

Date of Meeting	5th April 2018
Application Number	18/00898/FUL
Site Address	Land at Ridge Farm, Woodfalls, Salisbury, SP5 2LW
Proposal	Installation of a 17.5m slimline telecommunications column with 3 no. antennas within shroud, 2 no. 300mm dishes, with installation of 1 no. equipment cabinet and 1 no. meter cabinet and ancillary works within a secure fenced compound.
Applicant	Vodafone Ltd
Town/Parish Council	REDLYNCH
Electoral Division	REDLYNCH AND LANDFORD – Cllr Randall
Grid Ref	419664 120031
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Warren Simmonds

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been called in by the Division Member because of concerns about visual impact; the relationship to adjacent properties and public interest in the matter.

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation that the application be approved, subject to the Conditions set out at the conclusion of the report.

2. Report Summary

The main issues in the consideration of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Siting, Appearance and Visual Impact and residential amenity
- Health and safety

The application has generated a total of 73 representations (together with a petition) from the interested parties, as follows:

Neighbour/third parties – 73 Third party representations have been received, together with a petition containing 38 signatories, each in objection to the proposed development. The following objections/concerns have been raised:

*Traffic disruption, construction/service vehicle movements and right of access
Proximity to residential properties and consequent impact on amenity*

Impact to enjoyment of Right of way footpath
Lack of community consultation
Microwaves, public health and safety
Landscape/visual impact
Insufficient screening of the site – nearby trees soon to be cut down
Insufficient site selection process – questionable reasons for alternative sites being discounted
Impact on property values
Development in the countryside
Poor/insufficient access
Noise and disturbance to local residences from construction and maintenance
The proposed mast would provide insufficient coverage for Redlynch & Lover

Redlynch Parish Council object to the proposed development on grounds that the proposal would have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties due to its height, scale and dominance as it will be located too close to residential housing. In addition it will still have an impact on the users of the footpath and the enjoyment of the rural surroundings.

3. Site Description

The application site is located in a field that is part of Ridge Farm situated adjacent to the settlement boundary for Woodfalls. A ROW runs southwards from a farm access located at the end of a track that is accessed off Highfield Road. The site lies south of dwellings in Highfield Lane.



Right of Way – Footpath REDL25 identified in purple

4. Planning History

- | | | |
|----------------|---|-------------------------|
| 16/09602/FUL | The installation of a 17.5m monopole with 3 antennas and 2 microwave dishes, the installation of 2 equipment cabinets and a meter cabinet and development ancillary thereto | APPLICATION WITHDRAWN |
| 17/01351/PNTEL | Installation of 17.5m monopole with 3 antennas and 2 microwave dishes, with installation of 2 equipment cabinets and a meter cabinet and development ancillary thereto | Deemed Consent 25.04.17 |

5. The Proposal

The application proposes the installation of a 17.5m slimline telecommunications column with 3 antennas within the shroud and 2 x 300mm microwave dishes, together with installation of 1 equipment cabinet and development ancillary thereto.

The mast would be erected within the existing compound of approx. 5.6m x 5.6m which has been constructed on the site approximately 2.2m from the field boundary consisting of hedging, beside the ROW that runs adjacent to the boundary and 10m south of the field gate that is accessed to the end of the track.

Access to the site would be gained via Ridge Farm, The Ridge.

The new mast would replace the existing mast that is currently in situ in the village at Skylark motors, close to the bungalows at Springfield Crescent.

6. Local Planning Policy

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) Core Policies CP48, CP51.

WCS Strategic objective 6: to ensure that infrastructure is in place to support communities

Saved SDLP policy PS7 (Telecommunications)

NPPF

Section 5 Supporting high quality communications infrastructure

7. Summary of consultation responses

Redlynch Parish Council - object to the proposed development on grounds that the proposal would have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties due to its height, scale and dominance as it will be located too close to residential housing. In addition it will still have an impact on the users of the footpath and the enjoyment of the rural surroundings.

Wiltshire Council Archaeology – No objection - Although this site lies within an area of archaeological interest, there is nothing specifically within the site. Therefore, on the evidence available to me at present, I consider it unlikely that significant archaeological remains would be disturbed by the proposed development and so have no further comment to make.

Wiltshire Council Highways – No objection – Access to the site will be via a track that leads to adjacent properties and the field in which the equipment is proposed to be sited, this is not proposed to be altered as part of this application. Once the construction is complete access thereto will be limited to maintenance and as such the additional use of the existing access will not be detrimental to highway safety and therefore I wish to raise no highway objection.

Wiltshire Council Rights of Way – No objection - I note that a 2 metre width has been made available for the public footpath between the compound and the hedge. While this was our minimum requirement given in response to the previous application there is still overgrowth from the hedge which reduces the available width of the path here both alongside the compound and the utility pole. With further growth the path may become impassable and the surface may require additional maintenance due to this restricted width. I would therefore recommend the following condition/informative:

The section of hedge from the gateway to a point approximately 3 metres beyond the utility pole should be cut back level with the existing fence. Once construction is complete this section of hedge must be maintained to this standard by the applicant or the landowner.

Reason: To ensure the public right of way remains available and convenient for public use.

New Forest National Park Authority – Support - No harmful impact upon the park considered.

8. Publicity

The application was publicised via site notices and neighbour notification letters. The application generated a total of 73 third party representations have been received, together with a petition containing 38 signatories, each in objection to the proposed development.

The following objections/concerns have been raised:

Traffic disruption, construction/service vehicle movements and right of access
Proximity to residential properties and consequent impact on amenity
Impact to enjoyment of Right of way footpath
Lack of community consultation
Microwaves, public health and safety
Landscape/visual impact
Insufficient screening of the site – nearby trees soon to be cut down
Insufficient site selection process – questionable reasons for alternative sites being discounted
Impact on property values
Development in the countryside
Poor/insufficient access
Noise and disturbance to local residences from construction and maintenance
The proposed mast would provide insufficient coverage for Redlynch & Lover

9. Planning Considerations

9.1 Background

This application arises from unusual circumstances. The applicants already have a telecommunications mast in place within the residential area of the village at Skylark Motors, to the rear of bungalows in Springfield Crescent, but as the landowner wishes to

redevelop the site, they need to relocate, as well as update to current infrastructure standards. Most telecommunication structures of this nature, including new or replacement masts, do not require planning permission from the Council as local planning authority, but only 'prior approval', where the local planning authority can only consider the *siting and appearance* of the development. (This is because the Government place a high priority on the national delivery of telecommunications infrastructure and therefore effectively grant planning permission, leaving the local Council to consider only siting and appearance). In 2017, the applicants submitted a prior approval application for a 17.5 metre high mast in this field and obtained deemed consent for its erection as the application was not determined by the Council within the Government stipulated time limit of 56 days.

The applicants commenced development, but investigations by the Council, assisted by local residents, confirmed that the concrete slab and compound that had been laid for the development was not built on the site authorised by the deemed consent, but approximately 2 metres away. The developers therefore stopped worked to consider their options and discuss the matter with Council officers. Whilst they could, as a 'fall-back' position, and without any come-back from the Council, tear up the concrete, compound and infrastructure that has been laid and build the mast that has deemed consent on the approved site, they have opted to propose to retain the compound on the site where it has been constructed, and instead to erect a 'slimline' mast of a less intrusive design than the one that has deemed consent, and one more usually associated with areas of sensitive landscapes, such as AONB's. Because the mast would be erected on the existing base, they are not able to take advantage of prior approval procedures, as these only apply where no development has commenced. This is why the Council now has a planning application before it for determination.

9.2 Health Issues

Paragraph 46 of the NPPF states:

"Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not ...determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure."

Officers note the representations made on this issue. However, the submitted statement from the applicants confirms that: *"The proposed equipment and installation is designed to be in full compliance with the requirements of the radio frequency (RF) public exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP), as expressed in the EU Council recommendation of 12 July 1999 on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0Hz to 300GHz)."*

Consequently, the proposal is in accordance with the guidance in the NPPF and the Council cannot justify a refusal of the scheme on grounds of health concerns.

9.3 Site Selection

The applicant has provided (at section 5 of the submitted Supplementary Information document) details of the site selection process leading to the selection of the site for the

proposed mast. The site selection process details 15 alternative sites that were considered for the proposed mast, and the reasons for each being discounted:

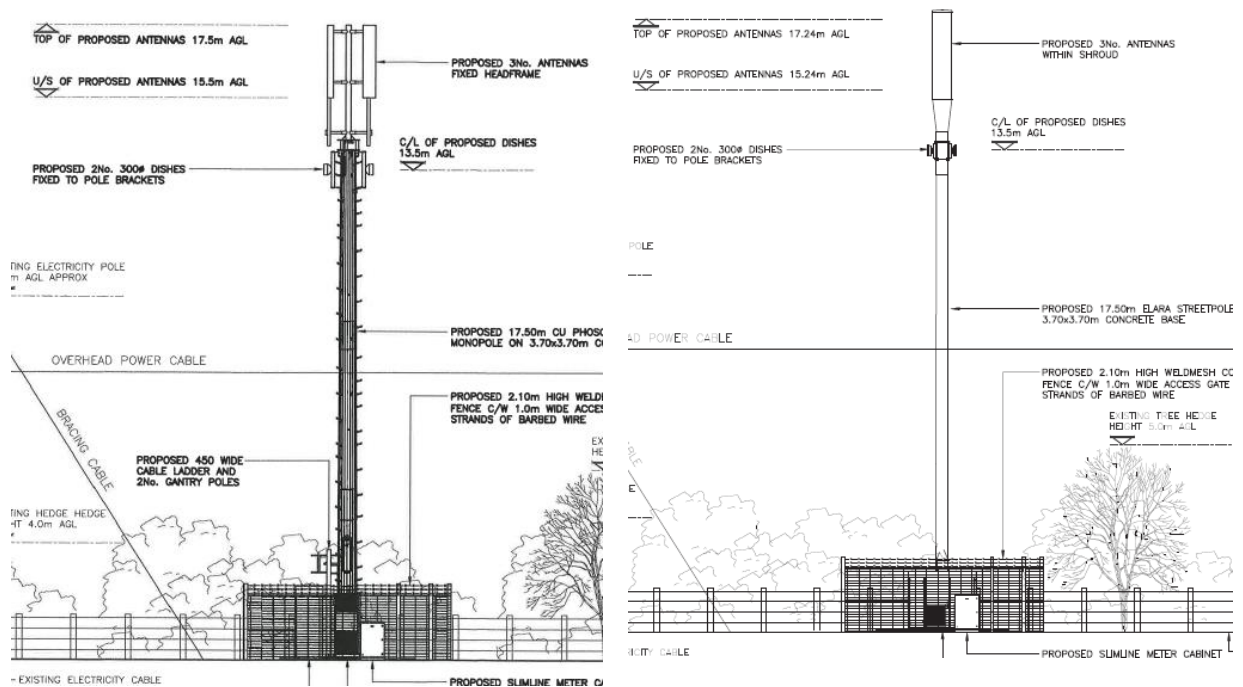
Alternative sites considered and not chosen

Site Type	Site name and address	National Grid Reference	Reason for not choosing site
1. Greenfield	Land to the North of Lodge drove, Woodfalls, SP5 2HH	E419377, N119820	A base station at this location would not provide the coverage required. A site more central to the built settlement of Woodfalls is required
2. Greenfield	Woodfalls Cross Farm, Hale Road, Woodfalls, SP6 2NW	E419746, N119469	A base station at this location would not provide the coverage required. A site more central to the built settlement of Woodfalls is required
3. Greenfield	MoT service station and car sales site, The Ridge, Woodfalls, SP5 2LS	E419791, N120124	This is the location of the existing telecommunications base station. The owner has plans to sell the land for redevelopment and is not interested in accommodating a telecommunications base station.
4. Greenfield	Playing Fields, Redlynch Social Club, Woodfalls, SP5 2LU	E419847, N119759	When searching for a site owner did not express any interest. In addition, a site here would not provide the level of coverage that the application site will provide.
5. Greenfield	Land to west of Slab lane and Primrose lane, Woodfalls, SP5 2NB	E419235, N120731	The ground levels are significantly lower than the existing and proposal site and an installation here would not achieve the required coverage.
6. Greenfield	Land to the south of Whiteshoot Hill, Woodfalls, SP5 2NW	E420040, N119644	The ground levels are significantly lower than the existing and proposal site and an installation here would not achieve the required coverage.
7. Greenfield	Woodfalls Inn, The Ridge, Woodfalls, SP5 2HT	E419821, N119851	The building is not suitable for the accommodation of an installation and there is no land available. If available, a structure here would have greater visibility than a the application proposal.
8. Greenfield	Land adj. The Ridge, Woodfalls, SP5 2HT	E420134, N120922	The site owner was not interested, when the site at the current location was progressed. The location is remote from the existing site and a site here would not meet coverage requirements.
9. Greenfield	Hart Hill Farm, The Ridge, Woodfalls, SP5 2LJ	E419990, N120374	The site owner did not express any interest. In addition a site here would not provide the level of coverage that the application site will provide.
10.	Parish Council suggested site – Recycling Centre	E421751, N117813	Coverage requirements would not be met with a site at this location

11.	Parish Council suggested site – Commercial site	E420614, N118650	Coverage requirements would not be met with a site at this location
12.	Parish Council suggested site – Site close to but to west of “land north of Lodge Drove” discounted site	E419115, N119781	Coverage requirements would not be met with a site at this location
13.	Parish Council suggested site – Parish Council Site (Site at Loosehanger)	E420872, N119067	Coverage requirements would not be met with a site at this location
14.	Parish Council suggested site – Site near top of Whiteshoot	E419923, N119641	Coverage requirements would not be met with a site at this location
15.	Parish Council suggested site – Edge of Tinneys Firs, Woodland Trust land	E419960, N119693	Coverage requirements would not be met with a site at this location

9.4 Appearance and Visual Impact

A comparison of the mast design now proposed with the one that has deemed consent is shown below. The one on the right is the current proposal.



The comparison confirms that the mast now proposed is slimmer and less intrusive than the mast that has deemed consent. Although taller, it is a design that has much in common with the existing mast at the rear of Springfield Crescent.



Existing Mast to rear of Springfield Crescent (to be removed)

The location of the proposed site is a field to the rear of properties in Highfield Lane. In this location, it is removed from the urban context of the current mast, but seen from distant views against the backdrop of existing development and trees/vegetation that form the current interface between the built development and the field. There are also overhead electricity cables and poles in the vicinity. The field is not in a protected or sensitive landscape, being outside of the National Park and not within any AONB. Whilst the mast that has deemed consent would be a more intrusive element in the landscape, it is not considered that the slimline mast would have such a significant effect. It would also be possible to paint the supporting column in a recessive colour. Whilst it will be clearly visible from the public right of way adjacent, it would be seen in close association with the existing electricity pole stay and apparatus. Overall, it is considered that the visual impact from the proposed slimline mast would be acceptable in this location.



Proposed Site

It is considered that the design now proposed mitigates as far as possible any negative impacts on the landscape and is in accordance with the guidelines in CP51.

9.5 Residential amenity and Access

The mast would be close to a nearby bungalow at 'Rolleston', which has its flank wall adjacent to the field. Other properties are further away. Again, Government guidance in the NPPF is clear that local planning authorities '*should not insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development*'. This is not altogether surprising as many 'streetwork' style masts are found in residential locations in close proximity to nearby houses (similar to the existing mast in the village). Whilst the mast will be visible from windows in the flank elevation of Rolleston, impacts on outlook from houses are not a material planning consideration and the mast itself will not have any significant impact on the amenity of nearby properties.

The access to construct the site is through the existing field, and no objection has been raised by highways. Once the mast has been erected, any traffic generation will be minimal, simply being maintenance checks etc.

9.5 Public Benefits The mast will ensure that the village and the surrounding area continue to receive good coverage for mobile phone use, in line with the requirement in Core Policy 48 to improve access to services and infrastructure in rural areas. This weighs in favour of the development.

9.6 Fall-back Position

As noted above, it remains a material planning consideration that the applicant *could* remove the existing base compound and re-construct it in the correct place according to the Prior Notification scheme (a distance of approximately 2m further to the North) and construct the larger Prior Notification version of the mast (as above left). The consent is still valid.

10. Conclusion

The proposed mast would replace the existing mast at the Skylark Motors site which is to be decommissioned. The proposed mast would provide potential public benefits by providing continued mobile phone coverage to the village. Although any new mast will always have a degree of visual intrusion, the design now proposed does mitigate substantially the visual impact, and whilst it might be close to some properties in Highfield Lane, none will suffer any significant adverse impact on their amenity, and certainly none sufficient to justify refusal of planning permission. There will also be a degree of improvement to the visual amenity in the area of Springfield Crescent by the removal of the existing mast.

Given that there is also a fall-back position that could see a more intrusive and visually harmful mast erected within a few metres of the site, it is considered that the current proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to the following Conditions:

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

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing number 201 issue G dated 10.01.18, as deposited with the local planning authority on 26.01.18, and

Drawing number 301 issue F dated 10.01.18, as deposited with the local planning authority on 26.01.18, and

Drawing number 100 issue A dated 07.09.16, as deposited with the local planning authority on 26.01.18.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. All equipment, apparatus and structure(s) hereby approved provided shall, when no longer reasonably required, be removed as soon as reasonably practicable from the land and the land restored to its condition before the development took place.

REASON: To ensure the removal of equipment, apparatus and structures and the restoration of the land when no longer reasonably required, in the interests of amenity.

4. Within three months of the bringing into use of the telecommunication apparatus hereby approved, the existing mast and apparatus at the Skylark Motors site in Woodfalls shall be decommissioned and removed from the site.

REASON: To prevent the proliferation of new telecommunication apparatus, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area, as the justification for this new mast relies partly on the need to replace the mast at Skylark Motors.

5. Before the mast hereby is erected on the concrete slab, details of the external colour paint to be applied to it shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The mast shall be painted in the approved colour before being brought into use.

REASON: To protect the character and appearance of the area, by ensuring the mast is painted in a suitable colour.

Informative:

The section of hedge from the gateway to a point approximately 3 metres beyond the utility pole should be cut back level with the existing fence. Once construction is complete this section of hedge should be maintained to this standard to ensure that the right of way is not obstructed.