

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Site Ref:	S5-06C	Applicant:	Cellnex Connectivity Solutions Limited (CCSL)
NGRs:	531752/128711	Date:	27 February 2026
Site Name:	Land At Bowders Farm	Type:	Prior Approval
Site Address:	LAND AT BOWDERS FARM, HAYWARDS HEATH ROAD, BALCOMBE, WEST SUSSEX		
Proposal:	Proposal: <i>Access track for approved telecommunications site and associated development thereto.</i>		
Planning Agent:	Avison Young (UK) Limited		
LPA:	Mid Sussex District Council		

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Design
3. Planning Policy Considerations
4. Technical Justification
5. Conclusion

Overview

Avison Young are planning consultants acting on behalf of Cellnex Connectivity Solutions Limited (CCSL), to submit the application contained herein for an access track in relation to an approved telecommunications development application reference – DM/23/0986.

Enclosed you will find an application for Prior Approval prepared on behalf of Cellnex Connectivity Solutions Limited (CCSL) who is a licensed operator that provide Cellular Network based upon the Global System for Mobile (GSM) standard and Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS) within the United Kingdom.

The supporting documents submitted with this application are as follows:

- Application Form (as generated through Planning Portal)
- Application Fee
- Drawings P1832-BAM-DRG-ECV-000500-P01.
- Planning, Design and Access Statement
- Copy of Developer's Notice

We trust you will find the enclosed information sufficient to register and validate the application. Should you require any further information please direct your queries to the below contact.

Contact Details:

Rebecca Skerrett MRTPI

Director, Technology

rebecca.skerrett@avisonyoung.com | telecoms.planning.uk@avisonyoung.com

6th Floor, 11 York Street, Manchester M2 2AW

1. Introduction

1.1. Project Overview

This application is submitted on behalf of Cellnex Connectivity Solutions Limited (CCSL), in conjunction with the DNO who require an amendment to the previously approved access track.

The Telecoms application was approved under reference DM/23/0986 for *"Erection of a 30m high lattice mast supporting two headframes. Installation of 12 no. antennas on both headframes. 16 no. radio equipment cabinets. Creation of a dedicated compound secured by 1.8m high mesh link fencing and an access gate measuring 15m x 8m. Compound is to be levelled. Installation of 1 no. shared metre cabinet. New access track from Haywards Heath Road, 3m wide and extending along the farms site boundary. Other ancillary development thereto including RRU's, BOBs and MHAs."*

As the access track is in connection with an approved telecommunications site and is not located within a SSSI a prior approval application is submitted herein.

2. Proposed Site

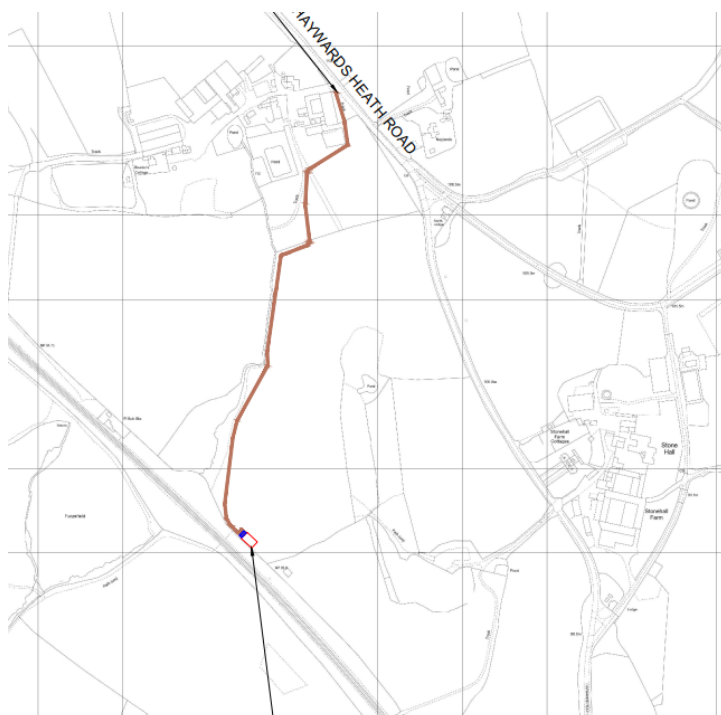
2.1. Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located at Bowders Farm, the proposed access track will run from Haywards Heath Road running along the existing footpath and then follow the site boundary north west to the mast. The site is well screened from views to the north west and east with tall deciduous trees and hedgerows located on the boundaries of the field.

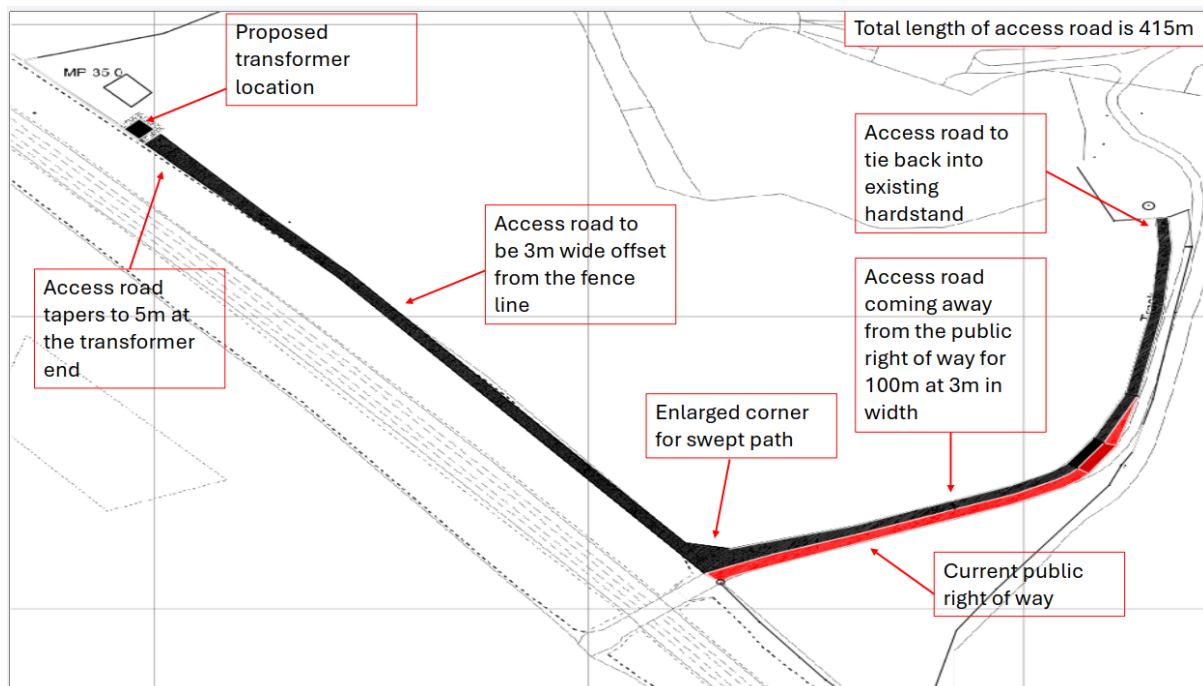
The site falls within the administrative area of Balcombe Parish Council and within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

2.2. Proposed Development

The permitted access track is detailed below and is 3 metres wide:



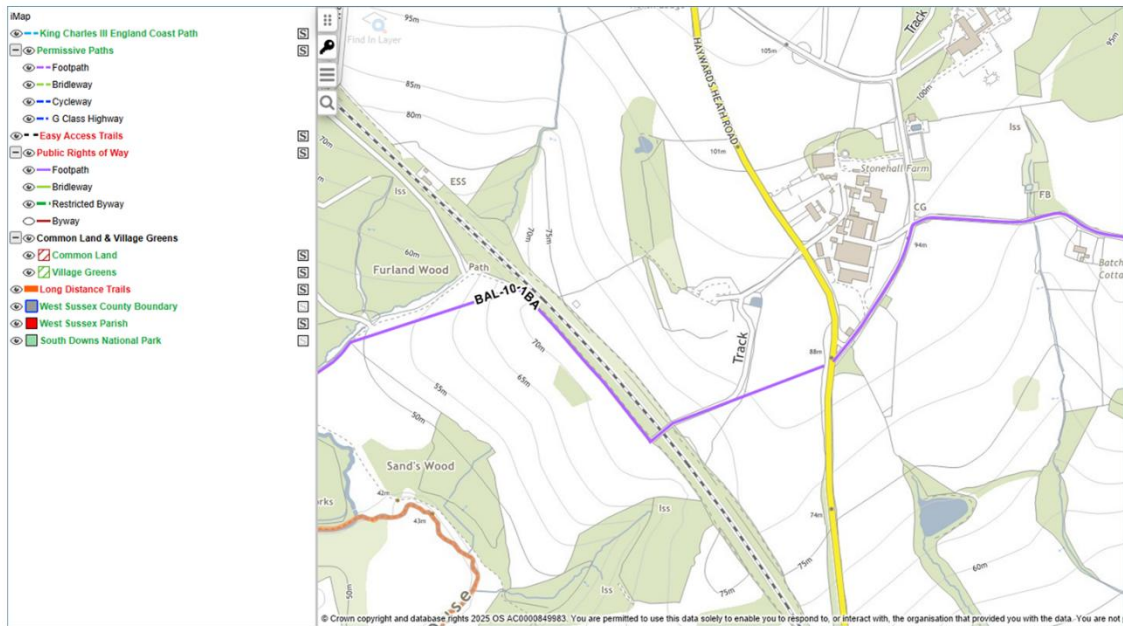
It now has been considered to be more appropriate to bring in the access track in the following location.



There is an existing footpath Balcombe 10_1Ba which will form part of the access track but will need to be upgraded. we have consulted with the public rights of way team and their comments form part of this application. Adam Tucknott advised -

“Following your email in relation to surface improvement to part of Balcombe 10_1Ba footpath for access to installation of electrical substation the following would be required. In principal we have no issue with the improvement to the surface of the footpath with the spec you have provided, our requirement would be that it needs to be a specification appropriate to a rural footpath or better which it clearly is as pre your spec. A question would be how much traffic would use this track post installation and works completed in relation to it being a footpath? If planning approved a temporary path closure would be needed for the duration of the works impacting the footpath”.

Below is the route of the existing footpath (purple line) which is not being altered but the surface is proposed to be upgraded.



The new section of access track would follow the edge of the field and is shorter in length than what has previously been approved.

The photograph below shows the existing footpath which needs to be upgraded.



The access will be finished to the following specification, which is the same as what has previously been approved:

- Top 400 mm of poor soil removed and replaced with compacted subgrade
- Traffic: 28T, 3-axle rigid wagon
- Road type: Unbound granular layers (stone only)
- Design life: 20 years
- Materials: Well-graded crushed stone, Type 1 MOT, Type 2/3 granular

Updated Design Table: After Excavation & Reinstatement

Layer	Material	Thickness (mm)
Wearing Layer	Well-graded crushed stone (Type 1)	100
Upper Sub-base	Type 1 MOT	200
Lower Sub-base	Type 2/3 granular	150

3. Planning Context

3.1. Planning Constraints

The site is located within the AONB and comprises of a Public Right of Way, footpath Balcombe 10_1Ba.

3.2. Relevant Planning History

Application DM/23/0986 - Erection of a 30m high lattice mast supporting two headframes. Installation of 12 no. antennas on both headframes. 16 no. radio equipment cabinets. Creation of a dedicated compound secured by 1.8m high mesh link fencing and an access gate measuring 15m x 8m. Compound is to be levelled. Installation of 1 no. shared metre cabinet. New access track from Haywards Heath Road, 3m wide and extending along the farms site boundary. Other ancillary development thereto including RRU's, BOBs and MHAs.

3.3. Pre-Application Engagement

Consultation has been undertaken with the public rights of way department due to the requirement to upgrade the existing footpath. They had no objection in principle and their response forms part of the application.

4. Design

4.1. Design Considerations

The applicant has sought to cause as little impact on the visual amenity of the area as possible whilst also ensuring that the track is sufficient for use. Previously permission has been given for an access track, this application amends the access and is in fact shorter than what has previously been approved. If permission is given for this proposal the previously approved access track will not be constructed.

The proposed track will hug the boundary of the site where possible so as not encroach onto the field and to reduce its visibility. A large proportion of the access track is along the existing footpath which only requires an upgrade and is not creating a new footpath or access.

The DNO are not happy to use the existing footpath and field even with temporary trackwork and therefore an access track is required to access the sub station.

4.2. Siting and Appearance

The access track has been tucked into the boundary of the field to ensure that it is not overly visible in the landscape. This also ensures that land that could be cultivated is not being eroded.

In summary the proposed design is considered to be respectful of the surrounding elements and does not cause detrimental harm to the visual amenity of the immediate environment. The siting and appearance of this proposal is therefore within the boundaries of acceptability as it will cause minimal interruption to the current landscape. In addition the principal of an access track in this area has been established by the previous approval.

Planning Policy Considerations

Development Plan Policy Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended requires planning applications and appeals to be determined having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan and other material considerations, and section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.3. Local Planning Policy

The following local planning policies are relative and have been considered in the submission of this application.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (Adopted March 2018)

Policy DP22 Rights of Way and other recreational routes.

The proposal will upgrade an existing footpath which the public rights of way team do not have an issue with.

Policy DP26: Character and Design

With reference to the principles of this policy, the proposed access track is not considered to be out of context and incongruous with the area and over time will blend further with the environment as it will weather.

Policy DP37 trees woodland and hedgerows.

The proposal does not remove any living trees or hedgerow.

Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

It is not considered that the access track will detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB. The track follows the boundary line of the fields and is shorter in length than the access that was approved in the original application.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is in accordance with local plan policy.

5. Technical Justification

This new access is required as the DNO had concerns with regard to the previously approved route. This proposed route is more direct and ensures that access to the site is easier for plant and machinery.

The installation of a new haul road is required to facilitate the safe and efficient access of a 28-tonne (28T) wagon for servicing the proposed transformer. The following points outline the key reasons for this requirement:

1.Access for Heavy Equipment

The proposed transformer installation necessitates the use of a 28T wagon for delivery and positioning. The existing site access routes are not designed to accommodate vehicles of this size and weight, which poses significant logistical and safety challenges.

2.Ground Bearing Capacity Limitations

California Bearing Ratio (CBR) testing conducted on-site has confirmed that the current ground conditions are inadequate to withstand the loads imposed by a 28T wagon. The measured CBR values fall below the threshold required for heavy haulage, indicating a high risk of surface failure, rutting, and potential structural damage to the existing access arrangement.

3.Operational and Safety Considerations

Attempting to use the existing access route without reinforcement would increase the likelihood of vehicle immobilisation, ground collapse, and potential damage to critical infrastructure. This could lead to project delays, increased costs, and safety hazards for personnel and equipment.

4.Compliance with Engineering Standards

Industry best practices and engineering standards dictate that haul roads supporting heavy vehicles must be designed to meet specific load-bearing and stability criteria. Installing a purpose-built haul road ensures compliance with these standards and mitigates risks associated with inadequate ground conditions.

5.Long-Term Asset Protection

A properly constructed haul road will not only support the immediate transformer installation but also provide a durable access route for future maintenance activities, reducing lifecycle costs and improving operational reliability.

6. Conclusion

In summary, the application is in respect of an access track in relation to an electronic communications base station necessary to improve connectivity along the Brighton Main Line.

This statement and the other accompanying material has demonstrated that the proposal is in accordance with local Development Plan policy and therefore permission should not be withheld.