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Appendix 2

27873 – Drummond Road

Correspondence received from Eastleigh Borough Council

- **Copy of Officers Report refusing application**

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: PN/25/99280

Site Address: Drummond Road, Hedge End

Case Officer: Gregg Chapman

Description: Prior approval application for the installation of a 20m Streetworks monopole, 2No.0.3m dishes, and 6No antennae at 16.32m and 19.52m. Additionally, a GPS node will be installed on top of the monopole, along with four cabinets at ground base level and other ancillary equipment.

Particular Site Constraints?	**Yes** ☒	**No** ☐
- Within the urban edge - Southampton Airport Safeguarding		

Planning History?	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☒
None relevant		

Publicity:	**Letters** ☒	**Site Notice** ☐	**Newspaper** ☐
Representations:	2 letters objection; a) The Applicant's Planning Statement notes that each potential site is assessed considering a combination of planning, technical and operation criteria. In this instance, the Statement also notes that although the proposed site is in proximity to some sensitive uses the technical benefit factors have been weighted by the Applicant and are considered on balance to support the selection as the most appropriate solution. In the alternative site analysis, various locations are discounted based on proximity to play spaces (Site D6 Maunsell Way, Dowd's Farm) or the Site's proximity to residential dwellings and the perceived concerns regarding likelihood of receipt of negative comments (e.g. Site D1 Verge off Drummond Road). However, the Proposed Site location is immediately adjacent to the Drummond Road Community Centre, is equally adjacent and overlooked by residential properties as the Site D1 Verge off Drummond Road location, is less than 20m distance to a playground and Pre-school. It should be noted that the playground is not mentioned in the planning justification document The 2016 Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England lists homes, nurseries and playgrounds all as sensitive uses. Whilst it is reiterated repeatedly by the Applicant that the Proposed Site is 'Amber' under the traffic light approach it is apparent from the traffic light guidance and the proximity to the above uses (residential, pre-school and playground) that the Site would be borderline 'Red' on the traffic light approach. The inclusion of street lighting is not akin to a 20m prominent mobile mast and the Proposed Site at the Drummond Road Community Centre is part of the St Luke's Neighbourhood Parade that services the north-eastern area of Hedge End beyond the Botley Road A334. The inclusion of a 20m Mast at the Proposed Site would significantly degrade the townscape		

	in this location and remove the local, community feel that is engendered by the current planting and landscape treatment. Whilst health concerns are required to be addressed by central Government in the matter of planning for Mast locations, the perceived concern around health issues and the potential knock-on effects from this should not be disregarded. The potential implications to the Little Drummers Pre-School, the use of the Drummond Community Centre by the wider local community and the Bump Company premises which is visited by pregnant women and newborn babies should not be underestimated. On the basis of the above, it is my opinion that the proposed location is wholly inappropriate and has been selected by a company via a mapping database from a location in the West Midlands with little regard for the potential effects it will have on the local community and no real appreciation for how prominent the site is to so many core community uses. I strongly object to the application. b) The Proposed Site location is immediately adjacent to the Drummond Road Community Centre and nearby residential properties, is less than 1m distance to a Preschool outdoor play area and approximately 15m to a public playground aimed at small children. The 2016 Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England lists homes, nurseries and playgrounds all as sensitive uses. In the planning justification document for the permanent mast location (PN/25/99280) the site for the temporary mast is described as a 'short-term measure only, intended solely to ensure continuity of service during the surveying, planning and construction phases of the permanent installation and it is therefore strongly in the operator's interest to progress with the permanent site as quickly as possible. However, there are no firm guidelines or assurances as to how long this temporary mast will be in place as the main mast site has yet to be approved. We also have concerns about: • noise pollution as the temporary mast will use a generator • disruption to our business whilst construction takes place 1 letter (listed as an objection); c) EE and 3 network is very poor in Grange Park area, So this work will hopefully improve the network services around this location
Town Council:	We strongly object to the proposed development on the grounds that it is not in keeping with the character of the surrounding streetscene and would have a significant adverse visual impact on the area. The Committee is particularly concerned about the proposal's close proximity to a nursery, residential properties, and its potential implications for pedestrian safety. Furthermore, the site's location in relation to the nearby airport raises additional concerns. The Committee believes that more appropriate alternative sites should be considered and notes a lack of sufficient justification provided for the selection of this specific location.

Southampton Airport:	No response received
Hampshire Highways:	An **objection** is made in regard to the above mentioned application from a Highway perspective, on highway safety grounds and obstruction. The proposed location of the mast is shown on drawings '002 Site Location Plan' (30000190_ELH05_27873_SO1390_M001), and '150 Proposed Site Plan' (30000190_ELH085_27873_SO1390_M001). These plans have been reviewed, and there are several concerns from a highway perspective. Firstly, it is proposed that the associated apparatus is to be located on a shared pedestrian/cycle path, which has been designed with enough width to safely accommodate the two user groups. The proposals significantly narrow the route to a width well below standards, down to approximately 3.5m to 2.5m. Additionally, to compound the issue, the location of the apparatus is within 5.5m of a highway junction and access path leading into the community facility. Given the use of the facility, it is likely that foot / cycle flows will be higher than normal, so increasing the risk of conflict due to the narrowing, and being close to the vehicle junction, there are added distractions in terms of also having to look out for vehicle movements. Combined, the above issues constitute a justifiable reason for highway objection on safety issues and obstruction.

Site Visit:	**Yes ☒**	**No ☐**
Details: 30/04/2025		

Legislation:
The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2015, Part 16 of Schedule 2, Class A allows the installation, alteration or replacement of any electronic communications apparatus by an electronic communications code operator. The proposal complies with the requirements set out within class A and therefore the principle of development is acceptable. Under the above Order the developer must apply to the Local Planning Authority, before starting development, to determine whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the proposed development.

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework **National Planning Practice Guidance** **Development Plan:** Policies S1, S4, S10, DM9, DM13, and DM36 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 - 2036 **Supplementary Planning Documents:** Quality Places SPD Hedge End, West End and Botley Character Area Appraisals SPD - HEWEB 65 – "1970s to present day terraced/detached development on loops/multi-headed cul-de-sacs in north Wildern".

Assessment:

Proposal

The proposal is for a 20m telecoms monopole with associated apparatus and cabinets within the footway at Drummond Road to the front of the Drummond Road Community Centre.

The prior notification applications includes:

- An ICNIRP certificate declaring the equipment conforms to public exposure guidelines.
- Developers notice

Principle of Development

Strategic policy S4 (3e) notes that the provision of high-speed telecommunication facilities to serve the Borough's settlements will be encouraged. Policy DM1 states that new development should seek to respect the context of the site and its surroundings, and policy DM9 pays specific regard to public utilities and communications, and notes that there is general support for providing new/improved existing facilities.

Part 3b of policy DM9 of the Local Plan sets out that the Council expectation is that the impact of such infrastructure is minimised and that it must be demonstrated that alternative sites and means of provision such as mast sharing have been examined and that there are no feasible alternatives.

NPPF policy is that *"advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing"*, whilst also stating in paragraph 120 that the use of existing masts, buildings and other structures should be encouraged. Where new sites are required, equipment should be *"sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate".*

Siting and Appearance

- Site Search

A list of 6 alternative sites has been provided along with the reasons why these have been discounted. The search area is limited and does not include the numerous commercial sites within the area.

Reasons for discounting the other sites (for example proximity to dwellings and overlooking by a children's play area) are equally as relevant to the current proposal.

No coverage map, or thus evidence of the necessity of the location is provided. The submitted material indicates that the proposal is to replace an existing mast, located approximately 400 metres to the west, with two masts, of which this is one. The NPPF advises that Local Planning Authority's should not question need. That is not questioned. It is however, considered relevant and necessary information as to whether there could be other more appropriate sites available.

It is not considered that it is near to being demonstrated that the site is the optimal site, so as not to cause any harm, or that the site selection process has been thorough. Notwithstanding this, consideration is given to the merits of the proposed siting below.

- Harm to the Character of the Area

The proposed siting of the mast and associated infrastructure is within the footway at Drummond Road to the front of the Community Centre. The road, which is a residential distributor road has the footpath with grass verge to one side to the front of the community centre, and public park, with trees to the rear of dwellings further along the road, and trees

and vegetation to the other. It is an attractive distributor road, with little clutter, and a sense of openness.

The proposed telecommunication equipment would have a utilitarian/functional design, this would appear uncharacteristic of the surroundings, where there is limited street furniture (comprising some streetlights and street trees). The introduction of a 20m monopole and associated equipment (at 1.8 metres at the tallest and spanning 6.5 metres in total) would create visual clutter, would be out of keeping, and would be considerably higher than the existing street furniture and the nearby neighbouring buildings. The proposed mast would not be screened by any existing trees or vegetation and would be located at a prominent location, whereby the proposal would be visible from wider public vantage points. It would become the dominant feature to the street and when viewed from the Community Centre. It would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area.

Whilst acknowledging paragraph 119 of the NPPF, that high quality communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth, paragraph 122 advises that applications should be supported by necessary evidence to justify the proposal. There is also a requirement, under paragraph 119, that 'equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate'. In this instance, it is not considered that the proposed design is sympathetically designed or camouflaged, and therefore would conflict with national advice.

- Highway Safety Impact

Strategic Policy S1 and policy DM13 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 seek to establish highway safety, as also reflected within the NPPF.

As raised in the HCC Highways Officer objection, the proposal is located on a shared pedestrian / cycle route and would result in the narrowing of the route which would create a pinch point and obstruction to visibility, close to a highway junction and community facility. Associated pedestrian and cycle flows are relatively high. The proposal would, therefore, result in a safety harm to users of the footway, and highway and is contrary to policies S1 and DM13 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 and the NPPF.

<u>Health</u>

In the government's view, as set out at paragraph 123 of the NPPF, if a proposed mobile phone base station or mast meets ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure, it should not be necessary for a local planning authority, in processing an application for planning permission or prior approval, to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them. An ICNIRP certificate has been submitted

The courts have previously established that perceived health concerns are not a material planning consideration unless exceptional circumstances exist. Where emissions fall within accepted safety limits (as certified that they would), health fears—do not, in themselves, provide a valid basis for refusing planning permission.

- Economic Impact

Strategic policy S4 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 seeks to safeguard employment provision, and create new employment, in accordance with the NPPF and government drive to boost the economy. Policies S10 and DM36 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 support the retention of Community Facilities, and attribute weight to their value within the community.

Notwithstanding the above position regarding health, it is also a material consideration as to whether the proposal would, by virtue of its siting and appearance, have an acceptable effect upon its surroundings or not. The Community Centre includes a nursery, which in itself is a business, but also provides rent, and thus an income to the Town Council. The proposal would, as a matter of fact (although not a planning refusal) create a level of

fear/anxiety with regard to health. By its nature, children attend the nursery. It is considered to be highly likely that parents would be inclined, as a result of this fear to not have their children attend the nursery, decreasing numbers, profitability, employment, and income to the Town Council, who object to the development including for this reason, thereby impacting economic development. This weighs against the development.

The proposal is contrary to policies S5, S10 and DM36 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 sand the NPPF as it would impact the success of the nursery provision, and thus the contribution that this makes to the Community Centre running.

Climate Change

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

Equalities Implications:
Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications

Conclusion and Planning Balance

The provision of high-quality, reliable telecommunications infrastructure is strongly supported at both national and local policy levels, recognising its importance for economic growth, social connectivity, and digital inclusion. The proposed development would contribute to improving telecommunications coverage in the area and supports the strategic objectives of Policy S4 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan and paragraph 119 of the NPPF.

However, this public benefit must be weighed against the site-specific harms identified. In this instance, the proposed installation would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area due to its height, siting, and design; would compromise pedestrian and cyclist safety along a key route; and would have a likely adverse economic impact on a community-run facility due to perceived health concerns. Furthermore, the

applicant has failed to robustly demonstrate that alternative, less harmful sites have been adequately explored. On balance, it is considered that the identified harms significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of improved telecommunications infrastructure in this location. Accordingly, prior approval is refused.

Conclusion:		
Recommendation:	**CONSENT** ☐	**REFUSE** ☒
Comments …		