

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (TELECOMMUNICATIONS) SUB-COMMITTEE**21 April 2005**Attendance:

Councillors:

Bennetts (Chairman) (P)

Baxter (P)
Busher (P)
Davies (P)Pearson (P)
Read (P)Officers in attendance:

Mr R Ainslie (Senior Planning Officer)

1. 5 METRE EXTENSION TO LATTICE TOWER (TOTAL HEIGHT 25.7M), 5 NO. ANTENNAE, 4 NO. DISH ANTENNAE AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT AT EASTON MANOR FARM, FULLING MILL LANE, EASTON

The Sub-Committee met at the entrance of Easton Manor Farm, Fulling Mill Lane, Easton, near to the application site. The site of the proposed mast was approximately 200 metres across one of the farm's fields and abutted a ridgeline of mature evergreen and deciduous trees.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Raymond who represented the applicant's agent (Patrick Farfan Associates) and Mrs Matthews who represented Itchen Valley Parish Council. No other members of the public were in attendance.

Mr Ainslie explained that a full planning application had been received from Hutchison 3G (UK) Ltd for the erection of a 5 metre extension to an existing lattice tower which was operated by Vodafone. The total height of the structure would measure 25.7 metres and the application also proposed five additional antennae and four dish antennae (three 600mm and one 300mm diameter dish antennae). These additional antennae would result in the mast supporting a total of four dishes. Mr Ainslie also stated that the application proposed a radio equipment housing at the base of the tower.

Mr Ainslie reported that subsequent to the publication of the Sub-Committee's agenda representations had been received from Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Officer who had objected to the application. In summary, they had concluded that whilst proposals to site shared telecommunications equipment were ordinarily encouraged, the proposed mast extension at Easton Manor Farm represented an unacceptable visual intrusion on the surrounding countryside. The ANOB officer also raised particular concerns regarding the application site's likely inclusion in the proposed South Downs National Park.

Mr Ainslie also reported that a letter of strong objection had been received from Itchen Valley Parish Council, stating that there had been no consultation with the local community and that the tower would be seen over a wide area of open downland.

Mr Ainslie stated that the officer's recommendation was to approve the application. Whilst it was accepted that the extension was likely to make the mast more visible, it was probable that the visible intrusion of the mast on the public domain, principally from Fulling Mill Lane and from Worthy Manor across the valley, was unlikely to be considered unacceptable.

During debate, Members agreed that in order to minimise the visual effect of the proposal, the entire mast, all the antennae and the equipment cabinets should be painted a suitable non-reflective colour on the advice of the City Council's Landscape Architect.

In response to Members' questions, Mr Raymond explained that whilst the existing structure was capable of supporting the proposed extension and additional equipment, it could not support a crown design that could achieve the necessary separation between the antennae at the same height. The Sub-Committee therefore noted that the additional height was required to achieve the necessary separation between the antennae of the Hutchison 3G and Vodafone to serve mobile phone customers, principally along a stretch of the M3, north of Winchester. Mr Raymond added that he was unaware of any further proposals from Hutchison 3G for additional telecommunications equipment in the vicinity.

The Sub-Committee discussed the other sites that the applicant had investigated before selecting Easton Manor Farm and it was noted that these would have brought forward a proposal of a similar height to that proposed at Easton Manor Farm. Following debate Members agreed that, of the sites investigated, Easton Manor Farm was the most appropriate.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs Matthews spoke in objection to the application as a representative of Itchen Valley Parish Council. Mrs Matthews highlighted that the officer's report stated that there were no public footpaths in the vicinity of the application site and this was, in her assessment, incorrect. She argued that Fulling Mill Lane served only one further property beyond Easton Manor Farm and was, by virtue of its low vehicle use, in effect used as a public footpath by numerous walkers and horseriders.

Mrs Matthews added that contrary to the application's Consultation Plan (published with the agenda for the Sub-Committee), Hutchison 3G had not contacted Itchen Valley Parish Council prior to the submission of the application.

Members also noted with concern that a neighbouring property had not been informed of the proposals by the Council and, although it was acknowledged that the statutory site notices had been posted, Members requested a review of consultation procedures. In response to a Member's question, Mr Ainslie reported that the nearest residential property was approximately 300 metres from the application site.

In her final objection to the proposal, Mrs Matthews agreed with the comments expressed by the ANOB Officer in that the extended mast was likely to have a detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the valley. As a consequence, Mrs Matthews recommended that the Sub-Committee should consider requesting the applicant to submit an application for a separate mast, sited close to the existing Vodafone tower.

At the conclusion of debate, Members discussed the possibility of refusing the application to encourage the submission of an application for a separate mast. Members were mindful of the tall mast proposed by the application, but following the Chairman's casting vote, Members reluctantly approved the application as the Council's policies encouraged mast sharing. The Sub-Committee also agreed to attach a condition to the application so that all the mast, all the antennae and the equipment cabinets were painted a suitable non-reflective colour on the advice of the City Council's Landscape Architect.

RESOLVED:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The mast, antennae, fencing and all ancillary equipment hereby approved shall be painted in a dark green/brown colour, reference BS4800 10 B 29, to a matt finish before the development is completed unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the rural area.

In the event that the development hereby approved becomes redundant or otherwise not required for the purpose permitted, the mast and all associated equipment and enclosures shall be dismantled and permanently removed from the site, which shall be restored to its former condition.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and concluded at 10.40am.

Chairman