a development by a telecommunications wide system operator. The principle of the development is not in dispute. The consideration of the notification concerns only the siting and appearance of this location.

TOPOGRAPHY

Predominantly flat

TREES

None of any significance affected by the proposed development.

BOUNDARY TREATMENT

Flint wall to rear to approx.1.5m high.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The site comprises highway verge with trees along Victoria

Drive. Other grey and colour cabinets together with a 17.5m high phase 5 monopole on root foundation are positioned on the verge.

CHARACTER OF LOCALITY

Predominantly residential with a care home Saxby Lodge to rear behind verge on the outskirts of a large roundabout connecting the area with A29 and B2259. Some trees and bushes within the front yard of care home.

As demonstrated by the site history this is an established telecoms site.

REPRESENTATIONS

No objection.

No representation received from nearby occupiers.

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

None.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED:

WSCC Highways: does not consider this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the NPPF (para 109), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

The imposition of an informative is advised.

COMMENTS ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Noted.

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:

Within Built Up Area Boundary

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

[Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031:](#)

DDM1	D DM1 Aspects of form and design quality
TELDM1	TEL DM1 Telecommunications

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance

POLICY COMMENTARY

The Development Plan consists of the Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031, West Sussex County Council's Waste and Minerals Plans and Made Neighbourhood Development Plans.

The policies are published under Regulations 19 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Bognor Regis has a Neighbourhood Plan, however there is no policy relating to communication.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

The above policies outline the criteria against which the application will be assessed. The only aspects that can be considered with regard to this prior approval application are the siting and appearance of the development. This application falls to be determined under the requirements of Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that there are/are no other material considerations to be weighed in the balance with the Development Plan.

In all applications, the Council must take into account other material considerations. This includes Government Advice, case law and appeal decisions which have emerged over recent years. By Analysis of these considerations, the following are also relevant:

- (i) Health concerns are material planning considerations. Whilst Government advice is that a planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards, Court cases and planning appeals show that public responses on the issue must be weighted in assessing the merits of a site by comparison with alternatives. This must apply to Prior Notification applications as well as applications for planning permission.
- (ii) The Planning Inspectorate consider zero health risk (or near zero risk) to be an unreasonable expectation or basis for a decision.
- (iii) An ICNIRP Certificate, confirmation compliance with guidelines for the emission of electromagnetic energy, is essential. Sites should be secure by fencing with advisory notes attached.
- (iv) Applications must include a thorough examination of alternative sites; this information must be included in the submitted information for public consultation.
- (v) Government best practice advice to applicants expects pre-application consultation with organisations such as schools. The Council can look for evidence that this has happened.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE SITES

The Code of Best Practice acknowledges that it has been a long-standing Government policy objective to support the sharing of masts and sites. Sharing of sites is now the norm, and network operators share much of their network infrastructure via joint venture commercial arrangements.

The existing mast is not being upgraded to provide the uplift in coverage proposed and there are no other installations in the immediate local area that could be used for mast sharing. The applications report received with this application explains that alternative sites have not been considered as the proposal is an upgrade of an existing site. The existing 17.5m high phase 5 monopole on site is intended to be replaced with the proposed new monopole. This involves decommissioning the existing monopole

and integrating the new one. Consequently the existing monopole will retain for a short period, integrate the 5G antennas on the new monopole and to remove the existing monopole when it is practicable. There is no intention to have both monopoles in place.

The new column is located where there is an established radio base station. There are no other more suitable locations in the immediate area for the operator to locate their equipment. As such this is sequentially the most preferable site for the operator to install the new column and associated equipment cabinets.

The design of the new monopoles has to accommodate the additional equipment but requires a separation between antenna systems so as not to create interference. The addition of a further generation of antennas has meant that the monopoles need to be taller, predominantly 20m.

The existing telecommunication street pole is shared by both EE and Three and provides 2G/3G/4G coverage and capacity to the Bognor Regis area. The search area is very small and the new mast must be in close proximity to the existing mast to fit within the existing network cell configuration.

In line with the requirements of NPPF, there are no existing telecommunications installations for the operator to share, that would provide the necessary coverage to the target coverage area. Similarly, there are no buildings which are suitable and available that the operator could utilise to operate their equipment. The discounted options are set out in the applicant's supporting documents and their reasons for being discounted are fully explained.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal falls to be determined under Part 16 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015. The principle of the development is not in dispute. The consideration of the notification concerns only the siting and appearance of this location.

MBNL undertakes the management and network deployment of telecommunications sites on behalf of both EE (UK) Ltd and Hutchison 3G UK Limited. The proposal is for a new Hutchison 3G UK Limited column, in order to provide the latest 4G and new 5G technologies to this area of Bognor Regis.

The Code of Best Practice was revised in November 2016 and is supportive of mobile network provision in line with Government aspirations that everyone should have access no matter where they are located.

The development location enables the surrounding area to benefit from improved 5G network coverage and has been designed to be future proof, thus enabling other technologies to be deployed depending upon the demand required. As the shift in demand is expected for the foreseeable future and as central Government considers digital communications to be a critical national infrastructure, the applicant intends to support customers and local residents by ensuring as little disruption as possible.

Due to the beamforming technology required for 5G service, the antenna height must be greater than that for previous generation technology. Following the development, there will only be one street pole present since an existing pole will be removed. The proposed design was chosen to minimise the visual impact on the surrounding area.

Site selection was progressed in accordance with the applicants licence obligations, advice in the NPPF and the Code of Best Practice and represents the least environmentally intrusive, technically suitable, available option.

Siting

The proposed mast is to sit along an existing 17.5m high mast within a distance of 13m further, away from nearby houses. The existing mast will eventually be removed leaving just the new 19m mast standing on site. The closest receptor will be a care home Saxby Lodge to the south. The distance is enough to ensure that a new 19m mast will not have any more harm than the existing 17.5m mast.

Views from the residential properties will not be adversely affected, the mast would be set away from the residential properties as far as is practical whilst ensuring that network coverage is maintained. The proposals would therefore be acceptable in terms of amenity.

All MBNL installations are designed to be fully compliant with the public exposure guidelines established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). These guidelines have the support of UK Government, the European Union and they also have the formal backing of the World Health Organisation. A certificate of ICNIRP compliance is included within the planning submission.

The replacement pole would be taller than the pole it replaces and wider, but its visual presence would not increase significantly as a result of its repositioning and dimensions. The pole would be located on the verge along Victoria Drive where other street cabinets, poles, road signs and trees exist. The proposed replacement equipment would not look out of place or be visually prominent in the street scene it would be assimilated into the trees and other vertical structures which exist along the verge.

Appearance

The design of the monopole has been carefully considered by the Operator. It is a simple, functional slim-line monopole, with the main column being split in to two sections. The upper section is wider than the lower section in order to safely accommodate the antennas at the top of the column. The mast will be coloured Grey which has been well established as the best colour for minimising impact upon urban streetscapes. The cabinets will be coloured Green in line with the existing equipment cabinets already in situ and other statutory undertakers' equipment cabinets which are often found in urban areas. The proposed street furniture style development is the most suitable type of base station as this is the most accepted design for urban and suburban roadside locations.

Due to all the technologies that will be available at this location, 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G, the applicant has advised 6 antennas need to be installed at the top of the slim-line monopole. These are split into a dual stack formation where 3 antennas will be located at the top of the column and the other 3 will be located underneath the upper set of antennas.

5G new radio technologies operate in higher frequency bands than older technologies where attenuation of the radio signal is higher and the effects of clutter from trees and other structures are greater it will normally require a higher structure to achieve the same coverage footprint. These factors drive a requirement for an increase in antenna height in 5G.

It is accepted that the height of the proposed installation is taller than other pieces of surrounding linear structures but this in itself is not a valid reason to conclude that it is not appropriate at a specific location. Indeed, Inspectors at appeal have noted that by their very nature to be effective masts are required to be taller than surrounding structures. If the column were to be any lower, the antennas would not be able to provide the necessary 5G coverage to the target coverage area and would not be able to clear the urban clutter/tree canopy. As a result, the antenna signal would not be able to operate effectively. A lower height would lead to a poor user experience for a large part of the target coverage area and would require an additional installation contrary to national planning guidance contained in the NPPF.

This is the slimmest design possible which will enable all technologies to be supported from this site. If the column and shroud width were to be any slimmer then the technology would not fit in the one column and another radio base station would be required, which would lead to an unnecessary proliferation of masts contrary to national Government guidance set out in the NPPF and The Code of Best Practice. Similarly if the column were to be a uniform width throughout then the overall width would have to increase which would appear more visually prominent in the streetscene, than the proposed design.

The main issues arising from this prior approval notification are whether the proposed mast and cabinets due to their scale and siting would be a visually obtrusive feature which would be detrimental to the

character and appearance of the area. Whether any perceived harm would outweigh the significant social and economic benefits associated with the increased service provision attributed to the proposal and other valid material considerations as outlined within NPPF and the Arun Local Plan.

The social and economic benefits of providing reliable and high quality mobile broadband connections including 5G support growth in productivity, efficiency and labour force participation across the whole economy is fully supported by the NPPF and the aims and objectives of the Local Plan. These benefits are strong material considerations which outweigh any perceived loss of visual amenity to the surrounding area.

The proposal would therefore be acceptable in terms of visual amenity and it is recommended that no objections are raised to the siting and design of the equipment.

RECOMMENDATION

NO OBJECTION

- 1 INFORMATIVE: The Local Highways Authority (LHA) advises the applicant that in addition to obtaining planning permission that they must also obtain formal approval from the highway authority to carry out any proposed works on the highway, please call 01243 642105.