

GRO/13203/4 – Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd

Installation of a 20m high monopole, three antennas, three dish antenna, radio equipment housing and development ancillary thereto. Elms Farm, Grove Road, Grove

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 This application proposes the erection of a monopole to accommodate three telecommunications antennas and three dishes. The total height of the pole including the antennas is 20m. The proposal also involves the provision of ancillary equipment including an electric meter cabinet and radio equipment housing. Evergreen planting and a stock-proof fence are proposed around the compound. The application drawings are at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 The monopole is proposed adjacent to existing deciduous and evergreen trees. Which are a maximum of 19m tall. There is an existing bungalow located about 22m from the proposed site.
- 1.3 The applicant has submitted information regarding the proposal and site choice. This is at **Appendix 2**.
- 1.4 This application comes before Committee as it is for a structure which exceeds 15m in height.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 Much of the planning history at this site is for developments in conjunction with the farm.
- 2.2 An appeal was allowed in 2001 for the change of use of 3 of the agricultural buildings on the farm to B1, B2 and B8 uses.
- 2.3 There is an existing lattice mast at Elms Farm approximately 90m away. This was permitted in 1993 with further additions permitted in 2000 and 2001 resulting in a total height of 26m.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 Policy D26 of the adopted Local Plan allows commercial telecommunications proposals to be permitted provided the siting of the proposal would not cause demonstrable harm to the surrounding area or the operator has demonstrated that there are no alternative sites.
- 3.2 Policy SF6 of the Second Deposit Draft Local Plan carries forward similar objectives and goes on to state that wherever practicable operators should share existing facilities or erect antennas on existing building or structures.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Grove Parish Council does not object to the proposal provided that any tree that dies in the area as a result of the installation is replaced with a similar tree of the same height as that lost.
- 4.2 The County Engineer has no objections.

5.0 Officer Comments

- 5.1 Your Officers consider the main issues in determining this case to be: 1) whether the proposal is acceptable in terms of visual impact, and 2) whether the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated that there are no less harmful alternatives.
- 5.2 The positioning of the proposed monopole in relation to the trees means that any views of the pole from Grove Road will be against a backdrop of trees. The applicants have stated that there is no requirement for extensive coverage to the east of the trees and, as such, the pole is only required to be slightly higher than the trees. A condition is suggested to ensure that the monopole

is painted dark green. Your Officers consider that these factors will result in a development that, whilst visible from Grove Road, will not be unduly harmful in terms of its visual impact.

5.3 Members will be aware that generally site sharing is encouraged in preference to the erection of new structures. In order for the operator to share the existing lattice mast an additional head-frame would be required on which to locate the equipment. Given that the existing structure is relatively exposed when viewed from Grove Road and is at the top of the slope your Officers consider that the additional height required would result in an unduly harmful visual impact upon the area. As such, in this circumstance, it is considered that a sensitively designed and sited monopole in the proposed location is more acceptable than the site-sharing option. Appendix 2 includes a list of 8 other discounted options for providing coverage for Hutchinson 3G across the target area. Your Officers are satisfied that the applicants have satisfactorily demonstrated that there are no less harmful options available.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 *It is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to the following conditions:*

1. *TL1 Time Limit – Full Application*
2. *Notwithstanding any details shown on the approved plans the monopole, dishes, antennas and ancillary equipment hereby approved shall be painted dark green and maintained as such thereafter.*
3. *LS3 Implementation of Landscaping Scheme (incorporating existing trees)*