

MEMORANDUM

From:	Finlay Rothery Green Infrastructure Support Officer		
Service	WBC Infrastructure	Green	App No: 252762
Address:	West Court Land, Park Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4QF.		
Proposal:	Prior approval submission for a proposed installation of replacement electronic communications apparatus comprising a slimline lattice mast, 3 no. aerials, 2 no. transmission dishes, 1 no. GPS aerial, radio equipment housing and development ancillary to radio equipment housing.		
Type of Development:			
Site Visit Made:	Yes (26/11/25 – photos included taken on this date)		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☒ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

I have reviewed the documentation provided by the applicant, with particular attention to the Site Location Plans (Drawing no. TVY181-DD-01), Proposed Site Plan (Drawing no. TVY181-DD-02), and the Proposed Site Elevation (Drawing no. TVY181-DD-03). I have also noted the three photos provided to demonstrate the visual impact of the proposed structure.

I have reviewed the proposal against the Council's planning policies as well as Natural England Guidelines for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs), since the application site is within the boundary of the new West Court SANG.

SANG Guidelines

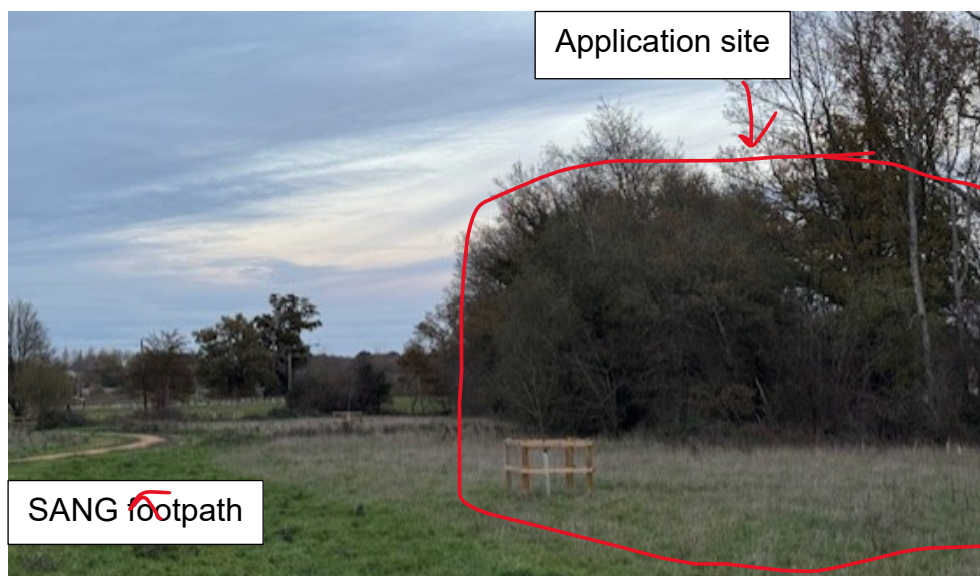
Natural England Guidelines for Creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) – August 2021 states the following (note SPA refers to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, which SANGs are designed to attract residents of new developments away from by providing high quality, naturalistic green spaces):

"Little or no artificial infrastructure is found within the SPA at present apart from the provision of some surfaced tracks and car parks. Generally, an urban influence is not what people are looking for when they visit the SPA and some people undoubtedly visit the SPA because it has a naturalness about it that would be marred by such features."

“Other infrastructure would not be expected and should generally be restricted to the vicinity of car parking areas where good information and signs of welcome should be the norm, though discretely placed benches or information boards along some routes would be acceptable.”

“SANG must be perceived as semi-natural spaces with little intrusion of artificial structures, except in the immediate vicinity of car parks. Visually sensitive way-markers and some benches are acceptable.”

The proposed structure is large in footprint, significantly taller than the surrounding trees, and would be visible from the majority of the SANG footpaths. There is a footpath that passes extremely close to the proposed site, which would be severely impacted visually, not only by the mast but by the intrusive base structure.



This artificial infrastructure would be significantly urbanising, affecting a large proportion of the SANG, and potentially reducing its efficacy as mitigation for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. As such, the proposal is not in line with Natural England’s guidelines for SANGs.

Council Policy

Council Core Strategy Policy CP1 - *Sustainable development* states that development should “maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment”.

Council Policy CC03 - *Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping*, states that proposals should:

- “Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features”.
- “Development proposals which would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of areas of green infrastructure will not be acceptable.”

Council Policy TB21 - *Landscape Character* states that “proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.”

The proposal involves the removal of TPO woodland which currently forms a physical and visual barrier between the SANG and Park Lane (photo below taken from inside SANG facing application area), as well as providing an important habitat function for wildlife on the site. The removal of this woodland to be replaced with urban infrastructure contravenes policies CP1, CC03 and TB21, which seek to protect such environmental features.



Conclusion

Taking the above policies and guidelines into consideration, the proposal should be refused. The loss of natural habitat and screening, and the significant urbanising effect of the proposed infrastructure not only result in a degraded version of the existing green infrastructure, but could feasibly lead to reduced usage of the SANG by its core target population (users of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA), which is not acceptable.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Please use this section to detail any conditions that are required to make this development acceptable in planning terms. All conditions should be accompanied by reasons.

Date:	28/11/25	Signed:	F. Rothery
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