

WIVETON - PF/19/0856 - Retention of an electronic communications base station without removing the existing 12.5m high monopole mast and attached transmission dish (as required by condition 5 of prior approval ref. no. PA/17/0681); Telephone Exchange, Hall Lane, Wiveton for Arqiva Limited

Minor Development

- Target Date: 26 July 2019

Case Officer: Miss J Smith

Full Planning Permission

CONSTRAINTS

Landscape Character Area

Enforcement Enquiry

Countryside

Conservation Area

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Unclassified Road

Undeveloped Coast

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PLA/20032025 PF

Cley ATE, Hall Lane, Wiveton

ERECTION OF TWELVE METRE TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLE WITH MICROWAVE DISH

Approved 07/05/2004

PA/17/0681 PA

Cley ATE, Hall Lane, Wiveton, Norfolk, NR25 7TG

Prior notification of intention to remove a 12.7m telecommunications monopole and install a 15m telecommunications monopole with 3 antenna and ground-based equipment cabinets

Approval - Prior Approval Given 28/06/2017

THE APPLICATION

Permission is sought for the retention of a 15m high telecommunications monopole without removing the existing 12.5m high BT monopole and transmission dish which was required by a condition attached to the prior approval given under application reference PA/17/0681.

The application has been submitted due to investigations revealing that the Line of Sight (LOS) links necessary to transfer BT's transmission dish cannot be achieved from the new base station. Consequently, BT's apparatus cannot be relocated to the 15 metre monopole as it would render part of its communications network inoperable.

The site is located within the in the compound at the rear the of Cley ATE, the telephone exchange building along Hall Lane, Wiveton.

The application is supported by a Planning Statement, Technical Supporting Information, Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Heritage Statement and information on alternative Sites and Discounted Options.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

At the request of the Local Ward member due to the principle of development and impact on landscape and heritage designations.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL

Wiveton Parish Council: No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

4 representations received objecting to the application summarised as follows:

- Manipulation of the planning system through application PA/17/0681 in order to gain approval for a taller mast on false claims.
- Application has failed to undertake proper research that the proposal was technically feasible.
- The LVIA and further revised LVIA incorrectly identifies that the site is within the North Norfolk Coast National Character Area Profile 77.
- Treasured landscapes and areas of England are being blighted by unnecessary/duplicated masts and equipment.
- Impact on residential amenity.
- Impact on character of the area due to its large and urbanising effect.
- The 12.5 metre pole was not removed as required as a condition of PA/17/068.
- The presence of two masts result in an overall sense of scale, massing and visual clutter that is greater than either would do individually and compound the overall harm.
- Two further options have not been considered (a) relocate the new mast to the site of the old mast and, (b) to remove the new mast altogether and find a suitable location for the equipment elsewhere.
- No mast should increase the height of the existing base station monopole (O2 and Vodafone) from its current height of 15 metres.
- The pole should not be sited further to the west or south than its present position. It would likely be closer to properties and more visible than it is currently.
- No trees should be lopped or removed to enable the mast to 'talk' to the one at Newgate.
- If the BT mast is retained it should provide the 4G coverage across 'all networks' required by all local communities.
- Any approval should ensure that overall situation is no worse than at present.
- No evidence for either mast which could not be met by utilising facilities available within St Nicholas Church, Blakeney.
- St Nicholas Church already hosts mobile telecoms equipment for (O2 and Vodafone) where it is understood that there is capacity to host further equipment for other operators. This existing facility would provide all of the public benefits and avoid all of the adverse visual impacts or any harm to the very important designated assets which surround the site.
- Failure to properly appraise sites or consider alternative solutions/utilising existing structures, i.e. Blakeney church tower.
- LPA must insist that the relevant condition imposed in PA/17/0681 is enforced and that the applicant relocates the equipment hosted on the original mast.

CONSULTATIONS

Conservation and Design Officer: The site is located on the northern edge of the village of Wiveton and falls within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Glaven

Valley Conservation Area. The southern boundary of the site defines the northern edge of the Wiveton Conservation Area. The nearest listed building is the Grade I Listed Church of St Nicholas which sits 650m west of the site.

The presence of both masts is somewhat screened from surrounding development and key public vantage points by the established mature trees and tall hedgerows. The recently adopted Wiveton Conservation Area Appraisal indicates a key viewpoint to the south-west of the site but not from further north along Hall Lane. Given the fairly enclosed nature of the site and the precedent for such communications equipment in this location, the impact on the heritage assets is low and most certainly less than substantial.

The existing 15m monopole mast with attached antennas has been treated in a 'matt Van Dyke Brown' colour and the equipment cabinet in Olive Green. This has helped in mitigating the visual impact of the structures and helps to knit the mast into the sensitive landscape context. It would be beneficial if the other mast could also be treated in the same colour.

Whilst the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the heritage assets in question (the Glaven Valley Conservation Area and setting of the Wiveton Conservation Area), the public benefits associated with providing and retaining adequate communications coverage is likely to outweigh the limited harm caused. Conservation and Design therefore have no objection to the application.

Landscape Officer: The submitted LVIA assesses the cumulative effect on landscape and visual amenity of retaining the existing BT 12.5m monopole alongside the recently erected 15 metre monopole. It is understood that, having sought alternative solutions as set out below, this is required to achieve the required Line of Sight (LOS) transmission east to a transmission mast in Cley linking to the telephone exchange that is currently interrupted by two groups of mature trees.

One alternative option was explored which involved reducing the height of these mature trees. However, as set out within the Planning Statement, the reduction in height of two groups of mature trees within private land to the east of Hall Lane and within Wiveton Conservation Area was not considered to be good arboricultural practice and the private landowner would not grant consent for such works. This solution was therefore not viable. A further option would have been to increase the height of the 15m mast, but pre-app advice concluded that this would not be favourably received given the incremental increase in landscape and visual impact that would have resulted.

The LVIA concludes that retention of the 12.5m monopole co-located with the 15 metre monopole would result in a minor effect on the local landscape character, visual amenity and two of the defined special qualities of the Norfolk Coast AONB (*settlement character and sense of remoteness, tranquillity and wildness*). The LVIA concludes that retention of the 12.5m pole would incur less landscape and visual impact than the alternative options considered. The Landscape Officer concurs with these conclusions, but notes that there is no landscape planting proposed to reduce the identified landscape and visual impacts. This should be included to provide a degree of mitigation for the adverse impacts identified.

Whilst there are public benefits to be gained by the efficient operation of this development in terms of improved signals for two mobile operators (Vodafone and Telefonica) since this is a shared monopole, the identified harm, albeit limited, to the landscape and visual amenity of the designated landscape will need to be attributed considerable weight in formulating the planning balance, in accordance with para. 172 of the NPPF requiring the 'great weight' be afforded to the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty within AONBs.

If the application is approved, the Landscape section recommend a condition securing an appropriate planting scheme that is carefully tailored to reduce the identified visual impact, particularly from near range views along Hall Lane and other locations illustrated by VP1, VP2, VP4, Vp9, Vp10, VP11 in the LVIA) without adversely affecting radio signals from the antennae. Some additional mitigation could be achieved by painting the 12.5m pole Vandyke Brown to match the recently installed pole.

Norfolk Coast Partnership: Would prefer to see the removal of the mast as this was stipulated in the previous application through condition. If this is approved they are concerned this will set a precedent for further applications of this kind in sensitive locations in the AONB. They ask if the apparatus within the Blakeney church tower could be shared

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the proposed development may raise issues relevant to Article 8: The Right to respect for private and family life.
Article 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Having considered the likely impact on an individual's Human Rights, and the general interest of the public, approval of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17

The application raises no significant crime and disorder issues.

POLICIES

North Norfolk Core Strategy (Adopted September 2008)

Policy SS 1: Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk
Policy SS 2: Development in the Countryside
Policy SS 4: Environment
Policy SS 6: Access and Infrastructure
Policy EN 1: Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and The Broads
Policy EN 2: Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character
Policy EN 4: Design
Policy EN 8: Protecting and enhancing the historic environment
Policy EN 9: Biodiversity and geology
Policy EN 13: Pollution and hazard prevention and minimisation
Policy CT 4: Telecommunications

Supplementary Planning Documents

North Norfolk Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (December 2008)
Landscape Character Assessment Draft Supplementary Planning Document (November 2018).

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

In determining planning applications for telecommunications, paragraphs 115 of the NPPF states: *'Applications for electronic telecommunications development should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include:*

- *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*

or technical site or military explosives area; and

- *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 on non-ionising radiation protection guidelines; or*
- *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”.*

APPRAISAL

BACKGROUND

On 8 November 2016, pre-application advice was sought from the Local Planning Authority as to a 20m high telecommunications mast at Cley ATE. Officer advice was that this would not be favourable given the incremental increase in landscape and visual impact that would have resulted from such a proposal.

On 3 March 2017, an application (ref PA/17/0681) was received for the intention to remove a 12.5m telecommunications monopole and install a 15m monopole with 3 antenna and ground-based equipment cabinets. Prior approval was granted on the grounds that the application was deemed to be permitted development. A condition was imposed requiring the existing 12.5 metre monopole to be removed within one month of the 15m monopole and antenna being brought in to use.

The 12.5m telecommunications monopole was not removed due to technical constraints. Following on from this there was informal discussion with the Council's Planning, Enforcement and Conservation and Design teams. The application states that engagement with the Local Planning Authority established the Council's position in relation to the options available to overcome the technical constraints, these are as follows:

a) Lop or remove those trees that prevent the Line of Sight (LOS) link being achieved from the new base station. However, the trees subject to this were considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the landscape and the Wiveton Conservation Area. Additionally, the landowner would not grant consent for these works.

b) An extension of the 15m monopole above the tree canopy to achieve the LOS link would not be acceptable by the Local Planning Authority in terms the visual impact of a taller mast within both the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Glaven Valley Conservation Area, as well as the potential harm to the setting of the Glaven Valley and Wiveton Conservation Area.

Technical Constraints Preventing the Removal of BT's Apparatus

The function of BT's monopole is to host the small transmission dish that connects sites within BT's customer networks to the telephone exchange. In the case of the Cley ATE site, it connects to a dish on another mast to the east of Newgate and Cley-next-the-Sea. Transmission dishes operate on a straight Line of Sight (LOS), which is similar to the beam of light from a torch, and passes calls and data between base station sites and the operator's core networks. The links however between them can be broken by trees and tall buildings. Thus, they require clear and unobstructed LOS between dishes at both ends of the link. A call or data might need to pass through several of these dish links (known as 'hops') across considerable distances before reaching the intended recipient. In BT's case, the core network includes the apparatus inside the telephone exchange.

At present, the LOS path for BT's dish is not obstructed. However, investigation resulted in a technical issue which would prevent the BT apparatus being re-located as it would be inoperable once it is transferred to the new mast. Consequently, the agent has confirmed that re-positioning BT's mast and dish to a different location elsewhere between Blakeney and Cley-next-the-Sea would not be a viable or technical solution due to it being divorced from the physical link to telephone exchange, as well as severing the LOS dish link hops that rely upon it.

MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Principle of Development
2. Landscape and Visual Impacts
3. Impact on Designated Historic Assets
4. Impact on Residential Amenity
5. Impact on Public Health
6. Assessment of Alternative Sites
7. Other Considerations
8. Overall Summary and Conclusion

PRINCIPLE

The site is situated within an area designated as Countryside under policy SS 1 of the Core Strategy. Policy SS 2 limits development in areas of Countryside to that requiring a rural location and where it is for one of the types of development listed in the policy. These include telecommunications development. The principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to compliance with other relevant policies.

Paragraphs 112-116 of the NPPF relates to the installation of telecommunications equipment and advises that local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, but should aim to keep the numbers of telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. It explains that existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need for a new site has been justified and that where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate. Paragraph 112 further states that: *“Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and social well-being”*. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services, especially in rural areas. Recent correspondence from the Secretary of State for Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to the MP for North Norfolk regarding poor mobile coverage elsewhere in the district confirms the Government's commitment to extended mobile coverage, especially in more and rural areas where specific reference was made to the Government's recent consultation referred to below on amending the permitted development rights for telecommunication to enable this to occur.

In this regard, the application states that if the base station was removed, it would result in the loss of Vodafone's and Telefonica's 2G, 3G and 4G coverage to Wiveton, and parts of Blakeney, Morston, Glanford and Cley. It would also result in the loss of a shared base station that could be readily adapted for 5G, which is clear directional move of Government given their recent consultation on *‘further reforms to Permitted Development right to support the deployment of 5G and extend mobile coverage* which seeks to further increase permitted development rights, including in conservation areas and AONBs.

Whilst there is clearly a more localised visual impact of the monopoles upon the residents surrounding the site, the residents of Wiveton, and parts of Blakeney, Morston, Glanford and Cley will stand to gain from the improved coverage.

Policy CT 4 aims to facilitate the growth of telecommunications systems while keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. It states that proposals for telecommunications development (including radio masts), equipment and installations will be permitted provided that:

- there is a justifiable need for the development in terms of contributing to the operator's national network;
- no reasonable possibilities exist to share existing telecommunication facilities;
- existing buildings and structures are used where possible to site new antennas rather than erection of new masts;
- the development is sited and designed so as to minimise impact on the open character of the North Norfolk landscape and respect the character and appearance of the surrounding townscape;
- where applicable, impact on the building on which equipment is installed is minimised; and
- within the Norfolk Coast AONB, it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the landscape or visual impacts.

The principle of a new telecommunications mast is acceptable subject to the requirements of Policy CT 4 above, together with those requirements of Core Strategy Policies EN 1 and EN 2 being met, whilst having regard to the requirements of section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay “special attention” to the “desirability of preserving or enhancing” the character and appearance of conservation areas.

EFFECT ON SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AND AONB

Both monopoles are located directly to the west of the telephone exchange within the existing compound. As such, there is no additional requirement for the removal of trees, hedgerows or the provision of security fencing.

The site lies within the AONB where Policy EN1 states that, *‘proposals that have an adverse effect will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that they cannot be located on alternative sites that would cause less harm and the benefits of the development clearly outweigh any adverse impacts’*.

Furthermore, the site lies within the following landscape types as defined in North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (Draft Supplementary Planning Document) (November 2018):

- Rolling Heath and Arable landscape type - the Rolling Heath & Arable – Blakeney Area (RHA1)
- River Valleys landscape type – River Glaven and tributaries (RV5)
- National Character Area 78 – Central North Norfolk

According to the LCA, the Rolling Heath & Arable – Blakeney Area (RHA1) landscape type is characterised by *‘a predominantly elevated open, rolling landscape with a strong coastal influence’* due to its proximity to the sea and fairly hilly topography. Additionally, the River Glaven and Tributaries (RV5) landscape character type portrays *‘deep valley sides with high level of tree cover with variations in land cover and views’*.

The applicants have submitted reports and documents to support their proposal, including a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA), together with visualisations from a number of viewpoints.

The key test within Policy CT 4 is whether the proposal *'is sited and designed so as to minimise impact on the open character of the North Norfolk landscape and respect the character and appearance of the surrounding townscape'* whilst policy EN 2 requires that development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance, amongst other things, the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area.

The LVIA submitted with the application includes 13 viewpoints taken from within the AONB which illustrate the visual effects, and the likely effects on the landscape which is one of an undeveloped and unspoilt character. Overall, the views of both monopoles are generally restricted to localised viewpoints (the field to the west, Hall Lane to the east, isolated hedgerow gaps on the A149 Coast Road to the north, the access road to the Broadview and Beacon End properties to the south, and to a limited degree from Blakeney Road and Wiveton Downs to the south west). The LVIA concludes that both monopoles result in a limited effect on the key characteristics of the Central North Norfolk, the Rolling Heath and Arable Landscape Character Type and the Blakeney, Salthouse and Kelling Landscape Character Area containing the site. The magnitude of change resulting from the retention of the monopoles is considered to be low resulting in a **minor effect** on landscape character. The monopoles are not considered to effect the character of the Riven Glaven and Tributaries Landscape Character Area within the lower floodplain to the east given the visual screening provided by the woodland along Hall Lane.

The location and nature of the monopoles collectively result in a more utilitarian feature in the landscape which creates a degree of harm in this essentially rural setting. However, this harm is predominantly short range, at localised views. The lower sections of the monopoles and cabinets are predominantly screened by the telephone exchange building with a roofline height of approximately 5.7m. Within distant views, the monopoles are generally difficult to discern against the woodland backdrop along Hall Lane and do not break the skyline within outward views towards the coastline. They are not generally visible from the lower floodplain of the Glaven Valley to the east, the North Norfolk Coast Path to the north east, or from the villages of Cley next the Sea, Newgate, Glandford or Blakeney.

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF advises that the AONB should be afforded the highest status of protection in the hierarchy of landscape designations. It is however considered that whilst the site is within the AONB, it is influenced by the utilitarian nature of the site. The LVIA concludes that the retention of the monopoles would affect, to a limited degree the *'settlement character'* and the *'sense of remoteness, tranquillity and wildness'* qualities. However, the monopoles would not affect the *'geomorphology of the coast'*, the *'links between land and sea'*, the *'locally distinctive habitats'* or the *'locally important geology'* qualities and functional character of the telephone exchange building and the presence of the existing monopoles.

The LVIA concludes that retention of the monopoles is considered to result in a **minor effect** on the landscape character, visual amenity and the special qualities of the AONB. This minor effect is considered to be preferable to the alternative options such as the increasing the height of the mast/pole to over 20m or the felling/pruning of off-site tree cover to the east of Hall Lane to provide a LOS.

The conclusions of the LVIA are accepted by the Council's Landscape Officer. It is considered that the effect on the landscape character is limited being restricted to localised viewpoints, which will need to be weighed up in the planning balance of public benefits of the proposal. Whilst the site is located within the AONB and is a valuable landscape, the proposal will result

in some harm to landscape but would not detract from the defined special qualities of the Norfolk Coast AONB. This minor harm is considered to be acceptable when assessed against policies CT 4, EN 1 and EN 2.

EFFECT ON DESIGNATED HISTORIC ASSETS

The Built Heritage Statement submitted within the application draws the following conclusions:

The 15m and 12.5m monopoles at the Telephone Exchange site on Hall Lane are located within the Glaven Valley Conservation Area which covers a relatively large geographical area. The site itself represents an extremely small proportion of the total area covered by the Glaven Valley Conservation Area and, as stated by the Conservation and Design Officer, there is already a precedent for telecommunications infrastructure in this locality.

Neither the 15m or the 12.5m monopoles would detract from, or result in harm to, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is therefore considered that the combined development of the two monopoles at the Telephone Exchange site would result in no harm to the heritage significance of the Glaven Valley Conservation Area.

No harm to Wiveton Conservation Area and the Grade I Listed Church of St Nicholas through setting is anticipated to result from the retention of the monopoles either individually or cumulatively.

It is considered that given the sites precedent for telecommunications equipment in this location, the relatively enclosed nature of the site and screening from the established mature trees and tall hedgerows, that the impact on the Glaven Valley and Wiveton Conservation Area would be low. The 15m monopole has been colour finished in a matt brown to mitigate the visual impact of the structure into the sensitive landscape context. The existing 12.5m monopole could be similarly treated in the same manner to reduce its visual impact further and secured through a condition.

Whilst the proposal will result in **some** harm to the heritage assets, the harm is considered to be 'less than substantial'. In such cases, Paragraph 196 of the NPPF requires that this harm is outweighed by the by the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, the public benefit of increased telecommunications coverage within this rural area is considered to outweigh the 'less than substantial harm' identified and is considered to be compliant with Paragraph 196.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The closest dwellings to the site are:

To the north:

- The Old Exchange approximately 30 metres away

To the south:

- 8 and 9 Hall Lane approximately 54 - 60 metres respectively away
- Bones Cottage approximately 75 metres away
- Broadview approximately 90 metres away

To the west

- Wiveton Barn approximately 155 metres away

To the east

- Agricultural fields

Whilst the monopoles are visible from a number of dwellings close to the site, it is not considered that they result in significant detrimental effect on the living conditions of their occupiers by way of overbearing or noise impacts. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies EN 4 and EN 13.

IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states: *“Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition from different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure.”*

Policy EN13 states that proposals should minimise all kinds of pollution where possible and seek to reduce emissions and other pollution in order to protect the natural environment.

As required by paragraph 116 of the NPPF, the application includes a statement that self-certifies when operational the development would comply with the International Commission guidelines.

The proposal therefore accords with Policy EN 13 of the adopted Core Strategy and requirements of the NPPF.

ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVE SITES

Policies EN 1 and CT 4, require that alternative and less harmful proposals have been properly considered. Paragraph 113 of the NPPF states *“Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate”*. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF requires evidence applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structures.

The approval given under application PA/17/068 is a material planning consideration in the determination of the current application. Application PA/17/068 detailed 11 alternative sites and set out the reasons why these alternatives were dismissed. This is submitted with the current application submission. In respect to the alternatives considered, a number of the sites were discounted due to their more prominent locations along the North Norfolk Coast. These sites would have resulted in a ‘net’ new mast which would be taller than that approved due to lower land levels. The resultant effect being a monopole which would be more prominent within the landscape, conservation areas and AONB. The discounted sites are as follows: (Cley Kiln Pumping Station, Cley Allotment Gardens, Anglian Water Compound, Cley Village Hall, Newland Herd, Cley Mill and Anglian Water Pumping Station).

Other sites were discounted as they were not considered to provide the adequate level of signal coverage (Cley Sewage Treatment Works, Norfolk Wildlife Trust). The use of local churches was also explored but discounted due to a combination of land level and signal coverage and as a consequence, would likely mean that a further additional site would be required to provide the required mobile coverage to the target areas.

With regard to the use of St Nicholas Church, further details were provided as part of application PA/17/068 stating that the church was not considered as an alternative site as it is an ‘additional site’, rather than ‘instead of’. The agent stated through that application that Cley Telephone Exchange will not provide any additional 4G coverage to the village of Blakeney to the west of Wiveton. Hence, a separate installation would be required at Blakeney Church to ‘infill’ this coverage deficit. This was demonstrated by the submitted coverage plots. Neither site can individually provide adequate 4G coverage for Blakeney, Wiveton, Cley next the Sea,

Glandford and Newgate.

Objections to the current application have again raised the issue surrounding the use of St Nicholas Church, Blakeney especially as telecommunications apparatus has now been installed and is stated to be currently operating. The agent has re-affirmed that Blakeney Church is an *additional site* to infill coverage deficit which is detailed on the coverage plots. In respect to the use of St Margaret's Church in Cley, the agent states the location of the Church and its position on lower lying land would result in the site not providing the required level of coverage. It was, therefore, an inferior technical option to Cley ATE and rejected. The agent confirms that there were also concerns regarding the potential impact of installing antennas and equipment cabinets at this grade I listed building. Cumulatively, this site was rejected as an option at an early stage.

The assessment of alternative sites was considered in the an appeal decision (APP/Y2620/W/17/3177414) relating to the installation of a 15m high monopole supporting 3 no shrouded antennas at land at Lamas Road, Badersfield (application ref. no. PA/17/0140. The application was refused the application due to the proposals impact on the Coltishall Conservation Area and to a lack of proper investigation of alternative locations, which failed to justify the siting proposed and outweigh the harm found. This appeal was allowed and the Inspector considered the information submitted by the agent provided for a '*reasonable level of investigation into alternative siting options*'. Furthermore, that the use of locally listed buildings within the Conservation Area were appropriately discounted due to the potential harm that may be caused and insufficient radio coverage '

In terms of overall design, the use of a 'tree mast was considered as an option as part of application PA/17/0681. However, this would require an additional height of 5m over that which was approved. This would not have been considered acceptable in terms of the impact on landscape and heritage designations.

Additionally, the replacement of the existing antenna head on the 15m monopole with a shroud antenna has been explored through the current application. The agent has confirmed that as the mast at Cley Telephone Exchange is a shared monopole designed to be used by two mobile network operators (Vodafone and Telefónica UK). This mast design precludes the use of an antenna shroud due to the need for a more robust pole.

It is considered that on the basis of the information supplied and lack of any evidence to the contrary, that the alternative have been properly assessed. As such the proposal complies with policies EN 1 and CT 4 in this respect.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Response to representations not specifically addressed in the above assessment:

- Landscape Character Plan provided in the Appendix to the LVIA demonstrates that the application site is correctly associated with National Character Area 78, not National Character Area 77.
- Right to a view is not a material planning consideration.
- The application submission states that it would likely be costs prohibitive to relocate the existing 15m monopole to the southwest of the site.

CONCLUSION

The NPPF considers that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure are essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local

community facilities and services. The application states that if the base station was removed, it would result in the loss of Vodafone's and Telefonica 2G, 3G and 4G coverage to Wiveton, and parts of Blakeney, Morston, Glanford and Cley. There is a clear emphasis that local planning authorities should be looking for ways to support development coming forward and not reject applications simply on environmental grounds.

The NPPF recognises that this is especially relevant where development might have other significantly important benefits such as being essential to meet, for example, sustainable economic growth or a national need which can include new infrastructure that connects more isolated communities, especially in rural areas. At a local level, whilst there is a more localised visual impact, the residents of Wiveton, and parts of Blakeney, Morston, Glanford and Cley will benefit from the improved telecommunications.

The economic and social benefits of improved telecommunications infrastructure are well recognised and are of growing importance, but these benefits have to be weighed against the protection afforded to heritage assets and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is considered that the degree of harm to the landscape character and impact upon heritage assets of the retention of these two monopoles is minimum and are outweighed by the public benefits. Furthermore, it is considered that all reasonable alternative locations for the mast have been assessed and justifiably discounted. Additionally, whilst there is clearly a more localised visual impact of the monopoles on the residents surrounding the site, the residents of Wiveton, and parts of Blakeney, Morston, Glanford and Cley will benefit from improved telecommunications.

Balancing the benefits against the limited harm arising from the proposal, it is considered that it is in accordance with Policies SS 1, SS 2, EN 1 EN 2, EN 8 and CT 4 for the reasons stated .

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to the conditions relating to the matters below and any others as deemed necessary by the Head of Planning:

- Approved plans.
- Within 3 months of the date of approval the antenna on the 15m monopole and the 12.5m BT monopole to be painted Van Dyke Brown.
- Within 3 months of the date of approval a soft landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- Removal of permitted development rights
- Removal of telecommunications apparatus when it is no longer in use.

Final wording of conditions to be delegated to the Head of Planning.