



Epping Forest District Council

Agenda Item Number 12



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Application Number:	EPF/1570/17
Site Name:	White Chicks Farm, Willingale Road, Fyfield, CM5 0SD
Scale of Plot:	1/1250

Report Item No:

APPLICATION No:	EPF/1570/17
SITE ADDRESS:	White Chicks Farm Willingale Road Fyfield Ongar Essex CM5 0SD
PARISH:	Fyfield
WARD:	Moreton and Fyfield
APPLICANT:	Telefonica (UK) ITD
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Prior notification for proposed installation of a 25m lightweight lattice telecommunications mast with 3 antennas and 2 microwave dishes, 2 equipment cabinets and a meter cabinet and development ancillary thereto within a fenced compound
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	Approval Required and Granted

Click on the link below to view related plans and documents for this case:

http://planpub.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/NIM.websearch/ExternalEntryPoint.aspx?SEARCH_TYPE=1&DOC_CLASS_CODE=PL&FOLDER1_REF=595494

CONDITIONS

NONE.

This application is before this Committee since it has been 'called in' by Councillor McEwen (Pursuant to The Constitution, Part Three: Planning Services – Delegation of Council functions, Schedule 1, Appendix A.(h))

Description of site

The application site is located within a sporadic area of development on Willingale Road, within the settlement of Fyfield. White Chicks Farm is located on the northern side of the road, Parsonage House, a Grade II listed building is to the west and there are various other residential properties on Willingale Road. The application site is located within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Green Belt and it is not in a Conservation Area.

Description of proposal

The proposal is for a prior approval for the erection of a 25m high telecommunications mast in the north east corner of White Chicks Farm.

Relevant History

None

Policies Applied

GB2A – Development in the Green Belt
GB7A Conspicuous Development
RP5A – Adverse environmental impacts
U6 – Other masts and aerials
HC12 – Development affecting the setting of listed buildings
DBE9 – Loss of amenity
LL1 – Rural landscape
LL2 – Inappropriate rural development

The above policies form part of the Council's 1998 Local Plan. Following the publication of the NPPF, policies from this plan (which was adopted pre-2004) are to be afforded due weight where they are consistent with the Framework. The above policies are broadly consistent with the NPPF and therefore are afforded full weight.

Consultation Carried Out and Summary of Representations Received

FYFIELD PARISH COUNCIL – NO COMMENT AT TIME OF WRITING REPORT

PARSONAGE HOUSE – OBJECTION – The proposed siting and appearance of the proposed mast is inappropriate and would result in significant visual harm, in stark contrast to the appearance of the area. Its substantial height will be very visible in the area and will detract from its character and appearance.

HILLCREST – OBJECTION – The proposed mast will harm the character and appearance of the area

THE BARN – OBJECTION – The proposal will cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

LITTLE WITNEY GREEN – OBJECTION – The proposal will be overtly visible from my property and the general street scene and will cause it significant harm. The proposal will also harm the public footpath.

FYFIELD HOUSE – OBJECTION – The proposal is approximately 250m from my property and will harm the character and appearance of the area. The mast is unnecessary and will not provide significant benefit to the community.

WITNEY GREEN FARMHOUSE – OBJECTION - The proposal will be in a very conspicuous location and overtly visible in the street scene. It will greatly impact the character and appearance of the street scene.

RADAR HOUSE – OBJECTION – The proposal will cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the street scene and is out of character. Users of the public right of way will also be adversely affected.

Issues and considerations

Telecommunication poles/columns up to 25m in height can be erected as permitted development. However mobile phone companies must first of all obtain prior approval from local planning authorities (LPA's) before being able to utilise this permitted development right, and LPA's can only consider issues of siting and appearance in their assessment of whether prior approval should be granted or refused. Section 5 of the NPPF supports the development of high quality

communications infrastructure, and advises Local Planning Authorities to deal with applications in a positive and constructive manner.

The proposed telecommunications mast will be utilised by Telefonica (02) and will provide 2G, 3G and 4G coverage to Fyfield and extend coverage of existing coverage to neighbouring communities. There is substantial support from the Government to support high quality communications services and there is little doubt that this mast will greatly improve existing mobile signal to the community.

The proposed mast will be set approximately 115m to the rear of Willingale Road and will be set against a robust row of Leylandii trees to the north east which are approximately 20m high. The mast will have a maximum height of 25m and therefore will be visible from public viewpoints despite its partial screening from the existing vegetation, it is noted that there is no guarantee that these trees will remain in perpetuity on the site, nor that they would be replaced if they were lost and therefore this is only given limited weight.

From views directly in front of White Chicks, the mast will be overtly visible. However given that it is so significantly set back from the main public carriageway of Willingale Road and in the context of some partial screening to the north east from the vegetation it is not considered that there will be significant harm to the character or appearance of the street scene. It is acknowledged that there is a Public Right of Way directly adjacent to the site, running to the north, however it is not considered that the mast would cause such detrimental harm to users of the path.

The mast would be approximately 50m from the edge of the garden of the nearest residential property (The Rectory) and over 120m from the Listed Building to the west (Parsonage House). Whilst the mast will be visible to these neighbours, given the substantial distance and partial screening, it is not considered that there will be significant harm to their outlook. Indeed, these residential neighbouring properties are orientated away from the position of the mast and would therefore not have direct views from their rear elevations.

Need

The applicants argue that the development is needed to boost the existing levels of 2G and 3G coverage to the area whilst providing new 4G coverage in line with government commitments, and have provided evidence that current coverage is intermittent and patchy in the area, with no 4G coverage. The proposed location was chosen as it provides good coverage. 9 other sites in the area were investigated but this site was chosen due in particular to the high level of existing screening.

Health Issues

Government advice states that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards, and it goes on to say that if a proposed mobile phone base station meets ICNIRP guidelines it should not be necessary to consider further the health aspects of the development. (ICNIRP = International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation). An ICNIRP certificate has been submitted with this application.

Conclusion

Any telecommunication mast in the rural area will by definition be a visual intrusion, the impact of the mast must be considered against the benefits to the rural area, and the rural economy of the coverage that they will provide. The siting, in this instance, due to the extensive existing screening and the distance from the highway and residential properties, is considered to be acceptable, as the harm to the character or appearance of the area and impact on neighbouring properties is kept

to a minimum. No other site with lesser impact has been identified. It is therefore recommended that prior approval is granted.

Should you wish to discuss the contents of this report item please use the following contact details by 2pm on the day of the meeting at the latest:

Planning Application Case Officer: James Rogers

Direct Line Telephone Number: 01992 564371

or if no direct contact can be made please email: contactplanning@eppingforestdc.gov.uk