

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 27 June 2018

ITEM NO. 13

Ward: Park

App No.: 180786/FTL

Address: Fire Station, Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JU.

Proposal: Telecommunications application for replacement of 1 no. existing flagpole antenna to top of fire training tower with 1 no. new tri-sector antenna. Installation of 1 no. equipment cabinet within the existing cabin, plus associated ancillary development.

Applicant: H3G UK Ltd.

Date validated: 17 May 2018

8 week target decision date: 12 July 2018

RECOMMENDATION

Grant Full Planning Permission

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Standard approved plans condition

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Standard positive and proactive informative.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site fronts Wokingham Road at the corner with Holmes Road and comprises the existing fire training tower to the north of the main fire station building within the main fire station compound.
- 1.2 A number of telecommunications antennae exist on the building including one disguised as a flagpole, which is to be replaced.
- 1.3 The site is located close to the boundary with Wokingham Borough.



Site Location Plan



Site Photograph

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Full Planning Permission is sought for the replacement of the existing 4.5m tall flagpole antenna with a 5.5 metre tall mast to the top of the existing tower. The overall height above ground level would be 18.7 metres.
- 2.3 The supporting statement submitted with the application explains that there is a specific requirement for a radio base station upgrade at this location to provide the 4G service; the existing mast is limited to 3G.
- 2.4 A declaration has been submitted by the applicant confirming compliance with the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 990789 Erection of a 3.5 metre stub mast on the drill tower with 3 x cross polar antennas and 4 dish antennas attached, together with an equipment cabin at ground level. Approved
- 3.2 020753 Single storey pitch roof brick building together with 3 dual band dual polar pole mounted antenna on existing training tower and 2.38m high GRP screen on existing tower finished to match existing structure. Approved

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Statutory:

- **Wokingham Borough Council** - Confirm no objection.

4.2 Non-statutory:

- **RBC Environmental Protection (EP)**
An ICNIRP certificate has been submitted. EP therefore have no objections.
- **RBC Natural Environment (NE)**

All the works appear to be on or within existing structures and within the site, i.e. behind the front boundary wall. As such, it should not affect the Plane tree on the grass area fronting Wokingham Road hence NE have no objections.

4.3 Public consultation:

- Site notices were displayed on Wokingham Road close to the boundary of the site and also at the corner of Wokingham Road and Holmes Road.
- Letters were sent to addresses surrounding the site and to local schools and other educational establishments.
- No representations were received.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 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'.

5.2 Full Planning Permission has been applied for as the development exceeds permitted development rights under Class A, Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

5.3 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework

Part 5 - Supporting high quality communications infrastructure

Part 7 - Requiring good design

5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy

CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)

5.6 Sites and Detailed Policies Document

SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

DM21 (Telecommunications Development)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 Policy DM21 states that proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:

- They do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area;
- 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.

Impact on Visual Amenity

- 6.2 The proposal involves the removal of an existing 3.5 metre high 'flagpole' design and its replacement with a wider diameter 5.5 metre high monopole. The proposal includes the provision of a new ancillary equipment cabinet within an existing cabin at ground level.
- 6.3 The mast would be clearly visible from the adjacent roads and nearby dwellings. The increase in height and diameter compared to the existing mast would increase its prominence. However it is considered that its siting on a functional structure in amongst other antenna would reduce its potential obtrusiveness and the proposal would not be visually harmful within this context.

Alternative Sites

- 6.4 The re-use of existing sites, such as that currently proposed, is in accordance with paragraph 43 of the NPPF and is within the spirit of Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM21 which encourages lamppost swap-outs, i.e. the replacement of one structure with another to minimise the visual impact. 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.

Equalities impact assessment

- 6.5 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies, and national policy guidance, as assessed above. It is therefore recommended that approval be granted, subject to suitable conditions.

Drawings:

RDG027 -050 Rev.E dated 10 May 2018

RDG027 -051 Rev.E dated 10 May 2018

RDG027 -052 Rev.E dated 10 May 2018

Case Officer: Steve Vigar



