

## **DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT**



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

<b>Application Number:</b>	252206
<b>Site Address:</b>	Land At Rushton Farm, Warren House Road, Berkshire, RG40 5RG
<b>Expiry Date:</b>	19 December 2025
<b>Site Visit Date:</b>	1 October 2025
<b>Proposal:</b> Prior approval submission for the removal of an existing 17m monopole and associated compound, and the installation of 1no. monopole sharable mast (height 25m), antennas to be installed on headframes, operator cabinets, multi-user electrical cabinet.	

### **PLANNING CONSTRAINTS**

Countryside  
Red Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts  
Flood Zone 1

### **PLANNING LEGISLATION**

#### **The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015**

Article 3	In conjunction with Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A grants planning permission for electronic communications code operators for the installation, alteration or replacement of any electronic communications apparatus and development ancillary to radio equipment housing.
Article 4	Provides that the planning authority may give direction to restrict the effect of Article 3.

#### **Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**

Section 55	Provides that 'development' includes the carrying out of building operations on land, and 'building operations' includes structural alterations or additions to buildings.
Section 57	Planning permission is needed for all development of land.
Section 187a	Enforcement for breach of conditions

### **PLANNING POLICY**

<b>National Policy</b>	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
<b>Core Strategy (CS)</b>	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits

<b>MDD Local Plan (MDD)</b>	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
<b>Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)</b>	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS5 – Development in the countryside SS6 – Development in the Green Belt SS15 – Securing infrastructure SS16 – Safeguarded routes SS17 – Transport improvements CE2 – Environmental standards for non-residential development C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C7 – Digital infrastructure and communications technology FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design NE6 – Valued landscapes DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC5 – Environmental protection HC6 – Air pollution and air quality HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution HC9 – Contaminated land and water HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
<b>Other</b>	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

<b>PLANNING HISTORY</b>		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
001515	Proposed erection of one mast with 3 dual polar antennas, 2 dish antennas one radio equipment housing and ancillary development.	Approved 19/04/2000
052886	Proposed change of use of agricultural buildings to B1c (light industrial). Retrospective.	Refused 21/06/2005

080997	Application for the retention of two single storey buildings to be used for agricultural storage.	Refused 13/11/2008
173309	Full application for the proposed change of use of land and existing buildings from agriculture to commercial.	Refused 04/04/2018

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### Internal

WBC Drainage – No objections  
WBC Highways – No objections  
WBC Ecology Newts – No objections subject to an informative

### External

None consulted

## REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	<p>One resident representation raising the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proposal fails to consider impact on nearby residential properties.</li> <li>- Assurance required that there is no health risk to nearby residents or workers (<b><i>Officer comment: The submission is supported by ICNIRP certification. ICNIRP certification provides the relevant guidelines for public exposure to phone masts. The impact of the development in respect of the Equality Act is dealt with at the end of this report.</i></b>)</li> </ul> <p>An objection has also been received by the current mast operator, Cornerstone. Their objection, and the applicant's response to it, is addressed in detail below.</p>

## APPRAISAL

### Site Description:

The application site consists of an area of grassland immediately south of Rushton Farm. The site is currently occupied by several shipping containers and discarded materials, plus the existing telecommunications mast and its associated equipment and enclosure.

The site is accessed via a long, private road off of Warren House Road to the west. Views of the site from the public realm are limited due to the site's distance from the road (approximately 230 metres) and existing vegetation screening along Warren House Road.

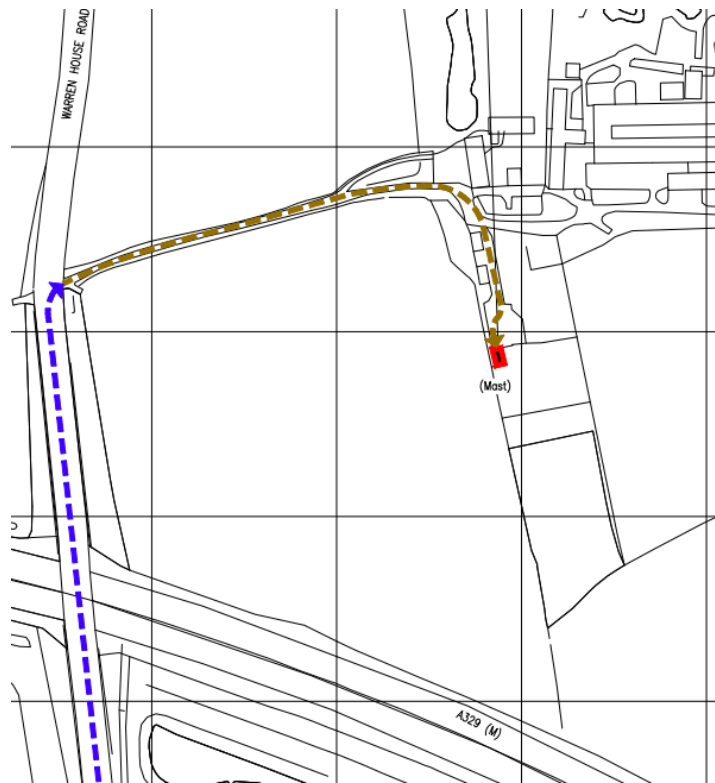
### Proposal Description:

This application seeks approval for the removal of the existing 17 metre monopole and associated compound and the installation of a 25 metre tall monopole sharable mast. The plans indicate that the existing ground based equipment and enclosures would be retained.

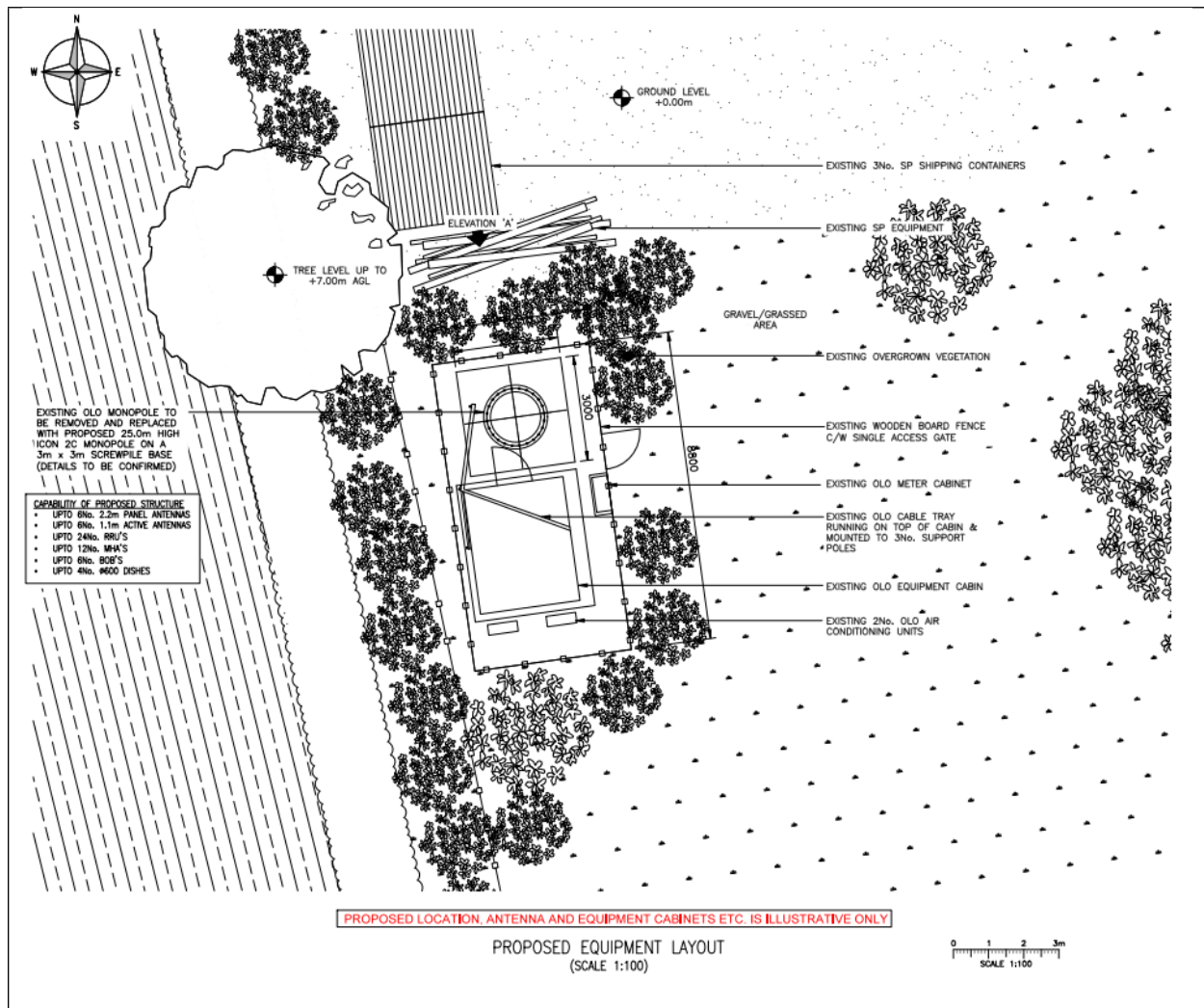
Icon Tower Infrastructure Ltd (the applicant) is a Wholesale Infrastructure Provider, or Infrastructure System Provider, specialising in providing sites and infrastructure for shared use by network operators, such as the four UK Mobile Network Operators. The statement provided with this application outlines the following as to the intentions behind the development:

*“Icon increases the competition in this growing sector, which the Government recognises to be in the public interest. This is through the provision of additional shared sites to aid the deployment of 5G and future technologies in a cost effective manner that reduces the costs of the network operators.”*

**Figure 1: Site Location Plan**



**Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan**



APPRAISAL UNDER PART A.1			Yes	No
s.55	1	Does it constitute development?	✓	
s.191	2	Would it be contrary to an enforcement notice?		✓
s.187a Art.3 (4)	3	Would it be contrary to any condition imposed by any planning permission granted or deemed to be granted?		✓
Art.3(5)	4	Are the building operations involved in the construction of the original development lawful?	✓	
Art.4	5	Is there an 'Article 4 Direction' in effect for the site?		✓
Sch.2 Part 16, Class. A	6	Does it involve development by or on behalf of an electronic communications code operator for the purpose of the operator's electronic communications network in, on, over or under land controlled by that operator or in accordance with the electronic communications code, consisting of— (a) the installation, alteration or replacement of any electronic communications apparatus, (b) the use of land in an emergency for a period	✓	

		not exceeding 18 months to station and operate moveable electronic communications apparatus required for the replacement of unserviceable electronic communications apparatus, including the provision of moveable structures on the land for the purposes of that use, or (c) development ancillary to radio equipment housing.		
<b>Ground-based apparatus</b>				
A.1(1)(a)	7	Does the electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast), excluding any antenna, exceed a height of 15 metres above ground level?		✓
A.1(1)(b)		in the case of the alteration or replacement of electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast) that is already installed, the apparatus, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the height of the existing apparatus or a height of 15 metres above ground level, whichever is the greater;		✓
A.1(1)(c)	8	Does the mast, excluding any antenna, exceed a height of— (i) 30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or (ii) 25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway?		✓
A.1(1)(d)	9	in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast, the height of the mast, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the greater of the height of the existing mast or a height of— (i) 30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or (ii) 25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or		✓
A.1(1)(e)		(e) in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast— (i) the mast is on any land which is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest; and (ii) the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by more than one third.		✓
<b>Apparatus on masts</b>				
A.1(3)	10	Does the height of the mast (including the apparatus installed, altered or replaced) exceed any relevant height limit specified in paragraph A.1(1)(c)?		✓
<b>Ground or base area</b>				

A.1(7)	11	Does the electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast, antenna, any apparatus which does not project above the level of the surface of the ground or radio equipment housing) exceed an area of 1.5m <sup>2</sup> ?		✓
<b>Radio equipment housing</b>				
A.1(9)	11	Does the radio equipment housing involve: (a) development that is not ancillary to the use of any other electronic communications apparatus; (b) the cumulative volume exceeding 90m <sup>2</sup> ; or (c) on any article 2(3) land, or on any land which is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest, any single development would exceed 2.5 cubic metres, unless the development is carried out in an emergency?		✓ ✓ ✓
<b>APPRAISAL UNDER PART A.2</b>				
<p><i>(1) Class A(a) and A(c) development is permitted subject to the condition that the siting and appearance of any antenna or supporting apparatus, radio equipment housing or development ancillary to radio equipment housing are such that the effect of the development on the external appearance of that building is minimised, so far as practicable.</i></p> <p>Not relevant in this instance as proposal is not for siting on a building.</p>				
<b>APPRAISAL UNDER PART A.3 – Prior approval</b>				
<p><i>(1) Before making the application required by sub-paragraph (4), the developer must give notice of the proposed development to—</i></p> <p><i>a) any person (other than the developer) who is an owner of the land to which the development relates, or</i></p> <p><i>b) a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land to which the application relates</i></p> <p><i>(2) Notice must be given by or on behalf of the developer as follows—</i></p> <p><i>a) by serving a signed and dated notice on every person described in sub-paragraph (1) whose name and address is known to the developer, stating—</i></p> <p><i>i) the name of the developer;</i></p> <p><i>ii) the address or location of the proposed development;</i></p> <p><i>iii) a description of the proposed development (including its siting and appearance which includes the height of any mast);</i></p> <p><i>iv) a statement that the developer will 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;</i></p> <p><i>v) the name and address of the local planning authority to whom the application will be made;</i></p> <p><i>vi) a statement that the application is available for public inspection at the offices of the local planning authority during usual office hours;</i></p>				

- vii) a statement that any person who wishes to make representations about the siting and appearance of the proposed development may do so in writing to the local planning authority;*
- viii) the date by which any such representations should be received by the local planning authority, being a date not less than 14 days from the date of the notice; and*
- ix) the address to which such representations should be made; or*
- b) if the developer has been unable to ascertain the names and addresses of every such person after taking reasonable steps, by local advertisement.*

The applicant has provided a copy of the developer notice sent to the existing landowner.

- (3) Where the proposed development consists of the installation, alteration or replacement of a mast within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome, the developer must notify the Civil Aviation Authority, the Secretary of State for Defence or the aerodrome operator, as appropriate, before making the application required by sub-paragraph (4).*

The site is not within 3km of an aerodrome.

- (4) Before beginning the development described in paragraph A.2(3), 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.*
- (5) The application must be accompanied by—*
  - a) a written description of the proposed development and a plan indicating its proposed location together with any fee required to be paid;*
  - b) the developer's contact address, and the developer's email address if the developer is content to receive communications electronically;*
  - c) evidence that the requirements of sub-paragraph (1) have been satisfied where applicable; and*
  - d) where sub-paragraph (3) applies, evidence that the Civil Aviation Authority, the Secretary of State for Defence or the aerodrome operator, as the case may be, has been notified of the proposal.*

This application forms this requirement and the relevant documentation has been provided.

- (6) Subject to sub-paragraphs (8)(b)(ii) and (c), upon receipt of the application in accordance with sub-paragraph (5), the local planning authority must—*
  - a) for development which, in their opinion, falls within a category set out in the Table in Schedule 4 to the Procedure Order (consultations before the grant of permission), consult the authority or person mentioned in relation to that category, except where—*
    - i) the local planning authority are the authority so mentioned; or*
    - ii) the authority or person so mentioned has advised the local planning authority that they do not wish to be consulted, and must give the consultees at least 14 days within which to comment;*



- b) in the case of development which does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated, or which would affect a right of way to which Part 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (public rights of way)<sup>124</sup> applies, must give notice of the proposed development, in the appropriate form set out in Schedule 2 to the Procedure Order (notice of applications for planning permission)—*
  - i) by site display in at least one place on or near the land to which the application relates, for not less than 21 days, and*
  - ii) by local advertisement;*

*in the case of development which does not fall within paragraph (b) but which involves development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more,*

- c) must give notice of the proposed development, in the appropriate form set out in Schedule 2 to the Procedure Order by local advertisement and either—*
  - i) by site display in at least one place on or near the land to which the application*
  - ii) relates, for not less than 21 days, or by serving notice on any adjoining owner or occupier;*
- d) in the case of development which does not fall within paragraph (b) or (c), must give notice of the proposed development, in the appropriate form set out in Schedule 2 to the Procedure Order—*
  - i) by site display in at least one place on or near the land to which the application relates for not less than 21 days, or*
  - ii) by serving notice on any adjoining owner or occupier.*

Prior approval is required but parts (b) and (c) are not applicable. The Highways Authority were consulted in line with part (a), and notice was served on adjoining landowners on 19<sup>th</sup> September, satisfying part (d).

- (7) When determining the application made under sub-paragraph (4), the local planning authority must take into account any representations made to them as a result of consultations or notices given under paragraph A.3.*

Relevant consultation responses and representations outlined above and discussed in this report.

- (8) The development must not begin before the occurrence of one of the following—*
  - a) the receipt by the applicant from the local planning authority of a written notice of their determination that prior approval is not required;*
  - b) where the local planning authority gives the applicant written notice that prior approval is required—*
    - i) the giving of that approval to the applicant, in writing, within a period of 56 days beginning with the date on which the local planning authority received the application in accordance with sub-paragraph (5);*
    - ii) the expiry of a period of 56 days beginning with the date on which the local planning authority received the application in accordance with sub-paragraph (5) without the local planning authority notifying the applicant, in writing, that such approval is given or refused; or*
  - c) the expiry of a period of 56 days beginning with the date on which the local*

*planning authority received the application in accordance with sub-paragraph (5) without the local planning authority notifying the applicant, in writing, of their determination as to whether such prior approval is required.*

Prior approval is required and this forms part of the assessment of this application below.

*(9) The development must, except to the extent that the local planning authority otherwise agree in writing, be carried out—*

- a) where prior approval has been given as mentioned in sub-paragraph (8)(b)(i), in accordance with the details approved;*
- b) in any other case, in accordance with the details submitted with the application.*

*(10) The agreement in writing referred to in sub-paragraph (9) requires no special form of writing, and, where that agreement is in place, there is no requirement on the developer to submit a new application for prior approval in the case of minor amendments to the details submitted with the application for prior approval.*

*(11) The development must begin—*

- a) where prior approval has been given as mentioned in sub-paragraph (8)(b)(i), not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which the approval was given;*
- b) in any other case, not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which the local planning authority received the application in accordance with subparagraph (5).*

9, 10 and 11 above would form conditions on the 'prior approval' decision if it were granted.

*(12) In the case of emergency, development is permitted by Class A subject to the condition that the operator must give written notice of such development as soon as possible after the emergency begins, to—*

- a) the local planning authority; and*
- b) in the case of development carried out on land which is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest, to Natural England<sup>125</sup>.*

Not applicable.

*(13) When computing the number of days in sub-paragraphs (6)(b)(i), (6)(c)(i) and (6)(d)(i), any day which is a public holiday must be disregarded.*

Noted.

Hence, pursuant to paragraph A.3 above and given prior approval IS required, the following appraisal on the siting and appearance of the development is provided.

**Siting and Appearance:**

*(1) Class A(a) and A(c) development is permitted subject to the condition that:*

- (a) *the siting and appearance of any—*
- (i) *mast;*
  - (ii) *electronic communications apparatus installed, altered or replaced on a mast;*
  - (iii) *antenna or supporting apparatus;*
  - (iv) *radio equipment housing; or*
  - (v) *development ancillary to radio equipment housing, constructed, installed, altered or replaced on a building (other than a building which is a mast) are such that the effect of the development on the external appearance of that building is minimised, so far as practicable;*

**Policy Context:**

Paragraph 85 notes that planning decisions should help create 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.

Paragraph 87 sets out that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including making provision for data driven, creative or high technology industries.

Paragraph 119 states that 'Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being'. It goes on to explain that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks.

Paragraph 120 continues by stating that the number of radio and electronic communications masts and the sites for such installations should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the effective operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

Paragraph 122 sets out that applications for electronic communications development should be supported by necessary evidence to justify the proposed development, including:

- 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.

Paragraph 123 identifies that local planning authorities must determine applications on

planning grounds only and should not seek to prevent competition between different operators or question the need for an electronic communications system.

Site Context:

The application site is located within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) I1 - Ashridge Farmed Clay Lowland according to the Council's Landscape Character Assessment (2019).

In terms of the landscape strategy for the LCA, the overarching strategy is to conserve and enhance the existing the rural character. In terms of development, the aim is to conserve the sparse settlement pattern through controlling development.

The application site itself is well set back from the public realm but on the other hand, the landscape surrounding the area is predominantly flat with no notable changes in topography. Rushton Farm itself is comprised of a variety of residential and commercial units.

Assessment:

To begin with, an important factor of the development's assessment is that it is a replacement of an existing 17 metre tall telecommunications mast, rather than the introduction of new telecommunications development into the locale. Therefore, the primary assessment surrounds the additional impacts associated with the proposed replacement development.

The existing mast is 0.5 metres wide and at its apex, the width of the masts reaches 1.8 metres. In comparison, the new mast would have a height of 25 metres. The mast width is 0.85 metres and at its apex, the width of the antennae reaches 3 metres. All existing ground based equipment would be unaffected.

The new mast would undoubtedly increase the amount of vertical massing compared to the mast it would replace. The mast would become increasingly prominent when viewed from the occupiers of Rushton Farm, but the extent of this additional prominence would be limited due to the distance between the mast site and the nearby buildings (approximately 92 metres south of Rushton Farmhouse).

Similarly, additional views from the mast's increased massing from the public realm/highway would be severely limited due to the fact the site is set back from Warren House Road by 230 metres. Vegetation screening along Warren House Road would largely limit any notable viewpoints of the mast, with only fleeting views of its form available as you travel further north along the road.

The colour of the mast (grey) would also help assimilate the mast into its backdrop, since the majority of its form (assisted by the flat topography of the site) would blend into the sky behind.

It is acknowledged that the flat topography of the site does increase the prominence of the mast in the wider landscape, largely due to its vertical height. Furthermore, a larger piece of telecommunications infrastructure cannot reasonably be seen as achieving the LCA's aim of conserve and enhance the existing the rural character of the surrounding Countryside. That being said, the extent of additional harm on the landscape (compared to the existing mast's massing) is not considered to be significant/notable, assisted by the site's spatial and topographical constraints which limit almost all public viewpoints of the mast along Warren House Road.

Furthermore, consents of this nature require the removal of the equipment from site and its complete restoration after the equipment is no longer required for electronic communications purposes. This would limit any permanent harm to the landscape as a result.

Overall in terms of the proposal's siting and appearance, the impact on the character of the area is considered to be acceptable, subject to the appropriate remediation conditions.

*Objection from Cornerstone (current mast operator):*

An objection has been received from the current mast operator, Cornerstone, who have raised several concerns regarding the proposals, namely:

- The application is not accompanied by sufficient justification to replace the existing mast, contrary to paragraph 122 (c) of the NPPF; it is taller, more harmful and does not provide any additional benefits in terms of coverage compared to the existing, smaller mast.
- There are no end users identified (Mobile Network Operators - MNOs).
- No alternative sites have been considered.

Icon Tower Infrastructure Limited, the applicant, have responded to this objection. Firstly, they outline that the matter related to who leases the site to operate a mast is currently subject of a litigation case, due to go to court in the coming weeks. This is not a relevant planning matter and will not influence the determination of this application.

With regards to paragraph 122 (c), the applicant outlines that the proposed mast cannot be seen as contrary to this policy, insofar that this paragraph relates to a new mast or base station. The LPA's view is that this is a replacement mast where the principle of such development has already been accepted, therefore this paragraph is not relevant to the development proposals.

Turning to the lack of identified end users/MNOs, there is no policy requirement to demonstrate such. Icon Tower Infrastructure limited have outlined that this is a shareable mast, and that all current users of the existing mast are welcome to use the replacement mast in the future.

On another note, the applicant questions Cornerstone's assertion that the current

mast utilises 5G, since they are of the view that 5G can only be deployed above 17.5 metres. The LPA are unsure as to the extent that this is true but ultimately, it has a negligible influence on the determination of this application.

Turning to the lack of alternative sites consideration, it has already been outlined above that the use of this site for telecommunications infrastructure has already been accepted in principle. Considering the proposals relate to the replacement of the existing mast, the LPA are of the viewpoint that the lack of alternative site considerations is justified and does not warrant a reason for refusal.

Notwithstanding the viewpoints of both Cornerstone and Icon Tower Infrastructure Limited, it is important to note that the LPA's assessment is limited to the siting and appearance of the telecommunications infrastructure. Whilst the new mast would be notably taller and marginally wider than the mast it would replace, the minimal impact on the character of the area and surrounding landscape, in isolation from other concerns raised, is not sufficient grounds to refuse this application.

As per paragraph 123 of the NPPF, the LPA must determine applications on planning grounds only and should not seek to prevent competition between different operators or question the need for an electronic communications system. In this instance, the need is already established and does not need to be questioned. The ongoing 'competition' between Cornerstone and Icon Tower Infrastructure Limited as to who operates from the site is not a matter relevant to the determination of this application. From a planning (siting and appearance) perspective, the LPA's view is that the replacement mast would have an acceptable impact and can be reasonably seen as a form of 'future proofing' through the installation of newer equipment.

**Heritage:**

To the north of the application site lies Rushton Farm House, a Grade II Listed dwelling. Whilst views of the mast may become slightly more apparent from the house, the 93 metre separation distance between the mast and the house severely limits any harm to the setting of the Listed Building.

The harm to the heritage asset is considered to be less than substantial. In this instance, paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which the LPA view as outweighing the minimal harm highlighted.

**Highways:**

No traffic impacts are expected from the removal, installation and operation of the mast.

The applicant has provided swept paths for the largest vehicles they would use to install/remove the mast to ensure they can leave the site in forward gear. These are acceptable.

**Arboricultural Matters:**

There are no Arboricultural concerns.

**Drainage:**

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of surface water flooding. As the proposals involve replacement infrastructure with no additional impermeable areas, WBC Drainage raise no objections to the proposals.

**Residential Amenities:**

As the replacement mast would be sited at least 90 metres away from the nearest residential properties and commercial units, there are no anticipated impacts on the amenities of their occupiers.

**Ecology:**

The site is located within a Red Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts. Despite this, the fact the proposals would utilise an existing developed site would avoid any adverse impacts on this protected species. An informative will be placed on the decision notice as a precaution.

**Masts and Health**

In accordance with the NPPF (Para. 122), a Health and Safety Statement and Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines was submitted with the application. This confirms that the proposal would comply with acceptable levels of Radio Frequencies (RF's) as outlined by the International Commission on Non- Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Public Exposure Guidelines. In addition to any RF's generated by the proposed mast, the submitted ICNIRP certificate takes account of the cumulative effect of the RF emissions from all base stations in the vicinity of the application site.

In terms of potential health risks, the proposal has been assessed in light of supporting technical information, i.e. ICNIRP certificate, submitted by the applicant in respect of acceptable levels of RF exposure. The government's advice is clear on this matter in that local authorities should not seek to determine public health safeguards if the proposal meets the International Commission guidelines for public exposure. Furthermore, the site is not adjacent to what are perceived to be particularly sensitive uses. The nearest school or nursery is over 2 miles away.

Therefore, it is considered that there are no exceptional circumstances in relation to this application that warrant elevating the status of perceived health risks as a material consideration above that of other approved base stations within suburban areas of Wokingham or, indeed, against the advice provided within the NPPF outlined above.

**Other Conditions**

(1) Class A development is permitted subject to the condition that any electronic communications apparatus provided in accordance with that permission is removed from the land or building on which it is situated as soon as reasonably practicable after it is no longer required for electronic communications purposes; and such land or building is restored to its condition before the development took place, or to any

other condition as may be agreed in writing between the local planning authority and the developer.

The above would form a condition on the 'prior approval' decision if granted.

**Planning Balance:**

The NPPF states 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) and full fibre broadband connections.” (Para. 119).*

The social, community and economic benefits associated with this development, namely the continued maintenance of mobile coverage for the area, are afforded substantial weight in the planning balance and have been considered and fully taken into account in determining the overall merits of this case.

The resultant limited harm to the surrounding landscape and nearby heritage assets are noted. However, it is not considered that this harm outweighs the identified benefits above. Therefore, this application is recommended for approval.

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposal constitutes development but benefits from permitted development under Article 3 in Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 and **the prior approval of the local planning authority as to it the siting and appearance of the development IS required.**

**Prior approval for the siting and appearance of the development is recommended to be APPROVED** subject to the conditions contained within the Part 16 legislation specified.

**RECOMMENDATION**

<b>Conditions agreed:</b>	Not required
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Prior Approval - Approval
<b>Date:</b>	16 December 2025
<b>Earliest date for decision:</b>	10 October 2025

**Recommendation agreed by:  
(Authorised Officer)**



**Date:** 16/12/25



