



15 Knowles Avenue
Crowthorne
RG45 6DU
2 September 2021

BFC Planning

Ref: 21/00781/RTD

Sir

We strongly object to this application to place a 5G phone mast at the junction of Dukes Ride and Fincham End Drive.

1. The Site selection Process is flawed as they haven't followed sequential approach detailed in NPPF

In accordance with the sequential approach outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) following search criteria have been utilised. Firstly, consideration is always given to sharing any existing telecommunication structures in the area, secondly consideration is then given to utilising any suitable existing structures or buildings and thirdly sites for freestanding ground-based installations are investigated.

This sequential approach is outlined below:

- a) Mast and Site Sharing
- b) Existing Buildings Structures
- c) Ground Bases Installations

First priority is for mast and site sharing. They have not provided evidence that they have done any more than paying lip service to actively seeking to share masts with other providers.

The Draft BFC local plan proposes that Derby field will be available for development and the station car park extended. If approved that opens up the possibility of a shared mast being provided in the enlarged station car park. That should be thoroughly investigated before consideration is given to piecemeal applications from each individual provider.

The next preferred option is using existing buildings.

They haven't considered alternatives such as mounting on the building at the Railway station or on top of the garage or any of the buildings in the business park.

2. No attempt to mitigate the visual impact.

A new ground base installation should only be an option of last resort. Even then the NPPF puts clear limits.

NPPF, Para 115

Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

The proposed mast is more than twice the height of nearby houses and would have an overbearing impact on the street scene of Dukes Ride. There has been no attempt at sympathetic design or providing camouflage such as disguising it as a tree. Therefore it is not compliant with NPPF.

3. Highways safety

That land at the corner of Fincham End Drive has been left open to provide suitable visibility splay for vehicles exiting Fincham End Drive onto Dukes Ride. The position of cabinets would obstruct the view of drivers turning out of Fincham End Drive. This is a particularly sensitive location as it is used by schoolchildren crossing the road on their way to school.

4. Proximity to School

The applicant incorrectly states that the site is not near a school, so appears to have not noticed that the main entrance to Wellington College is nearby. Raglan, 135 Dukes Ride, which is used by pupils on a daily basis, is close to the main entrance, as are the tennis courts and other sports facilities.

NPPF para 117 says that the application should be supported by evidence of consultation if the site is near a school. No such evidence is provided.

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,

5. Wrong Place, Too close to homes.

The implication in the statement on BFC website is that they will seek to avoid positioning masts near residential homes.

We do not have a blanket policy and we seek to consider all cases on their merits. In some instances we are in a position to allow the use of our land thereby removing the need for masts to be erected amongst homes, for example.

In this case BFC appear to be doing exactly the opposite, allowing use of their land so that it can be sited adjacent to homes. To allow something that high, immediately adjacent to a house in such a prominent place would be totally incongruous.

The area around the railway station or in the business park is more industrial and more suited to a structure such as a phone mast. There is already one there and more effort should be placed on either upgrading the existing mast so it can provide a shared service or alternatively, installing a new one.

6. Contrary to Policy SC4 Bracknell Forest Local Plan

"10.5The development must be sited so as to minimise its visual impact, subject to technical and operational considerations."

This site has a significant and overwhelming visual impact on a main thoroughfare and will be seen by hundreds of residents every day.

7. Need for a concerted plan.

It is unfortunate that Bracknell Forest Council have not acted on the recommendations in the Crowthorne Village Design Statement, published in March 2006

5.3 Mobile Phone Coverage

The provision of mobile phone service is important. However the current situation of each service provider making piecemeal applications for masts around the village is inefficient in delivering an effective solution. It would be preferred if providers cooperated to make a joint plan for provision of coverage using mast sharing as much as possible and minimising the visual impact of masts.

All telecoms companies will be seeking to upgrade their infrastructure. Maybe now is the time that BFC should lead a co-ordinated effort to plan for the future and avoid multiple piecemeal applications.

In summary, this particular application should be refused

- Scant evidence that alternatives have been properly considered.
- Too large and prominent, with no attempt to soften visual impact
- Too close to existing homes
- Detrimental to street scene
- Dangerous to highway safety

Yours sincerely

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