

PART A	
Report of: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SECTION HEAD	
Date of Committee:	8th January 2015
Site address:	Bushey Station, Pinner Road
Reference Number:	14/01689/FUL
Description of Development:	Installation of 21m high lattice telecommunications tower supporting 6 no. antennas and 3 no. dishes.
Applicant:	Telefonica UK Limited and Vodafone Limited and CTIL
Date received:	26th November 2014
8 week date (other):	21st January 2015
Ward:	Oxhey

SUMMARY

This application is for full planning permission for the erection of a 21m high lattice telecommunications tower supporting 6 no. antennas and 3 no. dishes. The proposed mast will provide improved capacity for 2G and 3G services and new 4G services in this area for the applicants. The locality currently experiences high demand for services as a busy rail and bus interchange.

The mast is sited on operational railway land and adjacent to existing railway infrastructure, including a 30m high lattice mast to the east. It will have limited visibility from the public realm due to its siting between the railway tracks which are running on embankments at this point. It will have some visibility from the nearby residential blocks of flats to the west and south-west but, in this context, it

is not considered that this would give rise to any significant loss of outlook or amenity to these flats. With regard to health effects and any perceived harm to health, the proposal will have no health implications.

The proposal meets an identified need for coverage in this area, complies with the General Population Exposure levels of the ICNIRP guidelines and is not considered to have a significant adverse impact on the locality or the amenities of nearby occupiers. The proposal accords with national policy advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Development Management Section Head therefore recommends planning permission be granted, subject to the condition set out in the report.

BACKGROUND

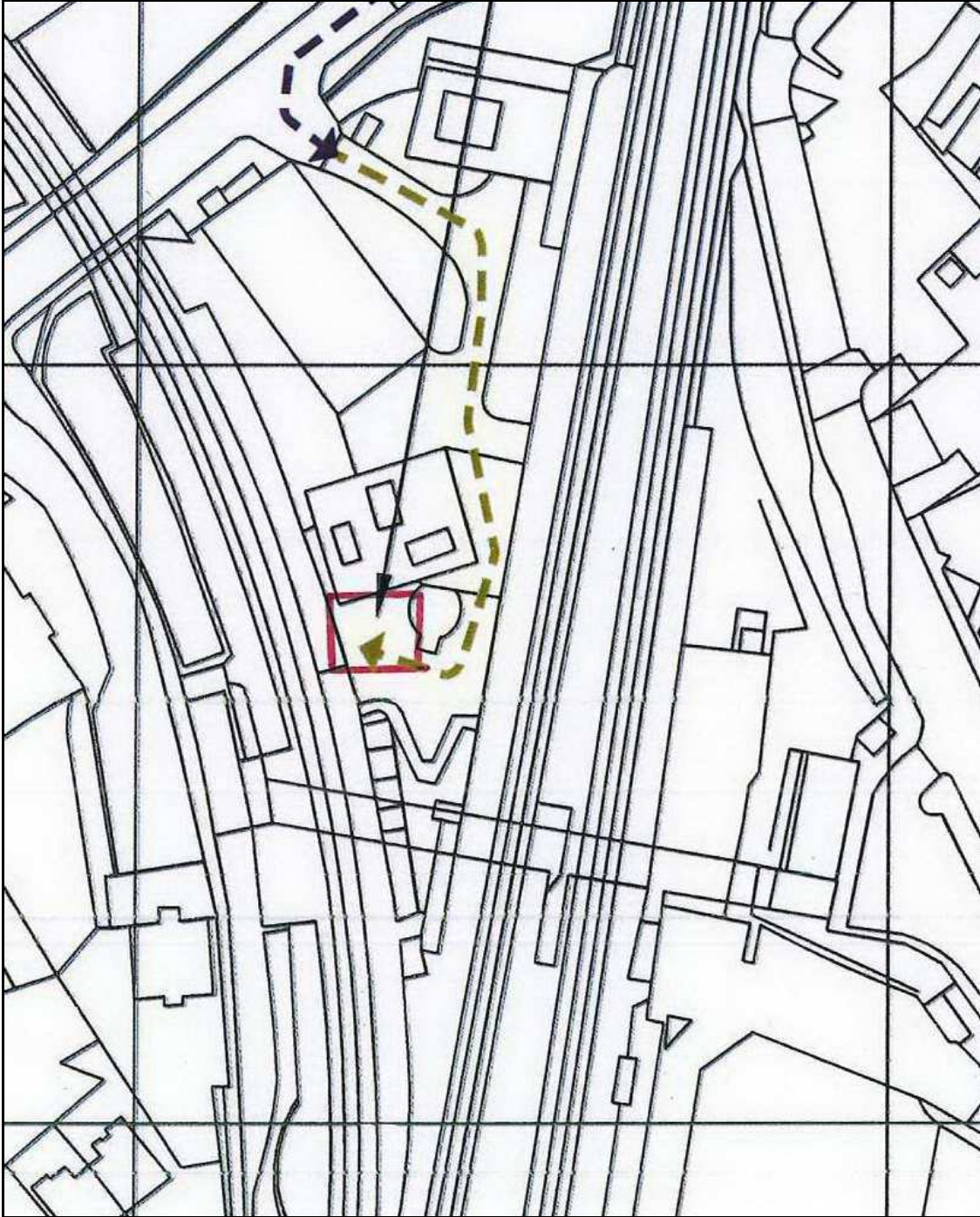
Site and surroundings

The site is located within the operational land of Bushey Station between the mainline tracks and the London Overground tracks, adjacent to Platform 2. It comprises an area of unused shrub land situated north of the station buildings and has no public access. Access to the site for operational purposes is from Eastbury Road. The site is adjacent to various operational infrastructure associated with the railway including a large electricity sub-station building and other plant and equipment. In addition to this, there is an existing 30m high lattice telecommunications mast for operational use sited 35m due east (adjacent to Platform 6).

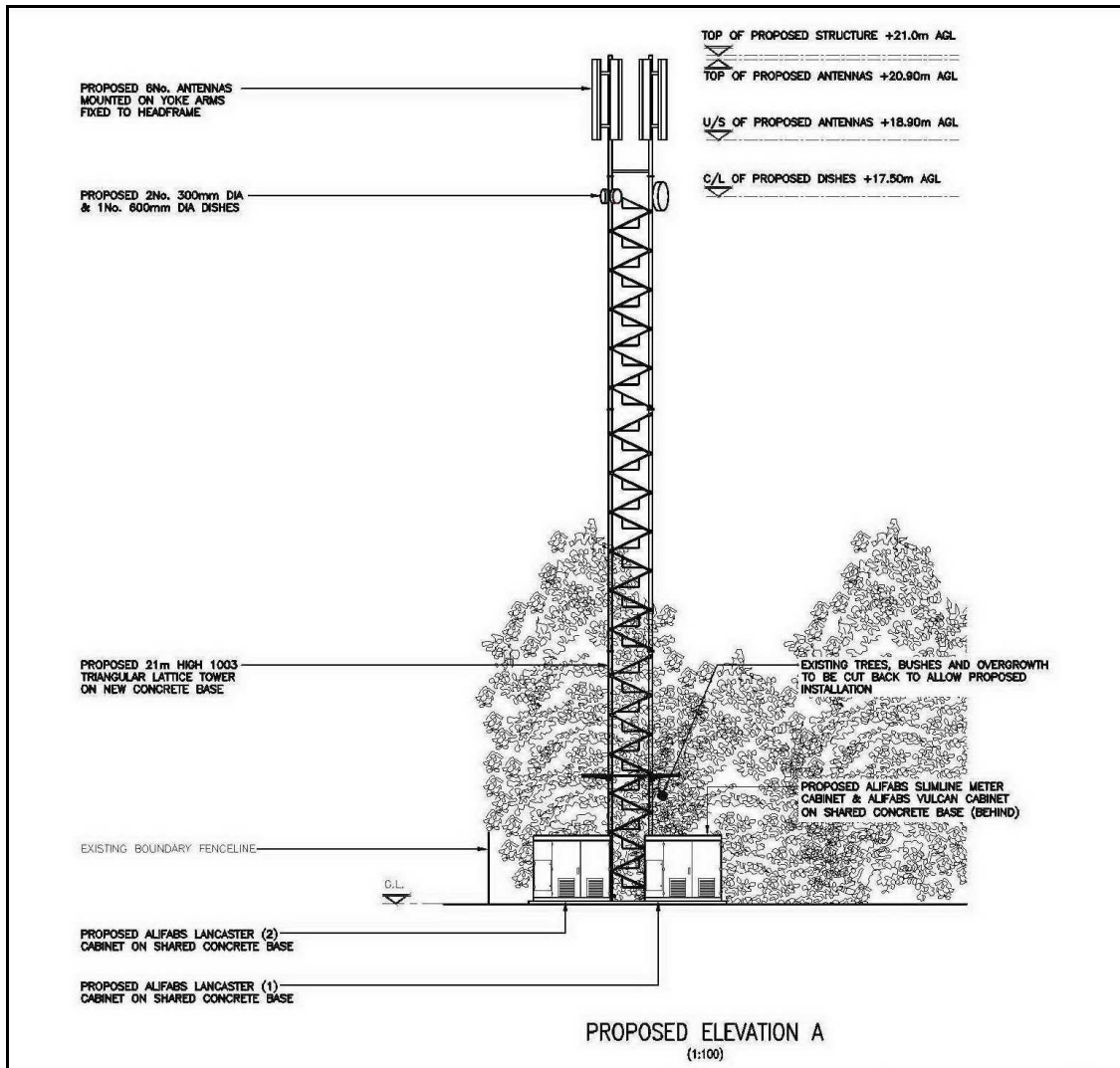
Proposed development

This application is for full planning permission for the erection of a 21m high lattice telecommunications tower supporting 6 no. antennas and 3 no. dishes. The proposed mast will provide improved capacity for 2G and 3G services and new 4G services in this area for the applicants. The locality currently experiences

high demand for services as a busy rail and bus interchange. The tower will be sited within a compound measuring 4.9m by 4.9m which will contain 4 equipment cabinets, all permitted development.



Location plan



Proposed elevation

Planning history

None.

Relevant Policies

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 5 Supporting high quality communications infrastructure

Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31

UD1 Delivering High Quality Design

CONSULTATIONS

Neighbour consultations

A total of 91 properties within a 100m radius of the site were notified of the application. Two site notices were also put up at the site on 27th September 2014. This is in accordance with the revised publicity procedures approved by the Development Control Committee on 2nd September 2010.

No representations have been received at the time of preparing this report.

Consultations

None.

APPRAISAL

In accordance with s.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan for Watford comprises:

- (a) the *Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31*;
- (b) the continuing “saved” policies of the *Watford District Plan 2000*;
- (c) the *Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026*; and
- (d) the *Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016*.

Land allocation

The site has no specific land use allocation but falls within a primarily residential area, albeit within the operational land of the railway. There is no land allocation for telecommunications development in the development plan but there is no objection in principle to telecommunications development within residential areas or on operational railway land.

Need for the development and alternative sites

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks. They should aim to keep the numbers of masts and sites to a minimum with existing masts, buildings and other structures to be used unless the need for a new site has been justified.

In this case, the applicant has proposed a new mast to provide improved 2G and 3G service capacity and new 4G coverage to the local area, including the railway station and bus stops. Due to the number of people using the station throughout the day, the area experiences a high demand for services. This can be best met by providing a new base station within the operational land of the station. The existing operational mast sited to the east is not available as this provides important communication services to trains and the proposed mobile services would cause interference with these communications if the antennas were sited on the same mast. Network Rail, as the owners of the mast, are not willing to allow this.

A number of existing street works masts have been considered but these already support one or two operators and could not support a further 2 operators without being replaced by significantly larger masts which would have a much greater visual impact on the public realm. They would also not give the required level of coverage sought by the applicants. Other sites have also been considered but have been discounted either due to their use (residential blocks of flats, school) or the unwillingness of owners to allow a mast to be sited on their land.

The proposed mast, through its proposed siting and height, will provide the necessary level of coverage and capacity for the station and the surrounding area for both operators. It is located on operational railway land and not within the public realm or on sensitive land uses. In the circumstances, a new mast at the station is considered acceptable in principle.

Siting and appearance

The proposed mast will be sited within the operational railway land between the existing tracks, adjacent to Platform 2. It will be sited 35m due west of the existing 30m mast that provides communications for the railway network. This is a secure location, with no public access and is sited adjacent to other railway infrastructure. The lattice design of the mast will be the same as that of the existing mast and very similar to the railway gantries over the tracks. As such, its siting and appearance will not appear out of place or incongruous within this locality which is dominated by railway infrastructure.

Due to its siting, the mast will not be readily visible from the public realm. The railway tracks are raised on embankments to the north of the station buildings as they pass over Bushey Arches and Eastbury Road. As such, the embankments largely screen views of the railway and will, consequently, limit views of the mast.

Impact on surrounding properties

The mast will primarily be visible from the upper floors of Mulberry Lodge and Cherry Lodge, located to the west and south-west of the site respectively. Mulberry Lodge is a 3 storey block of 15 flats and Cherry Lodge a 3 storey block of 6 flats. In the case of Mulberry Lodge, this is sited 25m to the west. All of the flats have their main habitable room windows orientated to the north-west or south-east with only secondary windows in the north-east elevation facing the railway tracks. As such, the mast will be visible from these secondary windows, albeit at an oblique angle, although it will be seen in the context of the existing railway infrastructure and mast to the east. Overall, it is not considered that in this context views will give rise to any significant loss of outlook or amenity to these flats.

Cherry Lodge is sited 30m to the south-west. All of the flats have their main habitable windows orientated north and south. In this case, all of the flats are

dual aspect. The mast will be visible at an oblique angle from the windows in the front (north facing) elevation although, as with Mulberry Lodge, seen in the context of the existing railway infrastructure. Overall, it is not considered that in this context views will give rise to any significant loss of outlook or amenity to these flats.

Health impacts

The application is supported by a declaration that the cumulative effect of the maximum emissions from all the antennas at the site and all other radio base stations present at, or near, the site is in compliance with the radio frequency public exposure guidelines of ICNIRP. This is in accordance with paragraph 45 of the NPPF. The application should therefore be supported. It is not the role of the Council to determine health standards where a proposal meets the International Commission guidelines.

Conclusion

The mast is sited on operational railway land and adjacent to existing railway infrastructure, including a 30m high lattice mast to the east. It will have limited visibility from the public realm due to its siting between the railway tracks which are running on embankments at this point. It will have some visibility from the nearby residential blocks of flats to the west and south-west but, in this context, it is not considered that this would give rise to any significant loss of outlook or amenity to these flats. With regard to health effects and any perceived harm to health, the proposal will have no health implications.

The proposal will enable the applicants to provide improved 2G and 3G service capacity and new 4G capacity and coverage in this area. The proposal complies with the ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines, is in accordance with the NPPF and will not have any significant adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the locality or on nearby residential properties.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The siting and appearance of the proposal is considered acceptable and complies with national and Development Plan policies. The planning merits of the proposal have been considered in reaching the conclusion above. Having regard to the advice in the NPPF and decisions of the Courts, it is not considered that the proposal as detailed will infringe the human rights of third parties to such a degree as to merit a refusal of planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following condition:

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings: 101B, 200B, 300B

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

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