

Response to the Wokingham Borough Council Appeal Statement of Case

Appeal references 6003550 and 6003551

Wokingham Borough Council reference 252518 and 252519.

Appeal Site:

Pavement o/s Poundstretcher, 25 Peach Street, Wokingham RG40 1XJ (E 481353, N 168603)

Our BT Street Hub Ref:

WKM-001

In response to the Council's written statement, the appellant would wish to comment as follows:

5.6 The Council statement states, *'The proposed design of the BT Street Hub lacks the refinement of the original red phone box with the large digital screen over-dominating the suggested primary purpose of the structure. The result is that the structure is seen as a platform for advertising, rather than a telephone kiosk.'*

The Council refers to the 'original red phone box' and the appellant would wish to note that the existing kiosk is the more modern KX100+ and not the traditional red design, which was retired over 40 years ago. The appellant would wish to reiterate that the proposed Street Hub is not primarily an advertisement structure and is a telecommunications kiosk that provides a public service, which uses advertising as a legitimate source of income.

The Council's statement continues, *'The provision of the digital screen necessitates an overly large structure, much larger than would be required to house the telephony, Wi-Fi and wayfinding equipment proposed.'* In response, the appellant would wish to reiterate that the proposed screen and advertisement is the same size as the feature on the existing kiosk.

Paragraph 5.6 concludes by stating, *'It would add significantly to the street clutter in the vicinity and detract from the high street streetscape environment. The NPPF, at paragraph 117, states that proposals should "avoid unnecessary street clutter and respond to local character and design standards".'*

In response, the appeal is to replace the existing kiosk with an advertisement feature and any sense of additional clutter is limited. The presence of the existing kiosk means that the character of the area will not change to the extent that would warrant the refusal of the application and it should be reiterated that the proposal is required in order that BT comply with the USO agreement with Ofcom, therefore, is not considered to be unnecessary.

5.13 The Council statement refers to the previous examples of appeal decisions and comments, *'A more relevant appeal decision in the view of the LPA is attached at Appendix 2 (Appeal Decisions APP/X0360/W/24/3356330 & APP/X0360/H/24/3356331) which is within proximity of the site and within Wokingham Town Centre itself.'*

In response, the appellant would wish to note that the appeal is a new item of street furniture, as opposed to the proposal for the Street Hub, which is for the replacement of the existing kiosk. In addition, New World Payphones are not a statutory provider of utility services or have a Universal Service Obligation agreement with Ofcom to meet, which the appellant is and does. Therefore, it is considered, respectfully, that the appeal cited by the Council has limited comparable value.