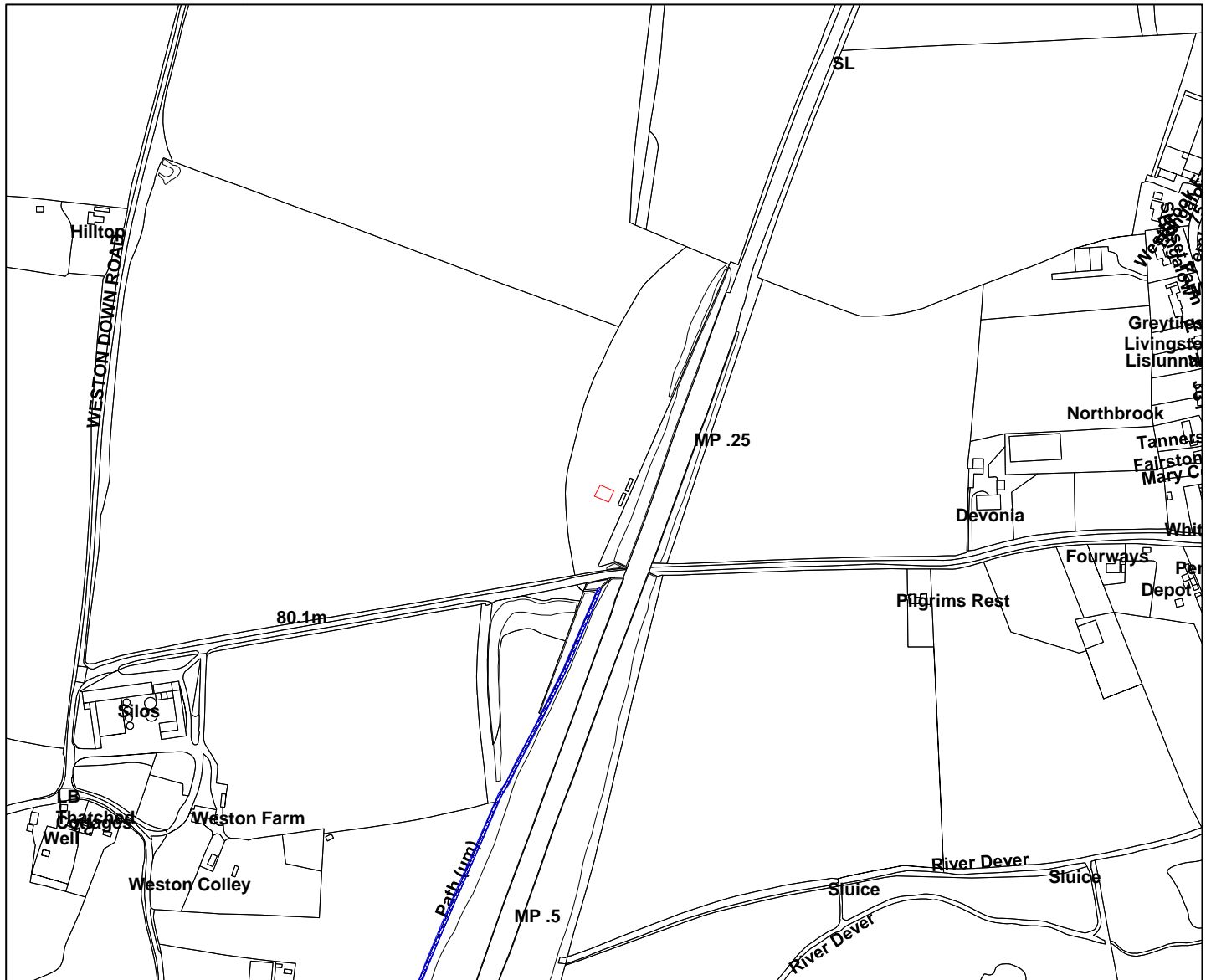


Land North of Weston Down Lane, Weston Colley

10/03125/FUL



Legend

Scale:



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Organisation	Winchester City Council
Department	Development Services
Comments	
Date	11 May 2011
SLA Number	00018301

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA

Item No: 4
Case No: 10/03125/FUL / W22077
Proposal Description: Installation of 27 metre high Vodafone telecommunication installation
Address: Land North Of Weston Down Lane Weston Colley Hampshire
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: Micheldever
Applicants Name: Vodafone Limited
Case Officer: Lorna Hutchings
Date Valid: 8 December 2010
Site Factors:
Contaminated Land Consultation
Radon Gas Levels
Recommendation: Application Permitted

General Comments

This application is reported to Committee because of the number of objections received and at the request of Micheldever Parish Council whose comments are appended at the end of this report. Cllr Godfrey and Cllr Wright also requested determination at Committee, their requests are also appended.

Site Description

The site of the proposed telecommunications mast is located approximately 1km to the northwest of Micheldever. It is to the west of and adjacent to the railway line just off and to the north of Weston Down Lane.

The mast location sits within an area of derelict land which is well contained by existing vegetation to all boundaries and the railway embankment along the eastern side. Existing vegetation includes mature deciduous tree cover along the western and eastern boundaries and a copse of variable age and condition to the south either side of existing site access.

It is proposed within an existing steel palisade fence enclosure which would be retained as part of the proposals.

There is a smaller telecommunications mast immediately south of the proposed mast location with only the top visible among boundary trees.

The site as existing is on a slope with the ground continuing to rise to the north beyond the proposed location of mast.

There are no dwellings or other features of local significance immediately close to the site. The nearest properties are to the east of the site at 0.28km and 0.25km from it, Weston Farm is further to the southwest and there is another house located 0.43km to the northwest.

Proposal

The proposal is for a slim line lattice structure measuring 27m high with 2 no. antennas mounted at the top of the structure.

1 no. equipment cabinet and an ancillary cabinet located at the base of the mast are proposed within a small compound measuring 4.5m x 4.5m.

Access to the site is directly off Weston Down Lane via a secure gate and large

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA

compound.

The site is proposed to be located on developed land defined as storage in close proximity to the London – Southampton rail line.

The site is needed to provide coverage and capacity to the Vodafone network in this known 'dead spot' of the railway line.

Relevant Planning History

There is no planning history relevant to this specific mast site and network provider at this site however there is an existing 20m high (to top of antennas) Orange lattice mast located at the entrance of the site which is now concealed by the boundary trees which have grown considerably. This development includes 6 No. sector antennae, 3 No. 0.6 metre diameter radio dishes, 1 No. equipment cabin, 1 No. meter cabinet, security fence with gate and associated works (97/01479/FUL).

Consultations

Environmental Protection: The proposed development is situated on land that has been used historically as domestic landfill that represents a gas risk. Given this, as it is situated on land where contamination is suspected for all or part of the site, an appropriate contamination assessment is required either as part of the application or conditioned to ensure that the proposed development is suitable for use and is not capable of causing unacceptable risks to human health and the environment. [Condition 03]

Landscape: The proposals, although seen in part from public viewpoints, are not considered to be harmful to the landscape or have an adverse visual impact on existing landscape character. [Condition 02]

Representations:

Micheldever Parish Council – Objection – Excessive intrusion to the visual impact on the surrounding village countryside. Requests it be considered at Committee. Full objection is appended to this report.

Cllrs Wright and Godfrey – concerned as objections raised are very significant and PC's pictures emphasise that the mast is very much taller than both trees and other mast.

Contrary to policy and government guidance. To be determined at PDC.

letters received objecting to the application for the following reasons:

- Height
- Well above tree line and higher than other mast (11.4m higher)
- On highest point
- Coverage is adequate
- Destroy rural views of village protected in Village Design Statement
- Impact on Conservation Area
- Alternative ways to improve railway coverage
- Masts should be shared
- Alternative disguised equipment has not been considered
- No screening
- Will project into skyline above railway embankment
- Not following government guidance to limit proliferation of masts
- If Orange works at lower height this should also
- Visible for many miles and from every house

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA

- Many existing masts, no more needed
- O2 has signal and are prepared to share with Vf so why would they need another mast.

No letters of support received however 1 letter supported the principle of need in that signal is poor in this area.

Relevant Planning Policy:

South East Plan 2009:

CC6, C4.

Winchester District Local Plan Review

DP.3, DP.14, CE.4, CE.5.

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:

PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPG 8 Telecommunications

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Micheldever Village Design Statement

Other Planning guidance

Code of Best Practice on mobile phone network development ODPM 2002.

Planning Considerations

Principle of development and need.

Telecommunications development is facilitated by policy DP.14 of the WDLPR, provided that there is no preferable alternative site or suitable structure to share and that the character of the countryside is not harmed.

The development is acceptable in principle as it is required for enhanced 2G coverage and capacity to the Vodafone network in this known dead spot, to support the railway network in the Northbrook area of Micheldever. This has come to the fore due to numerous complaints about dropped and Call Set-up Failure of calls by customers taking this designated train-route.

The existing coverage deficiency in the area is caused by the extremely tall trees which are located on both sides of the railway line. These trees have an effect of 'blotting out' the network signal from other sites in the area so causing a severe coverage deficiency in this area. Vodafone have analysed the coverage problem and have indicated that it can only be alleviated with a new site in close proximity to the railway line with a mast at this height to deal with the tall trees. Therefore the search area for a base station was limited due to constraints that govern the Vodafone network design and maximising the coverage and new services to the majority of the target area and evidently the key issue in the given area would be the high tree-lines prevalent in the vicinity.

The level of coverage provided by a particular site is dependant on a number of factors. The key factors are the frequency of the signal emitted (the higher the frequency, the shorter the transmission distance), the height and nature of surrounding "clutter" such as buildings and trees, which can obstruct, absorb and reflect the radio signals. The degradation of the signal by an appreciable amount will result in poor network performance. In order that the radio signal can be transmitted successfully the antennae

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA

must also be clear of any close obstructions which will cause “blocking” and “clipping” of the radio signal. In this instance Vodafone are proposing the use of a Lattice structure with an overall height of at least 27m. This will ensure the signal is free from any blocking / clipping as previously mentioned.

The coverage maps provided show clearly the dead spot along the railway and poor quality of service at this point with the improvements made to such coverage if the proposed mast and antenna were installed and clearly demonstrate a need for the proposal.

Alternative sites and mast sharing.

In accordance with local and national policy and guidance a sequential approach should be adopted for site selection requiring applicants to assess the feasibility of existing buildings, structures already host to equipment or otherwise and sharing mast sites or the masts themselves.

Sharing the existing Orange 20m mast was considered but as it is currently below the tree line it would have to be re-developed from 20m, to 30m-35m due to the height requirements of each operator and high tree line. A mast sharing enquiry was submitted to Orange in August 2010 but this was rejected by them. Therefore it is considered that this option has reasonably and appropriately been explored and discounted. The proposed 27m lattice structure will be available for mast sharing in the future if required which is likely as the coverage of the Orange mast will no doubt be affected by the significant tree growth and it is likely that other operators will have similar dead zones in coverage along the railway.

An alternative position to the east of the railway line on land within their ownership was considered however this was rejected as it would have a higher visual impact as it would be in a more visually prominent position with less tree screen.

A site on land next to Borough Farm, off Duke Street in Micheldever was also considered. It is a greenfield site on land west of the railway line. Due to the tree height again the tower would need to be in excess of 35m at this point which was not considered acceptable.

It is considered that the current proposal offers an acceptable solution to provide the required coverage and in comparison to other alternatives. It is clear that all the other mast sites are too far away to provide anything like adequate coverage and there are no structures in the area which could be utilised. It is considered that the mast at the height required is needed and it is not considered that there is better alternative option.

Design and Impact on character of area

The site lies between the small hamlets of Weston Colley and Northbrook within an area where countryside policies apply and within the Dever Valley landscape character area (Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment March 2004), key characteristics including ‘the well treed railway embankment which bisects the character area’ and ‘an open river valley landscape with views out over open arable fields.’

The mast location site within an area of derelict land which is well contained by existing vegetation to all boundaries and a railway embankment along the eastern side. Existing vegetation includes mature deciduous tree cover along the western and eastern

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA

boundaries and a copse of variable age and condition to the south either side of existing site access. There is a smaller Orange telecommunications mast immediately south of the proposed mast location with only the top visible among boundary trees. The site is on a slope with the ground continuing to rise to the north beyond the proposed location of the mast.

As there are no public rights of way close by, public viewpoints within the immediate vicinity are restricted to glimpses of the mast through gaps in field hedgerows from the local road network i.e. from the North to South lane linking Weston Colley with Micheldever Station west of the railway line and the East to West lane between Weston Colley and Northbrook.

The topography further restricts views when seen from the west and the north with only the top of the mast visible within the open undulating landscape, illustrating a justification for height of mast as proposed to maximise reception; similarly, the railway embankment and associated vegetation conceals much of the mast when viewed from the south and east.

The mast will be seen from the public right of way on the edge of Micheldever by the church, approx 0.75 km from site on the far side of the river valley although the full extent of the mast will remain partially concealed by the railway embankment; it will also be framed by mature vegetation when seen from this viewpoint which will lessen some of the impact on the skyline.

Micheldever VDS identifies important views around the parish where degradation of these views by inappropriate new structures should be avoided. Views of the site are not included in this assessment (pp12-13). Design guidance notes relating to mobile phone masts state that where possible they should 'be shared between phone providers' FD 21 and should be 'made unobtrusive by siting within tree lines' FD22 (p23).

The above illustrates that the mast will undoubtedly have a level of visual impact but this needs to be considered as to whether this is indeed visually intrusive or so harmful as to outweigh the need for the mast and warrant refusal. All the viewpoints were established and assessed in terms of this with the assistance of a demonstration mast to accurately pinpoint the position of the mast in the landscape and its height. In terms of appearance, the design was also taken into account in this assessment and this is considered less intrusive than the existing Orange mast with its very bulk width and lattice work and top heavy large head frame. The design of the proposal is a significant advantage to it in considering how harmful the views of the mast will be. The lighter slimline 'lattice work' structure, simply shaped outline with very minimal equipment will significantly reduce its impact in the landscape and coupled with the significant distance that the mast will be seen over (except close up where it will only be visible through gaps in the hedge) the proposal is considered visually acceptable without significant intrusion into the countryside so as to harm its character. There is a possibility that the mast could be further painted to lessen impact but it is considered that letting the galvanised steel naturally weather over time will be appropriate in this case as much of it will be seen against the skyline and the rest screened by trees with no particular impact.

In conclusion, the proposals, although seen in part from public viewpoints, are not

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA

considered to be harmful to the landscape or have an adverse visual impact on existing landscape character. This conclusion and recommendation has been reached in conjunction with the landscape officer after a lengthy site visit and assessment of the proposal.

Impact on neighbouring property

The proposal mast location is too remote from any houses to have any detrimental impacts which would be materially harmful to the visual amenities of occupants notwithstanding the fact that the structure will be visible from homes in and around Micheldever.

Landscape/Trees

The proposal will not impact on the health of any of the surrounding vegetation due to the distance and a landscaping condition is recommended to ensure that gaps in the tree line are filled to improve the green setting for the mast. [Condition 02]

Other Matters

The guidance set out in PPG8 states that if the emissions from a proposed development meet the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection guidance (ICNIRP), it should not be necessary for an authority to consider health effects further. The proposed development application is accompanied by an ICNIRP certificate which takes into account the cumulative effect of the emissions from the proposed installation and all radio base stations present at, or near, the proposed location.

In conclusion it is considered that the need for the mast has been proven, there are no alternative options and whilst visible from Micheldever this will not be so intrusive as to harm the countryside or setting of the village. It is considered appropriate to remove permitted development rights to ensure any future additions to the mast are appropriately assessed. [Condition 04]. A condition is also proposed to ensure the mast and associated equipment is removed if it becomes redundant to protect the future of this countryside location. [Condition 05]

Recommendation

Application Permitted, subject to the following condition(s):

Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 2 A detailed scheme for landscaping, tree and/or shrub planting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. The scheme shall specify species, density, planting, size and layout. The scheme approved shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner. If within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, any trees, shrubs or plants die, are removed or, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, become seriously damaged or defective, others of the same

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA

species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, in the next planting season, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

2 Reason: To improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

3 Development shall cease on site if, during any stage of the works, potential contamination is encountered which has not been previously identified, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Works shall not recommence before an assessment of the potential contamination has been undertaken and details of the findings along with details of any remedial action required (including timing provision for implementation), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be completed other than in accordance with the approved details.

3 Reason: In order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity.

4 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended, or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order, no development permitted by Part 24 of Schedule 2 of the Order shall be undertaken without the prior approval, in writing, of the Local Planning Authority.

4 Reason: To improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

05 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.

5 Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

Informatives:

This permission is granted for the following reasons:

The development is in accordance with the Policies and Proposals of the Development Plan set out below, and other material considerations do not have sufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should therefore be granted.

The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:

South East Plan 2009: CC6, C4.

Winchester District Local Plan Review 2006: DP.3, DP.14, CE.4, CE.5.

Please return this form to the Case Officer, Lorna Hutchings.

OFFICE SUPPORT

27 JAN 2011

From: **Micheldever Parish**

Case No: **10/03125/FUL**

Closing Date for comments: **2 February 2011**

Location: Land North Of Weston Down Lane Weston Colley Hampshire
Proposal: Installation of 27 metre high Vodafone telecommunication installation

Comments:

The Parish Council are not prepared to accept this application in its current form as it is an excessive intrusion to the visual impact on the surrounding village countryside

See attached sheet

Request for application to be considered by Committee:

(NB: Case Officer to forward form to Head of Planning Management if this section completed)

The Council are united in requesting that this application is considered at Committee level

Signed

Date: 20 Jan 2011



From: Micheldever Parish Council

Case No: 10/03125/FUL
Ref No: W2207

Case Officer: Lorna Hutchings
Closing Date: 2nd February 2011

Location: Land off Weston Lane at Weston Bridge, Micheldever

Proposal: Installation of 30 meter high Vodafone telecommunication mast

Background and comments:

The Parish Council wish to reject this application most emphatically.

The proposed mast will be 11.4 meters above the top of the existing Orange mast 70 meters to the South which is fully screened by trees. (Calculation: Vodafone mast height 29.4 meters, plus ground level rise from base of Orange mast of 2 meters equals 31.4 meters. Subtract the height of the Orange mast of 20 meters gives us 11.4 meters above the existing adjacent mast)

The mast will be in the open and not screened by any trees, and will project into the skyline above the railway embankment. For the people of Micheldever it could not be in a more prominent and intrusive location. Like a nail sticking out of the top of a bald man's head!

Vodafone say their proposed mast will be available for site sharing with other phone service providers, this is presumably the same way that the Orange mast has been made available to Vodafone for sharing. So much for following government guidelines to limit the proliferation of masts that blight the countryside.

No attempt has been made at the pre-planning stage to offer a camouflaged version of the mast in the form of, say, a Scots pine or similar cover.

If the Orange mast works at a height of 20 meters and gives good local reception why will Vodafone's not work at the same height as well?

The **Winchester District Local Plan Review** states in paragraph 3.80 and I quote: "Where new installations are essential, they should avoid the most environmentally sensitive parts of the District. The apparatus and structures tend to be very utilitarian, and their visual impact should be reduced wherever possible by appropriate use of materials and colours, appropriate design solutions, sensitive siting and landscaping. Telecommunication masts in particular require sensitive siting, especially for new installations. Account should be taken of public concern about the impact of such development, where it is a relevant planning consideration, and the Mobile Operators Association's `Ten Commitments for Best siting Practice` should be followed.

Planning applications and prior `approval submissions` should include evidence that those commitments that are relevant have been met, particularly that local communities have been consulted where appropriate.”
The advice in the above Plan Review **must** be taken into serious consideration.

I also enclose for clarification 3 photographs, number 1 is a view of the village taken from the base of the proposed mast site, this also shows the graveyard for Micheldever Church from where photographs numbers 2 and 3 were taken showing a scale Photoshop construction of what the proposed mast would look like. I am sure these will show why the villagers are solid in their objection to a new mast.

The Parish Council request that this application goes before Committee.

Signed for on behalf of Micheldever Parish Council.

Peter Bradley

20th January 2011



View of Micheldever village from the base of the proposed Vodafone mast site

Top of Orange mast
@20 meters high

Top of Vodafone mast
@ 29.4 meters

View of proposed Vodafone mast from Micheldever Churchyard



3

Top of Orange
mast in trees
@20m high

Proposed top of Vodaphone
mast @ 29.4m

View of proposed Vodaphone mast from Micheldever Churchyard