
FAO Phillip Richards - LPA ref 252518 & 252519 Proposed Street Hub Pavement outside, 25 Peach Street, Wokingham

From Alan Osborne <Alan.Osborne@mitie.com>

Date Thu 2025-11-20 14:23

To Development Control <development.control@wokingham.gov.uk>

 4 attachments (5 MB)

Appeal Decisions 3365044 and 3365045 Railway Station, Bracknell Forest.pdf; Inclusive Mobility - A Guide to Best Practice.pdf; pedestrian-comfort-guidance-technical-guide.pdf; TFL Guidance for Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice.pdf;

Dear Philip,

With regard to the above application, I note that the consultation period ends today and that an objection has been received from Wokingham Town Council (WTC). The Council portal doesn't have any record of any further objections, so I would wish to respond to the issues outlined in the Town Councils response.

WTC's objection states, '*this development is in the Town Centre conservation/heritage area and is not in keeping.*' It is our assessment that on the basis of the evidence of how the KX100 kiosks deteriorate, the replacement with the new Street Hub design will enhance the Conservation Area by removing an item of street furniture that has become a magnet for anti-social behaviour.

The Product Statement outlines how the proposed Street Hub will prevent this from happening to a new kiosk in the same way as the KX100+ deteriorated after it replaced the KX100. The Street Hub has been designed specifically so that any vandalism can be dealt with as soon as possible with a rigorous maintenance schedule, so that the appearance does not suffer even if there are repeated incidents. For example, there are no galvanised metal surfaces that scratch due to repeated repair or internal areas that are extremely difficult to clean properly.

In terms of the impact of the introduction of the advertising feature, it is accepted that this is often a concern. However, the location of the proposal outside a section of brightly lit retail premises that use advertising suggests that the impact will be neutral. As outlined in the Professional Lighting Guide 0523, there are controls that the Council can impose on the luminance levels and these are something that we would accept. We would defer to the recommended level of 600cd/m2 at nighttime, but we would be happy to discuss a level that the Council would accept.

The WTC objection continues, '*It will set an unwelcome precedent for similar developments in the town centre conservation area. Similar applications were rejected in the last two years, and this does not appear to differ substantially from those ones.*'

The concern regarding setting a precedent is acknowledged and that previous applications were refused in 2024. However, it is important to reiterate that the New World Telephone application (LPA ref 242146) involved the installation of a new item of street furniture and the proposed Street Hub will replace the existing kiosk. There is also the point that the Street Hub is a means of BT meeting the Universal Service Obligation agreement with Ofcom, which is not a voluntary commitment. As such, the proposed development would have a limited value as a precedent and that there is a substantial difference between the development that was refused.

With regard to the issue of highway safety, it should be noted that the replacement of the existing kiosk which is centrally located on the pavement, will improve the conditions for pedestrian movement. It is noted that

the proposed Street Hub will be closer to the roadside and introduce an advertisement, but the development has been designed to comply with the Department of Transport's Inclusive Mobility recommendations, but also TFL Guidance for Pedestrian Comfort Guidance and Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice. It is accepted that the 2nd TFL guides have limited material value for development in Wokingham, but they demonstrate that the proposal has been designed on the basis of guidelines for the busiest highway environment in the UK. For further information, I have enclosed the 3rd guides for your information.

The final point regarding safety is to preempt any concern regarding the proximity of the proposal to the signalised pedestrianised crossing. It is our view that there will be minimal conflict on the basis that Peach Street is one-way and not fast moving, but also because the proposed Street Hub will be behind the traffic signals. This matter has recently been considered as part of an appeal, where the Inspector found that there was limited conflict and noted;

'I acknowledge the Council's concerns regarding the potential impact of bright illumination and changing displays associated with the proposed advertisement, particularly in terms of distracting drivers and increasing the risk of collisions involving vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. These are valid considerations in assessing public safety. However, during my site visit, I observed that this stretch of road benefits from good visibility in both directions, allowing drivers ample time to respond to visual stimuli within the streetscape.'

Prior to any decision being made, I would be happy to have a call to discuss any further concerns that you might have.

Kind regards
Alan

Kind regards
Alan Osborne