

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/25/100646

Site Address: POLICE TRAINING CENTRE, ROYAL VICTORIA COUNTRY PARK,
NETLEY ABBEY, SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 4TS

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Installation of radar equipment on top of existing telecommunications mast, construction of associated equipment cabinet and laying of paving slabs for access

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Outside the urban edge - Within a listed Park & Garden - Adjacent to Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
L/25/100675 - Listed Building/Site Consent: Installation of radar equipment on top of existing telecommunications mast, construction of associated equipment cabinet and laying of paving slabs for access – Concurrent application Z/17924/058/00 - Installation of second dish antenna on existing telecommunications monopole – Approved Sept 2002 Z/17924/050/00 - Installation of 15 metre high telecommunication mono pole with one dish antenna and compound – Approved Apr 2001 Z/17924/045/00 - Reserved matters pursuant to outline application 17924/43 for construction of two storey building for use as control centre for Hampshire Constabulary – Approved May 1998		

Publicity:	Letters ☐	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None received		
Hound Parish Council:	No objection		
Hamble Parish Council:	No objection		

Site Visit:	Yes ☐	No ☒
Details: The site and its surroundings are well known to the case officer who has visited it a number of times having dealt with various planning applications.		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1 and S2; and Development Management policies S5, S8, DM1, DM9 and DM12. Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Places

Assessment:

Context:

Hampshire Constabulary's Southern Support & Police Training Headquarters covers an area of 20 hectares and lies within the grounds of the Royal Victoria Country Park, which itself is on the site of the former military hospital. The headquarters site consists of a number of buildings used for various operational and training purposes. The main building being Victoria House, which originally formed part of the military hospital, acting as a secure 'asylum' facility away from the main hospital which fronted Southampton Water but was demolished in the 1960s/70s.

The application site is adjacent to a modern building built in the late 1990s now used as the constabulary's call centre. Behind this building is a freestanding telecommunications mast constructed of steel and painted dark green to blend in with the adjacent woodland to the rear.

Whilst surrounded by the country park, the headquarters site is generally shielded from public view by mature woodland, with glimpsed views of some buildings only being visible when close to the site boundaries, such as along the Hamble Rail Trail which runs along the northern edge of the site parallel to the railway line.

Proposals:

It is proposed to install a 2.5 metre wide rotating radar to the top of the existing mast which "will be used for the monitoring of pilotless drones and is part of NPCC Home Office funded trials. The radar will not be used to monitor public drones. Instead, the radar will display Hampshire Police drones via Application Programming Interface (API) when flown Beyond Visual Line of Sight however its primary function is to detect other aircraft in the vicinity such as planes and helicopters, enabling Hampshire Police to maintain safe separation and uphold public safety during Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations." *(taken from the submitted planning statement)*

Policy & Principle:

The application site lies outside the urban edge where the principle of development is not usually considered acceptable except for a number of specified uses as set out in Policy S5. Also of relevance is Policy DM9 which relates to the provision of public utilities and communications infrastructure. As is set out in both of these policies, development associated with public utilities and telecommunications can be deemed to be acceptable, even outside the urban edge, provided there is no adverse impact upon the locality. Whilst these policies do not make specific reference to development of the nature proposed, they are considered to be the most appropriate policies on which to make an assessment of the application.

Visual Impact:

Whilst the proposed radar, which is in the form of a 2.5 metre long rotating bar, as opposed to a dish, will be larger than the existing redundant radio equipment, which is to be removed, it is not considered that it would have any adverse or unacceptable visual impact upon the locality. This is primarily due to the position of the mast, which is already in place and has been for a number of years, behind the Vickery Building and the adjacent woodland, meaning that it will be shielded from any obvious public vantage points.

Whilst almost twenty metres in height, the mast and radar will not be obviously visible in any distant views available to the public. This is again due to the heavily wooded nature of the locality and mature boundary tree planting around the country park.

Heritage Impact:

Whilst within the country park which is a listed park and garden, the mast is located away from any of the original listed former hospital buildings and will not impinge upon their setting or available views to and from them.

Trees & Nature Conservation:

Whilst the existing mast's concrete base will need to be extended by a modest mount, it is not considered that this would result in any harm to adjacent woodland trees or habitat. Equally, the radar installation is not expected to cause any impact to local biodiversity or protected species.

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; (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.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Equalities Implications:

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

Recommendation:	PERMIT ☒	REFUSE ☐
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For the reasons set out above, the application is recommended for approval.