

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0435	Case Officer:	Peter Davies
Application Type:	Prior Notification - Telecommunication		
Proposal:	The removal of the existing headframe, 2no. antennas, ancillary equipment and 3no. cabinets; the installation of a new headframe supporting 6no. antennas, ancillary equipment and 2no. 0.3m dishes, the installation of 2no. cabinets and development works thereto.		
Site:	Vodafone And O2, Telecommunications Mast 53314 At 535316 124969, East Mascalls Lane, Lindfield, West Sussex, , ,		
Validation Date	19 Feb 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	20 Mar 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Prior Approval is Granted	Recommendation Date:	14 Apr 2026
Target Date:	16 Apr 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Peter Davies

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	15 Apr 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0435

Vodafone And O2, Telecommunications Mast 53314 At 535316 124969, East Mascalls Lane, Lindfield, West Sussex, ,
The removal of the existing headframe, 2no. antennas, ancillary equipment and 3no. cabinets; the installation of a new headframe supporting 6no. antennas, ancillary equipment and 2no. 0.3m dishes, the installation of 2no. cabinets and development works thereto.
Cornerstone Telecommunications

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

LRPC have no comment.

INTRODUCTION

This prior notification application is submitted on behalf of Cornerstone Telecommunications, which is a mobile infrastructure services company. The application seeks a determination under Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) as to whether the prior approval of the local planning authority is required for the siting and appearance the removal of the existing headframe, 2no. antennas, ancillary equipment and 3no. cabinets and the installation of a new headframe supporting 6no. antennas, ancillary equipment and 2no. 0.3m dishes, the installation of 2no. cabinets at land to the north of East Mascalls Lane, Lindfield.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

05/00908/FUL - The installation of a 20m slimline monopole with 6no. antennas, 1no. 600mm dish, 1no. 300mm dish, 2no. ground based cabinets and ancillary development thereto. Permission

SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The site is located within the countryside. There is an existing mast in place with additional masts approximately 30 metres south east and 60 metres to the north west of the site. The mast is located next to a track on private land with fields and trees surrounding. To the north west of the site lies Noahs Ark Lane approximately 160 metres away and to the south east a dwelling approximaly 150 metres away.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposal is for the removal of the existing headframe, 2 no antennas, ancillary equipment and 3 no. cabinets. These are to be replaced with a new headframe supporting 6 no. antennas with ancillary equipment, 2 no. 0.3m dishes and 2 no. cabinets.

The proposal will use the existing 20 metre monopole in place and the total height will increase from approximately 22.7 metres to 23.4 metres. The proposed cabinets will have a height of approximately 2.10 metres and a width and depth of 0.7 metres. The headframe will be constructed from galvanised metal with the cabinets to be green metal.

The application seeks a determination under Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) as to whether the prior approval of the local planning authority is required for the siting and appearance of the proposed monopole and associated works.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, the Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD and the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

The PPG explains that 'Prior approval means that a developer has to seek approval from the local planning authority that specified elements of the development are acceptable before work can proceed. The matters for prior approval vary depending on the type of development and these are set out in full in the relevant Parts in Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order. A local planning authority cannot consider any other matters when determining a prior approval application.'

In the case of telecommunications development, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 states that before beginning development that is classified as permitted development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
DP23 - Communication Infrastructure
DP26 - Character and Design

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan (made March 2016)

Relevant policies:

Policy 5 - Broadband

Other Material Considerations

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and hearings were

concluded on the 19th March 2026. The District Plan remains at Examination until the Inspector has published his report, until that time only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

A list of relevant policies can be found here:

DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPI4 - Communications Infrastructure

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

ASSESSMENT

This prior approval application needs to be considered against Part 16 (Communications), Schedule 2, of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

The development complies with the technical requirements, subject to the prior approval process where the LPA must consider as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required for the siting and appearance of the development. To assist in that regard, the development should be considered against the development plan policies.

Policy DP23 of the District Plan relates to communication infrastructure and in part states that:

'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;'

Policy 5 of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan states:

'Proposals to provide access to a super-fast broadband network to serve the villages of Lindfield and Scaynes Hill, and outlying properties in the countryside, and to improve the speed of existing services, will be supported, provided that wherever possible, the location and design of any above-ground network installations reflect the character of the local area.'

Paragraphs 122 and 123 of the NPPF state:

'122. Applications for electronic communications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include:

a) the outcome of consultations with organisations with an interest in the proposed development, in particular with the relevant body where a mast is to be installed near a school or college, or within a statutory safeguarding zone surrounding an aerodrome, technical site or military explosives storage area; and

b) for an addition to an existing mast or base station, a statement that self-certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection; or

c) for a new mast or base station, evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure and a statement that self-certifies that, when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met.

123. Local planning authorities must determine 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.'

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states in part that:

'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

o it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or

o it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design and requires all proposals to be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside as well as addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape. In part the policy requires proposals to be of a high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace; and creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.

The proposed monopole and ancillary equipment would be located a relatively significant distance from the built up area of Haywards Heath, which is some 160 metres to the north west and the nearest dwelling being some 150 metres to the south east of the site. There are trees located around the monopole running from south east to north west and obscure views from Noahs Ark Lane and Scamps Hill Road. The proposal is reusing an existing monopole and there are 2 no. other masts located within close proximity.

Taking into account the above the proposal is considered to minimise the impact on the visual amenity, character and appearance of the surrounding area, and its siting and appearance is considered acceptable. It is also considered to maintain the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District and be supported by policy DP23 of the Mid Sussex District Plan. As such the proposal is considered to comply with the above parts of policies DP12 and DP23 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy 5 of The Lindfield and Lindfield Rural neighbourhood Plan.

With regards to health matters, the application is accompanied by a ICNIRP Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines. The Local Planning Authority has no evidence that the proposal would result in harm to public health and therefore in light of this and the advice in the NPPF, it is considered that there are no grounds to resist this application based on health matters.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that there are clear benefits from the proposal in relation to improved telecommunications infrastructure within the District. These are matters that weigh in favour of the application when considered the siting and design of the proposal. Due to the siting and reuse of an existing monopole, the proposal will not have a harmful impact on the character of the area and due to the location, would maintain the quality of the rural landscape of the district and be supported by policy DP23 of the Mid Sussex District Plan. It is further considered that the site equipment specification have been sufficiently justified through the application documentation. Taking into account the above

assessment, the proposal is considered to comply with the above parts of policies DP12, DP23 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy 5 of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant provisions of the NPPF. Prior approval of the appearance and siting of the development can therefore be granted in accordance with Part 16 (Communications), Schedule 2, of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Decision: Prior Approval is Granted

Case Officer: Peter Davies