

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P16/S2535/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	22.7.2016
<b>PARISH</b>	MOULSFORD
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Jane Murphy Pat Dawe
<b>APPLICANT</b>	EE & Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd
<b>SITE</b>	Land off Reading Road, Reading Road, Cholsey, Oxon OX10 9LU
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Proposed telecommunication installation and associated works.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	As amended and supported by revised plans and additional information received on 17 August 2016.
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	459154/185210
<b>OFFICER</b>	Gabriella Brown

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the officer recommendation conflicts with that of the Parish Council.

1.2 The application site is shown on the OS extract **attached** at Appendix 1. It forms part of an agricultural field and it lies between the settlements of Cholsey and Moulsoford, adjacent to the A329 (Reading Road). It also lies directly to the south of the Didcot to Reading railway line.

1.3 The site lies within the Parish of Moulsoford but is close to the Cholsey Parish boundary. As such, both Parish Councils have been consulted on the application.

1.4 The site also lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission to erect a 15 metre high telecommunications mast which is to accommodate 3 antenna and one dish and to create the associated base compound containing 3 equipment cabinets. The compound measures 3 metres wide X 6 metres long and a new access, parking and manoeuvring area are to be created adjacent to the compound.

2.2 The proposed scheme has been amended during the course of the application to show a replica telegraph pole style mast rather than a standard monopole and the access and parking area were revised to take account of the highway officer's comments.

2.3 The plans of the proposed development are **attached** at Appendix 2. Full details of the application and the consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Original Plans

3.2 **Moulsoford Parish Council** – Object. It appears conflicting mapping and supplementary information has been supplied with the application.

The following objection is based on the site location as detailed in Site Location

Plan drwgno 1451084 75432 - 01:

Material planning considerations - Amenity consideration - character of area (highly visible impact upon and detracting from the Chiltern and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

If the location were as that indicated by 'Option 1' on the map on the 6th page (unnumbered) of the accompanying document 'Site Specific Supplementary Information' then the council would have no strong views on the application.

- 3.3 **Cholsey Parish Council** – Object on the basis that the land involved falls within the boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 3.4 **OCC (Highways)** - Holding Objection until further information is supplied to address the following:
- The proposed gates will need to be set back a minimum of 5.0m so as to prevent a vehicle “waiting” on the carriageway
  - The parking/turning area will need to be tracked and demonstrated for consideration to show a vehicle can turn round and egress in a forward gear
- 3.5 **OCC (Archeaology)** - The proposals outlined would not appear to have an invasive impact upon any known archaeological sites or features. As such there are no archaeological constraints to this scheme.
- 3.6 **Health & Housing - Env. Protection Team** - I have no observations or comments to make on this particular application regarding noise, dust or odour.
- 3.7 **Forestry Officer** - The trees within this site are not subject to a tree preservation order. The site is not located within a conservation area. No objections to the proposed development.
- 3.8 **SGN Plant Protection Team** - Our low/medium/intermediate pressure gas main is near the site. There should be no mechanical excavations taking place above or within 0.5m of a low/medium pressure system or above or within 3.0m of an intermediate pressure system. The applicant should, where required confirm the position using hand dug trial holes. A colour copy of these plans and the gas safety advice booklet enclosed should be passed to the senior person on site in order to prevent damage to our plant and potential direct or consequential costs to your organisation.
- 3.9 Amended Plans
- 3.10 **Moulsford Parish Council** – The objection to the application still stands
- 3.11 **Cholsey Parish Council** – Object on the basis that the land falls within the boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 3.12 **Highways Liaison Officer** – No objection subject to a condition securing the retention of the parking and manoeuvring areas in perpetuity
- 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
- 4.1 [P16/S2447/T28](#) - Proposed telecommunications mast installation for EE UK Ltd.
- [P11/W1804/SCO](#) - Other Outcome (10/06/2013)  
Proposed Great Western Main Line Overhead Line Electrification -EIA request for a scoping opinion.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies;

CSEM1 - Supporting a successful economy  
CSEN1 - Landscape protection  
CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

C9 - Loss of landscape features  
G2 - Protect district from adverse development  
G4 - Protection of Countryside  
TE1 - Telecommunication development

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

Neighbourhood Plan - Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF.

The site itself is not located within a Neighbourhood Plan Area but it is just outside the Cholsey area. Cholsey are working towards the adoption of a neighbourhood plan and are at stage 1 in the process - (Area designation – approved 04 August 2016). The neighbourhood plan has limited weight at this stage.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main considerations in the determination of the application are:

- The need for the proposed development
- The principle of the proposed development
- The impact on visual amenity and landscape distinctiveness of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Alternative sites
- Highway safety impacts
- Health implications
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

6.2 **The need for the proposed development.** The site is required to provide new 3G and 4G coverage for EE LTD in order to improve coverage in the OX10 area of Cholsey. In addition, the information that supports the application states that the proposed site is of national importance as the Mobile Operator (EE) is working with the Home Office to improve coverage for the Emergency Services on key transport routes. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) is responsible for delivering a smarter, better and cheaper communications capability that will replace the system currently used by the three Emergency Services.

6.3 **The principle of the proposed development.** At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 28

states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development whilst paragraph 42 states that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth.

- 6.4 A key part of the governments' commitment to economic growth is the promotion of a modern, high quality, telecommunications (telecoms) system for communities across all parts of the UK. Good mobile coverage helps businesses to grow and people to stay in touch and people are increasingly using mobile connectivity to access the internet, as more and more people own Smartphones and tablet devices.
- 6.5 Saved Policy TE1 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan is also generally supportive of proposals for telecommunications development within the district (subject to a number of provisos which are explored in the following paragraphs of the report). It is your officer's opinion therefore that the principle of the proposed telecommunications development is acceptable under both national and local plan policies.
- 6.6 **The impact on visual amenity and landscape distinctiveness of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.** Both Moulsoford and Cholsey Parish Councils have objected to the proposed development on the grounds that the site is located within an AONB.
- 6.7 Policy CSEN1 of the SOCS seeks to protect the district's distinct landscape character and the supporting text to the policy clarifies that "In considering proposals for development in the AONB we will apply the advice in the NPPF. This is to give great weight to conserving the natural beauty, landscape and countryside whilst supporting suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of the areas and their communities".
- 6.8 Paragraph 44 of the NPPF states that "Local planning authorities should not impose a ban on new telecommunications development in certain areas, impose blanket Article 4 directions over a wide area for a wide range of telecommunications development or insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development". As such, telecommunications development is not precluded within designated areas and the fact that the site lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB is not a reason in itself to object to the proposed development.
- 6.9 When assessing the impact of the proposed development on the landscape character of the area, the character and appearance of the existing landscape is a material consideration. In this instance the proposed mast would be located adjacent to a busy 'A' road and railway track. To the west, and on elevated land, a line of 40 m high electricity pylons dissect and dominate the landscape. Within closer proximity of the application site, a row of telegraph poles line the western side of the Reading Road and there are metal gantries along the adjacent railway line. There are also other items of street furniture within the surrounding area including the traffic lights on the bridge and various traffic signs. As such, this is not an unspoilt landscape which is devoid of manmade features.
- 6.10 The mast would be considerably higher than the adjacent telegraph poles (although it would be significantly lower than the electricity pylons) and clear views of the mast would be available in views from the surrounding roads and footpaths. However, the style of mast has been revised during the course of the application to a replica telegraph pole and its height has been kept as low as is feasibly possible. The antenna are slim in profile and would not be overly dominant features on the structure. In long distance views the mast would be read amongst the existing telegraph poles, pylons

and gantries and it would meet both local needs and help to deliver the national Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme. In light of the above considerations your officers do not consider that the proposed mast would have a sufficiently detrimental level of impact on the visual amenity of the AONB as to merit a reason for refusal of this application.

- 6.11 **Alternative sites.** Paragraph 45 of the NPPF states that applications for new telecommunications development should include evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of using an existing building, mast or structure. No guidance on the breadth of evidence needed is given. The information accompanying the application states that the cell search area is extremely constrained in that there are no options for a site share, roof top installation, street works mast or a site outside of the AONB. The preferred option (Option 1 as referred to by Moulsoford Parish Council in their comments) would have been to use the existing rail track mast to the north-west of the application site. However, this is owned by Rail Track who do not permit site sharing on their masts and nor do they allow another installation to be located in close proximity due to interference issues.
- 6.12 The submission details four alternative sites which were considered and the reasons why they were dismissed. As such, your officers' consider that the requirements of the NPPF have been met.
- 6.13 **Highway safety impacts.** The proposed access gate in to the site has been moved back from the road in order to ensure that vehicles can wait to enter the compound off the highway. The plans show that there is sufficient space within the site for a vehicle to turn and leave in a forward gear and the OCC highway officer has confirmed that he has no objection to the proposed development on highway safety grounds.
- 6.14 **Health Implications.** Public perception of health risks can be a material consideration in determining planning applications and it is for the decision maker to determine what weight to attach to such considerations.
- 6.15 Whilst there have been some recent appeal cases where more emphasis has been placed on this issue by some Inspectors it remains the advice of Central Government through the NPPF (para.46) that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. In the Governments view if a proposed mobile phone mast or base station meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for a Local Planning Authority in processing an application for planning permission to consider the health aspects and concerns about them. The applicant has confirmed that the equipment proposed would be compliant with this standard.
- 6.16 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).** The council's CIL charging schedule has recently been adopted and will apply to relevant proposals from 1 April 2016. CIL is a planning charge that local authorities can implement to help deliver infrastructure and to support the development of their area, and is primarily calculated on the increase in footprint created as a result of the development.

This application is not CIL Liable. CIL is not payable on telecommunications development – see table below from the Council's charging Schedule

<b>Development</b>	<b>Zone 1 District</b>	<b>Zone 2 Didcot and Berinsfield</b>
Residential development	£150	£85
Residential development – strategic sites: Didcot North-East and Ladygrove East site; Wallingford site B	Nil	Nil
Residential – retirement housing including extra care incorporating independent living (C3) <sup>1</sup>	Nil	
Care home and residential institutions <sup>2</sup> (C2)	Nil	
Residential rural exception sites	Nil	
Offices (incl. research and development)	£0	
Supermarkets, superstores and retail warehouses <sup>3</sup>	£70	
Other retail development	Nil	
Hotels	Nil	
Other uses	Nil	

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 Government guidance is supportive of proposals for telecommunications infrastructure, and the NPPF is clear that applications should not be refused on public health grounds where International Commission guidelines for public exposure would be adhered to. Balanced against this is the need to preserve the landscape character of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the visual amenity of the area. The height of the mast proposed (which is dictated by functional requirements) means that it will have some impact on its surroundings. Taking into account the existing manmade features in the area however and the economic and social benefits of the proposal, it is considered the planning balance weights in favour of the proposal and your officers therefore recommend that planning permission is granted.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 : Commencement three years - full planning permission.**
- 2 : Approved plans.**
- 3 : Removal of telecommunications equipment when redundant to operations.**
- 4 : Parking and manoeuvring areas retained.**

**Author:** Gabriella Brown  
**Contact No:** 01235 422600  
**Email:** [planning@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southoxon.gov.uk)