



Mitie Telecoms
TSOC, Pacific House
Atlas Business Park
Simonsway
Wythenshawe
Manchester
M22 5PR

E info@mitie.com
W www.mitie.com

The Department of Planning
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

BGH-101

16th October 2025

Dear Planning,

BT Street Hub Project Full Planning and Advertising Application BGH-101 Pavement o/s 63 Church Walk, Burgess Hill, RH15 9BQ (E 531329, N 119071)

We write on behalf of our client, BT, following our pre-application consultation relating to various sites across your authority for the installation of BT Street Hubs and the associated removal of BT payphones. BT are moving forward with this particular case and are applying to Mid Sussex District Council for full planning permission and advertisement consent for the installation of 1 no. BT Street Hub and removal of 1 no. existing BT payphone.

InLink Project

The InLink UK service was first launched in 2017 and since then 494 InLink structures were rolled out in 23 cities. These units offer 1Gbps free public Wi-Fi, free UK calls, USB charging, an emergency services button and a range of other digital services for those in the vicinity. HD displays on the sides are used to carry advertising, which helped to fund the units, but the screens can also show local content free of charge. After the suppliers of the InLinks went into administration in 2019 and are no longer able to supply units to BT, this product is no longer available. Since then, BT have been working on a new and improved unit, the BT Street Hub which they are keen to rollout across major towns and cities in the UK, including those in the Mid Sussex administrative area.

BT Street Hub Project

BT is continuing to move forward with public connectivity and benefits in which Street Hubs will provide a sleek and modern answer to the demands of a digitally connected society. BT Street Hubs include the ability to house 5G small cells which is very much in line with current UK Government's guidance on communications infrastructure and the National Infrastructure Strategy. This is echoed in the Government's commitment towards telecommunications deployment which has been strengthened since the conception of InLinks and NPPF in particular, confirms that, *"Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being."*



Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G)."

Since the rollout of InLinks, there has been increased focus on green initiatives and environmental monitoring. Street Hubs take this into account and can house sensors that count pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle movements as well as monitor air, sound and light. This free information will help the planning system actively manage patterns of growth in support of national air quality objectives and the Government's ten-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. It will be a useful source of real-time data in the delivery of the Council's own green agenda, travel plans and can be used to present a business case for carbon offset credit.

Overall, Street Hubs will help future-proof the high street making them smarter, safer, and more sustainable. Investment in the high street is at an all-time low, but that has not slowed BT down as they look to ramp up their rollout of new Street Hubs across the UK. They are continuing their commitment to invest and improve in the high street, with one Street Hub at a time, and with that decluttering these environments with the associated removal of existing and redundant BT phone boxes.

This submission is comprised of the following documents:

- Site specific Planning and Design & Access statement;
- IApp forms and certificates generated by the Planning Portal;
- The prescribed fee of £1,176 (plus VAT) paid directly to the Council via the Planning Portal;
- Drawings including location plan map, proposed site plan, existing and proposed elevations;
- BT Street Hub Product Statement giving full details of the proposed structure;
- BT Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan;
- 'The Institute of Lighting Professionals' 'Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements' 2023 for your reference;
- International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) certificate.

The application site and proposal is within adopted highways-controlled land, maintained at public expense. As BT are a statutory undertaker on such land, a developer's notice has been served on the Highways Authority and any others who have been identified from Land Registry records as being an owner of the land.

We trust the application can be registered at your earliest opportunity, in which should you require any further information or have any queries, please do not hesitate to email me.

Yours faithfully,

Lewis Baldwin

Lewis Baldwin MRTPI

Senior Acquisition & Planning Surveyor at Mitie

Lewis.Baldwin@mitie.com

07385 406745



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Planning, Design and Access Statement

Our Ref.'s	BGH-101
Address	Pavement o/s 63 Church Walk, Burgess Hill, RH15 9BQ
Lat/ Long	50.956108, -0.131535
Site Type	Conversion

As part of our collaborative approach to connecting and improving local streets, Full Planning Permission and Express Advertisement Consent is sought for the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 1no. BT payphone.

Photomontage of Proposed Installation



Proposed Kiosk Removal

Tel: 01444870052

Address: Pavement o/s 63 Church Walk, Burgess Hill, RH15 9BQ

UK Digital Strategy

Digital connectivity in 2025 is now considered to be a utility, and modern life is increasingly impossible without it. Connectivity drives productivity and innovation and is the physical underpinning of a digital nation. Being connected is fundamental to the success in our modern world and Street Hub provides a cost-free way for communities to get online and take advantage of available opportunities. The Government has committed that every individual and every business should have the skills and confidence to seize the opportunities of digital technology and have easy access to high-quality internet wherever they live, work, travel or learn.

National Infrastructure Strategy

Published in November 2020, the Government acknowledges in its National Infrastructure Strategy that investment in our infrastructure is critical as the UK seeks to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Strategy puts innovation and new technology at its heart, in which BT Street Hub is at the forefront of this technological revolution. The Government's ambition is to support fast and reliable digital connectivity that can deliver economic, social and well-being benefits because new technologies have enormous potential to improve the environment and the daily lives of people across the UK. BT Street Hub can contribute to this with its suite of features, including Wi-Fi and small 5G cells capabilities, air monitoring and much more.

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

This application is for full planning permission under section 62 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 [the 1990 Act] and express advertisement consent under regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 [the Regulations]. Applications for full planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the 1990 Act). Under the advertisement Regulations, Express Consent is required for the advertisement element, notably the 2no digital screens on each side of the Street Hub. As per regulation 3 of the Regulations, applications for Express Advertisement Consent must be determined in the interests of amenity and public safety, considering (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and (b) any other relevant factors.

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 state the following specifically in relation to advertisement control:

PART I - General

Powers to be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety

3. (1) A local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account;
 - (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and
 - (b) any other relevant factors.
- (2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1)(b);
 - (a) factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;
 - (b) factors relevant to public safety include;
 - (i) the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - (ii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air;

(iii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

(3) In taking account of factors relevant to amenity, the local planning authority may, if it thinks fit, disregard any advertisement that is being displayed.

(4) Unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed.

National Planning Guidance

Planning policy is provided at the national level by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is a material consideration in planning decisions.

It is not necessary to quote extensively from this document but the following points are highlighted.

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The Government's latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on the 12th December 2024 and the Government's approach is to continue to strongly support communications infrastructure. The NPPF remains very supportive of high-quality communications. Indeed, a whole chapter is dedicated to high-quality communications, emphasising the importance that the Government attaches to digital connectivity. Paragraph 119 states that *"advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being."* This wording echoes the guidance set out in paragraph 42 of the 2012 version of NPPF. However, it also includes the importance of *reliable* communications infrastructure for both economic growth and social well-being.

The NPPF continues to support the expansion of electronic communications networks at paragraph 119. It notes that policies should set out how high-quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time. The economic and social benefits of providing high-quality and reliable communications infrastructure are well documented and can be found later in this Supporting Information Statement.

The NPPF supports the provision and promotion of sustainable transport at section 9. These relevant policies are set out below:

Paragraph 116 – *"Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios."*

Paragraph 117 - Within this context, applications for development should: [...] *"c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive, which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards."*

The NPPF states the following specifically in relation to advertisement control in section 12:

Paragraph 141 - *The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. "A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts."*

The NPPF makes reference to 5G and electronic communications systems:

"Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next-generation mobile technology (such as 5G)."

With the above in mind, the Government is already forward-thinking the evolution of data networks and seeks planning decisions to take account of this. 5G technology provides increased speed of data and more capacity in the network, to ensure that handheld devices can continue to be used for the purposes in which they were purchased. This will bring even greater economic and social benefits to the area.

Paragraph 120 of the NPPF retains the requirement to minimise the number of installations consistent with the efficient operation of the network but also includes being consistent with the needs of consumers and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion.

Paragraph 123 of the NPPF retains the guidance set out in paragraph 46 of the 2012 NPPF version which relates to determining applications on planning grounds only. *“They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.”*

At the heart of the NPPF is the retained presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11). For decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay or where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless the application of policies within the revised Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the revised Framework taken as a whole.

The NPPF continues to provide guidance on decision-making. At paragraph 39 it states that:

“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”

The NPPF builds on the aspiration to build a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 85 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken, should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation⁴²...”

Footnote 44 of the NPPF states:

“The Government’s Industrial Strategy sets out a vision to drive productivity improvements across the UK, identifies a number of Grand Challenges facing all nations, and sets out a delivery programme to make the UK a leader in four of these: artificial intelligence and big data; clean growth; future mobility and catering for an ageing society. HM Government (2017) Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future.”

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (March 2022)

The Code of Practice provides guidance to Code Operators (referred to as ‘operators’ throughout the Code of Practice), including the Mobile Network Operators and wireless infrastructure providers, their agents and contractors, local planning authorities, and all other relevant stakeholders in England on how to carry out their roles and responsibilities when installing wireless network infrastructure. It

is also a useful tool for other interested stakeholders such as community groups, amenity bodies and individuals with an interest in mobile connectivity.

The aim of the Code of Practice is to support the government's objective of delivering high-quality wireless infrastructure whilst balancing these needs with environmental considerations. It also has an important role in making sure that appropriate engagement takes place with local communities and other interested parties.

The Code of Practice covers all forms of wireless infrastructure development, including mobile towers and cabinets. It is recommended that other wireless communications operators follow the principles of this Code of Practice, where appropriate.

Unlike previous iterations this Code of Practice has been led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and developed in collaboration with representatives of the mobile network industry, other government departments and public bodies, local planning authorities, and protected landscapes. This document replaces the previous Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development, which was published in 2016 and is now published by DCMS.

The Code of Practice sets out the legal and policy framework for the delivery of wireless infrastructure development.

Paragraphs 8 – 12 of the Code of Practice set out the importance of connectivity:

8. "Digital connectivity is vital to enable people to stay connected and businesses to grow. Fast, reliable digital connectivity can deliver economic, social and well-being benefits for the whole of the UK."

9. "As the demand for mobile data in the United Kingdom is increasing rapidly, it is important that everyone has access to dependable and consistent mobile coverage where they live, work and travel."

10. "The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR) and the National Infrastructure Strategy set out the government's long-term strategy for meeting its digital connectivity targets and delivering high-quality, the reliable digital infrastructure that works across the UK."

11. "The government has committed to extending mobile coverage across the UK. The government has committed to extending mobile coverage across the UK. The government's Levelling Up White Paper has set a mission that the UK will have nationwide 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population by 2030. In support of this, the government and the UK's mobile network operators agreed to a £1 billion Shared Rural Network deal to extend 4G mobile geographical coverage to 95% of the UK by the end of the programme."

12. "Next Generation Mobile Technologies: A 5G Strategy for the UK, and the update to this, set out the government's ambition for the UK to be a global leader in 5G to take early advantage of its potential and help to create a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone. The government also wants businesses and communities to benefit from investments in 5G as soon as possible. Through the government's 5G Testbeds and Trials programme we have seen its value to manufacturing, farming, transport networks and healthcare."

The Government recognises the key role that the Planning System plays in delivering the digital infrastructure that we need, in a sustainable and well-designed way, especially as households and businesses become increasingly reliant on mobile connectivity.

The Code of Practice sets out 'How wireless networks function'.

Para. 16 states "Cellular wireless networks use base stations to provide an area of radio coverage. Wireless technology uses the radio spectrum to broadcast radio waves between base stations and devices. Different radio frequencies have different characteristics which, along with the density of cell site locations, affect the

extent of coverage and how much data can be carried over the network. Depending on the radio frequencies used, base stations can deliver coverage over a wide area or provide extra network capacity in areas where there is a high demand for network bandwidth.”

Para. 17 sets out that *“Wireless technology continues to evolve rapidly, and mobile devices are now capable of much more. Second-generation (2G) technology gave us voice calls and text messages, 3G led to the launch of smartphones, and 4G, which enabled faster browsing, allowed us to do things like watching videos on the move. 5G, the latest generation of wireless technology, is much faster than previous generations of wireless technology and can offer greater capacity and lower latency, allowing thousands of devices in a small area to be connected at the same time. 5G networks, and future mobile generations, will be vital for a range of Internet of Things uses (IoT) and Smart City applications.”*

The Code of Practice establishes ‘Principles and commitments’ by which operators should develop their networks and that Local Planning Authorities should demonstrate their support.

Paragraph 18 of the Code of Practice sets out the principles and commitments that operators should follow when developing their networks inter alia:

- Site sharing and use of existing structures: make use of existing structures, sites and towers wherever possible to reduce the need for new development.
- Consultation with local planning authorities, local communities and other stakeholders.
- Standardised and high-quality approach to planning applications, and the notification procedure: provide standardised supporting documentation for planning applications (where appropriate) within the context of national and local requirements.
- Compliance with guidance laid out in the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) public exposure levels guidance.

The Code of Practice also sets out the requirements of the LPA in relation to the deployment of digital infrastructure:

- Incentivising connectivity: support the expansion of telecommunications networks and take a ‘joined-up’ approach to the wireless infrastructure planning process, including ensuring that Local Plans effectively support the deployment of digital infrastructure.
- Facilitating sites: engage with operators when new sites have been proposed and discuss site requirements.
- Engagement with operators: respond positively to requests for engagement and make decisions in line with national policy and Local Plans. For planning applications, find solutions to issues and ensure timely decisions are made.

The added emphasis on support from Local Planning Authorities in the deployment of digital infrastructure is even more evident in the revised Code of Practice. The Code of Practice recognises the importance of collaboration and partnership to help drive network coverage across the country. It goes on to state that *“In all instances, it is important for all parties involved in the process to take a positive approach to consultation and engagement.”*

Local Planning Policy

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031

The Local Plan covers the planning process for the area of Mid Sussex and West Devon, to the year of 2031. The District Council have commenced a review of the District Plan (2021 – 2039). It is considered the following policies are applicable and in accordance with this case:

- Policy DP23: Communications Infrastructure
- Policy DP26: Character and Design
- Policy DP28: Accessibility
- Policy DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution

“DP23: Communication Infrastructure

Strategic Objectives: 6) To ensure that development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure in the right place at the right time that supports development and sustainable communities. This includes the provision of efficient and sustainable transport networks; 7) To promote a place which is attractive to a full range of businesses, and where local enterprise thrives; and 8) To provide opportunities for people to live and work within their communities, reducing the need for commuting.

Evidence Base: Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan, Greater Brighton City Deal, Gatwick Diamond Strategy; Mid Sussex Economic Development Strategy, A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape.

The Council will encourage the incorporation of digital infrastructure including fibre to premises, in major new housing, employment and retail development.

The expansion of the electronic communication network to the towns and rural areas of the District will be supported.

When considering proposals for new telecommunication equipment the following criteria will be taken into account:

- The location and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures should seek to minimise impact on the visual amenity, character or appearance of the surrounding area. On buildings, apparatus and associated structures should be located and designed in order to seek to minimise impact to the external appearance of the host building;
- New telecommunication equipment should not have an unacceptable effect on sensitive areas, including areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the South Downs National Park, archaeological sites, conservation areas or buildings of architectural or historic interest and should be sensitively designed and sited to avoid damage to the local landscape character;
- *Preference will be for use to be made of existing sites rather than the provision of new sites. When considering applications for telecommunications development, regard will be given to the operational requirements of telecommunications networks and the technical limitations of the technology.”*

“DP26: Character and Design

Strategic Objectives: 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; 12) To support sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and inclusive; and 14) To create environments that are accessible to all members of the community.

Evidence Base: CABE Good Practice Guidance.

All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);*
- creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.”*

“DP28: Accessibility

Strategic Objectives: 12) To support sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and inclusive; 13) To provide the amount and type of housing that meets the needs of all sectors of the community; and 14) To create environments that are accessible to all members of the community.

Evidence Base: CABE Good Practice Guidance; Mid Sussex Whole Plan and CIL Viability Assessment (2016); DCLG Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard, March 2015; Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment.

All development will be required to meet and maintain high standards of accessibility so that all users can use them safely and easily.

This will apply to all development, including changes of use, refurbishments and extensions, open spaces, the public realm and transport infrastructure, and will be demonstrated by the applicant.

With regard to listed buildings, meeting standards of accessibility should ensure that the impact on the integrity of the building is minimised.”

“Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

Developments of 5 or more dwellings will be expected to make provision for 20% of dwellings to meet Category 2 – accessible and adaptable dwellings under Building Regulations – Approved

Document M Requirement M4(2), with the following exceptions:

- 1) Where new dwellings are created by a change of use;*
- 2) Where the scheme is for flatted residential buildings of fewer than 10 dwellings;*
- 3) Where specific factors such as site topography make such standards unachievable by practicable and/or viable means;*
- 4) Where a scheme is being proposed which is specifically intended for the needs of particular individuals or groups, where a greater proportion may be appropriate*

Wheelchair-user dwellings

Category 3 – Wheelchair-user dwellings under Building Regulations – Approved Document M Requirement M4(3) will be required for a reasonable proportion of affordable homes, generally 4%, dependent on the suitability of the site and the need at the time.

The Requirement will also apply to private extra care, assisted living or other such schemes designed for frailer older people or others with disabilities and those in need of care or support services.”

“DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution

Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; and 12) To support sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and inclusive.

Evidence Base: Data held by Environmental Health, Air Quality Action Plan – Stonepound Crossroads, Hassocks.



The environment, including nationally designated environmental sites, nationally protected landscapes, areas of nature conservation or geological interest, wildlife habitats, and the quality of people's life will be protected from unacceptable levels of noise, light and air pollution by only permitting development where:

Noise pollution:

- It is designed, located and controlled to minimise the impact of noise on health and quality of life, neighbouring properties and the surrounding area;*
- If it is likely to generate significant levels of noise it incorporates appropriate noise attenuation measures;*

Noise sensitive development, such as residential, will not be permitted in close proximity to existing or proposed development generating high levels of noise unless adequate sound insulation measures, as supported by a noise assessment are incorporated within the development.

In appropriate circumstances, the applicant will be required to provide:

- an assessment of the impact of noise generated by a proposed development; or*
- an assessment of the effect of noise by an existing noise source upon a proposed development;*

Light pollution:

- The impact on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation areas of artificial lighting proposals (including floodlighting) is minimised, in terms of intensity and number of fittings;*
- The applicant can demonstrate good design including fittings to restrict emissions from proposed lighting schemes;*

Air Pollution:

- It does not cause unacceptable levels of air pollution;*
- Development on land adjacent to an existing use which generates air pollution or odour would not cause any adverse effects on the proposed development or can be mitigated to reduce exposure to poor air quality to recognised and acceptable levels;*
- Development proposals (where appropriate) are consistent with Air Quality Management Plans.*

The degree of the impact of noise and light pollution from new development or change of use is likely to be greater in rural locations, especially where it is in or close to specially designated areas and sites."

The BT Street Hubs provide a network service to the immediate area without the requirement for harsh, utilitarian street additions (e.g. Telecommunication Masts) while simultaneously acting as an advertisement, interactive tourist information hub, air quality monitoring hub with emergency services. This proposal sensitively integrates telecommunications equipment through a valuable addition to the street scene.

The BT Street Hubs have been designed to be as minimal on the surrounding character and setting of the areas in which they are sited. The border of the main display consists of darker shades to soften the visual impact of each unit and to keep the impacts of amenity and setting to an acceptable level. Lighting is reduced at night to reduce the impact on light pollution and to keep from being an



overbearing visual addition to the street scene. There is a frequent maintenance schedule for each unit wherein they are cleaned regularly and kept in working condition. The new BT Street Hubs will act as a modern, clean and usable street furniture replacement. This proposal will be of a high-quality design and usability, directly improving the street scene of the area.

In addition to the above, the proposed site location is not within a conservation area or within proximity to a listed building.

Pre-application advice

A formal pre-application consultation request was recently sent to Mid Sussex District Council, introducing the BT Street Hub project and to obtain feedback with regards to the various locations identified within the area for the siting of this new apparatus.

Accordingly, a written response was received from the Council – reference: DM/25/1726. In their response, the Council advised on the local policies which the planned development would be assessed (the policies are included with this statement). Without prejudice, the Council also very helpfully provided the following comments in respect of this particular location and scheme:

"The proposed Street Hub would be set within a pedestrianised location and therefore it is not considered necessary to seek further advice through a Highways pre-application enquiry for this particular case.

The proposal to develop a new Street Hub would be required to come in under both a full planning permission type and an advertisement application. It is encouraged that these are submitted in tandem with one another to allow for a decision to be issued within a set and consistent timeframe.

The above represents my informal view only based on the information contained in your enquiry. It does not prejudice the council from making whatever decision it considers appropriate on any application subsequently submitted."

Planning History

- LPA Reference: 06/00432/FUL

Address: The rooftop of Martlet Heights 49 The Martlets Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 9NP

Proposal: installation of 2 no. 1.2m, 1 no. 0.6m and 3 no. 0.3m transmission dishes and ancillary development alongside existing telecoms equipment. Approved June 2006.

Direct conversion

In this instance the proposed Street Hub has been progressed as a direction conversion of an existing BT kiosk as it is considered that its siting and appearance continues to fit into its immediate street scene context. It is felt that the Street Hub will be a clear improvement from the existing on-site arrangement.

Siting Justification against Planning Policy

At the conception stage, we have sought locations with wide pavements, and where a sites relationship with existing street furniture avoids undue proliferation of clutter.

It is appreciated that streets are ever-evolving environments, amidst society's changing connectivity demands. BT has a universal service obligation with Ofcom to provide a street level phone service, whilst the need for Wi-Fi and mobile coverage has increased significantly. In this respect we have tried



to build a sequence of Street Hub sites wherever possible, so that this can improve the user connectivity experience as they travel through an area.

Likewise, as Street Hubs can provide the Council with valuable data with each unit housing environmental sensors that can monitor air, sound and light, we have tried to plan a sequence of Street Hub sites along key routes, so that the information gathered can be better analysed. This free environmental data has its own dashboard and will help the planning system actively manage patterns of growth in support of national air quality objectives and will be a useful source of real-time data in the delivery of the Council's own green agenda. In a similar vein, Street Hubs have the capability to monitor pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicle movements, hence in building a strategic network of Street Hub units, it will help the Council to monitor and develop travel plans for the area.

The introduction of any form of development within a particular environment will always be, to some degree, a noticeable addition or change to those residents, businesses and regular passers-by found closest. However, it should be appreciated that the visibility of something that is new does not automatically result in an overwhelming adverse harm occurring.

In progressing new Street Hub sites, so far as practicable, we have sought to minimise the contrast between the development itself and its immediate environment through appropriate siting and design. The siting of each Street Hub has been considered having regard to the available footpath widths and the visual character of that particular street scene where the new Street Hub is proposed. With regards to its associated advertisement screens, thought has been given to its immediate context and public safety in terms of pedestrian and vehicular movements. These criteria have been adjusted where necessary on a site-by-site basis to account for local context and policy requirements when reassessing the site's suitability to accommodate a new Street Hub unit.

Justification for the siting and appearance of the proposed Street Hub, has been assessed against up to date national and local planning policies and any other material considerations. Our assessment has concentrated on whether the removal of the existing BT call box when balanced against the replacement of new Street Hub at the application site, creates a significant visual harm as to outweigh the public benefits.

In this regard, matters of siting, appearance and advertisements are discussed as follows: -

Siting

The proposal involves the installation of 1 no proposed new Street Hub adjacent to Primark, Union Street.

The proposal involves the removal of 1 no. BT existing call box in association with 1 no. proposed new Street Hub. Also, as previously highlighted at a strategic level, there are generally 2 no BT call boxes removed with every Street Hub proposed. The removal of these existing call boxes will declutter street scenes throughout the authority and when compared with the footprint of the proposed Street Hub, it will declutter pavements and free up space.

Appearance

The proposed BT Street Hub unit is an advanced, modern development which has been designed following significant improvements in technology and digital content over recent years. It can promote the image of the authority as a vibrant place, and we believe it will improve the quality of the immediate streetscape for residents, businesses and visitors to the area.



The proposed design is slimmer and takes a more compact profile than a conventional phone box, which many of these units are replacing. The user interface is located at a low level and is a similar height to an existing BT payphone unit to ensure that it is accessible to all users.

The appearance of the BT Street Hub unit has a vertical emphasis and by reason of its reduced footprint, will give a slender more elegant form of development when compared to an existing payphone unit. The appearance of the structure is not considered to be harmful to the wider street scene, especially when taking into account the nature of the existing payphone to be removed. We believe the appearance of the area and street scene will not be compromised by the proposed new BT Street Hub.

The new structure will sit within a commercial setting that is dominated by pedestrian movements; hence it is well-lit throughout the day. While it is accepted that the BT Street Hub advertisements will be more visible during the hours of darkness or in dull conditions, its appearance will not be out of keeping with this stretch of road which is well lit by streetlights and window displays. In this context, the BT Street Hub design will not appear detrimental to the amenity of this particular stretch.

It is concluded that the design of the proposed Street Hub is justified, and its appearance is an improvement when compared to the BT call box to be removed as part of the proposed scheme. Overall, we considered the appearance of the proposed Street Hub is acceptable and in accordance with national and local planning policies.

Pavement Width

The total existing pavement width at this location is 22.5 metres. The total width of the Street Hub is 1.236 metres. The Street Hub will be positioned some 7.1 metres back from the adjacent building and shop frontages maintaining the clear and safe passage of pedestrians. It is of note that the structure is only 350mm wide, so any minor narrowing of the footway occurs for just a few centimetres.

Advertisements

When seen in the overarching context of the street scene, it is considered that the location, size and height of the digital advertisement panels will on balance be acceptable. As previously discussed, it is believed that the siting and appearance of the BT Street Hub will not create significant harm to the amenity of the area that will outweigh the public benefits and other material factors of consideration.

In terms of public safety, the site of the BT Street Hub and the display of digital advertisements on its sides will allow for the continued safe movements of motorists and pedestrians. In this regard, its presence within the street scene will not endanger public safety of those people who are taking reasonable care for their own and others' safety.

It is recognised that all advertisements are intended to attract people's attention, however in this case their siting and size will not create an untoward feature within the street scene. The position where the BT Street Hub is to be located and the orientation of the advertisements in relation to the road will not cause unacceptable interference with nearby road signs and or navigational lights. Viewed within the street scene setting, the digital advertisements shall be seen by passing motorists but not create confusion nor influence the behaviour of drivers to such a degree that they cause a hazard by reason of their presence. The proposed Street Hub will be sited away from road junctions so as not to unduly interrupt any visibility splays or sightlines. When viewed within the street scene context of the wider environment, it is not considered that the Street Hub will appear as an untoward feature to passing motorists.

Regarding pedestrian safety, the Street Hub is positioned away from the road edge on a particularly wide section of pavement without impeding pedestrian movements as ample footway width will be



retained. Allowing for the orientation of the BT Street Hub's user interface in relation to passing motorists, the public safety of those using it will not be put at risk as they shall be set away from the kerb edge.

The area surrounding this specific site is visually busy with many retail premises and shop fronts, including the extensive retail premises of Peacocks. The proposal shall be an addition to the ground elevation and in context with the surrounding street furniture.

The proposed usage for the screens has been set in accordance with Schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 1984:

1. Any advertisements displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to the reasonable satisfaction of the local planning authority.
2. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a safe condition.
3. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the removal shall be carried out to the reasonable satisfaction of the local planning authority.
4. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.
5. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any road traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air, or so as otherwise to render hazardous the use of any highway, railway, waterway or aerodrome (civil or military).

The Transport for London's (TfL) policy document 'Guidance for Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice – 2013' [the TfL Guidance] has also been a key document in the design and site selection process.

In addition to the above conditions, each Street Hub location has been assessed against and comply with the following additional criteria from the TfL Guidance.

- There would be no conflict with any traffic signs, signals, crossing points, schools, hospitals or low bridges.
- No sightlines or clearances would be affected.
- The TfL guidance states that 'Static digital advertising is likely to be acceptable in locations where static advertising exists or would be accepted.' There is existing traditional advertisement on similar sections of the respective roads in many cases.
- The geometry of the roads is not complicated, and the driving conditions are not considered to be demanding or complicated.
- The advertisements would not be experienced by a driver in conjunction with any other similar digital advertisements.
- As per the TfL guidance, the advertisements would be located as close to the driver's natural eye line as possible and facing as head-on to the traffic as is practical.

The lighting levels noted above are within the levels set for this type and size of screen (those under 10m²) as set by the Institute of Lighting Professionals, Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (2023). A copy of this document is appended for clarity.

Noise Management

As one of many features, Street Hubs provide free phone calls via a speaker and microphone system. The following document identifies the steps we are able to take to ensure that these calls, like all the features of the Street Hub, help improve the amenity of a local area whilst also respecting the expectations of local community over time. Please note: this noise management plan refers specifically



to the noise from the Street Hub. Noise from pedestrians, users of the Street Hub, or from other nearby sources are not included and would typically be considered matters for the Police and other authorities who have the appropriate and relevant powers to act on such issues if necessary.

We have designed our Street Hub so that they create a 'sound cloud' for the person making a call with noise levels sufficient to make calls with background noise for the surroundings. Whilst this generates a reasonable conversational volume in proximity to the Street Hub, it is intended to result in minimal to no noise being noticeable further away. The average volume settings are 65dB average at 3m distance from each Street Hub. Users may also choose to use headphones when making calls or using the tablet, which deactivates the speaker for the duration of their use.

It is worth noting that the Street Hubs are situated on public streets, in the most part close to roads where high volumes of traffic will be seen, examples of background noise experienced on streets are details below:

Noise Level, dB	Example
60-70	Conversational Speech
70-80	Average traffic on Street Corner
80-90	Heavy lorries at 6m

Daytime (07:00 – 21:00)

Street Hub have controllable volume levels. This will default to 50% at the start of any user activity during the day and can be increased and decreased based on the preferences of the user.

Nighttime (21:00 – 07:00)

Between the hours of 21:00 to 07:00 all Street Hub will be governed so that the volume cannot be increased to greater than 60% of the maximum volume.

Exceptional Circumstances

We manage noise by exception based on feedback from users and the local community. If we receive any feedback that the Street Hub may be causing detrimental environmental impact, we take the following actions:

1. Understand the reason for the issue and any extenuating circumstances. At this point we will separate out any Police or community safety matters and work directly with the relevant authorities, and support the local residents in raising these issues through official channels where appropriate.
2. We will then verify the evidence provided against the Street Hub's call history and other operational data as required. This will allow us to understand the number, time, and frequency of outbound calls being made and better understand the severity of the reported situation.
3. Once we have verified the situation, we will typically look to apply local bespoke volume governor controls appropriate to the situation. We have found that reducing the Street Hub's maximum volume to 40% during relevant periods tends to resolve issues where they have been identified.
4. We will continue to monitor the situation and listen to ongoing feedback from the community as we do take matters seriously. We continue to learn as part of our roll out how Street Hubs are fitting into the community.

Further information

We want each Street Hub to provide the best possible experience for users and the communities around them, and will continue to work with councils, police, and the wider community to make sure they do. For more information on Street Hubs and how they are managed, please contact streethub@bt.com

Conclusion

BT Street Hubs have the potential to significantly enhance the provision of local community communications facilities and services. It is precisely the type of high-speed digital infrastructure that the government is seeking to support as part of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It will deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits by providing a suite of essential urban tools/services, including free ultrafast Wi-Fi to residents, businesses and visitors in this area. Overall BT Street Hubs will help future proof the high street making them smarter, safer, and more sustainable through their adaptable design and function.

The proposed BT Street Hubs structures are of a high quality, accessible design that would be a significant improvement when compared to the existing payphones that are to be replaced. Modern signage which is interactive and multi-faceted in its use has become more acceptable on the street scape due to its functionality, clean and modern look. We consider the proposal in this case to be appropriately sited; to reduce street clutter, to improve available footway widths, not to negatively affect heritage assets nor adversely affect amenity or public safety.

We believe this statement has demonstrated that the BT Street Hub proposal is in accordance with national policy set out in the NPPF and local development plan policies, in which we hope this application can be supported by your Council.

Planning Conditions

To give assurance that each Street Hub will operate as intended and the associated payphone removals will occur, we would be pleased to accept the following conditions or a mutually agreed version of them to be included as part of any planning consent:

- a. Pavement surrounding the Street Hub shall be made good to the same condition as the adjacent land.
- b. The intensity of the illumination of the two digital display screens shall not exceed 600 candelas per square metre (cd/m²) between dusk and dawn in line with the maximum permitted recommended luminance as set out by 'The Institute of Lighting Professional's 'Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements'.
- c. The digital display screens shall not display any moving, or apparently moving, images (including animation, flashing, scrolling three dimensional, intermittent or video elements).
- d. The minimum display time for each piece of content on the digital display screens shall be 10 seconds.
- e. The interval between each piece of content on the digital display screens shall take place over a period no greater than one second; the complete screen shall change with no visual effects (including swiping or other animated transition methods) between displays and the display will include a mechanism to freeze the image in the event of a malfunction.
- f. No content on the digital display screens shall resemble traffic signs, as defined in section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Should your department wish to append any other conditions to either the full planning or advertisement application, we would be most grateful if you could discuss these with us at your earliest opportunity during the course of the determination process.