

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Erection and Siting of Gigabit Full Fibre
Broadband Telecommunications Infrastructure**

at

**Land adjacent 118 Elizabeth
Road, Waterlooville, PO7 5TU**

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1.0 Introduction

Murray Planning Associates has been instructed by Toob Ltd to prepare and submit a planning application for the installation of infrastructure necessary to deploy and manage a Gigabit/full fibre (to the premises/home) broadband service in the Waterloooville area. The infrastructure is to be located on land north of Elizabeth Road, within the Purbrook area of Waterloooville.

The application has not been discussed with the Council through any pre-application enquiry.

This statement sets out 1) an assessment of the site context; 2) a summary of the relevant policy framework; 3) an assessment of the proposed development; followed by 4) conclusions based on the preceding sections.

This statement should be read in alongside the following documents and drawings:

- Site Location Plan
- Block Plan
- Site Layout Plan & Floor Plan
- Proposed Elevations
- CIL Form
- Application Forms & Ownership Certificates

2.0 Site Context

The site comprises an area of undeveloped land. The site lies within a larger area of open space that belongs to the Borough Council.



View looking
north-west from
Elizabeth Road
towards the site,

The site is generally open in aspect, and currently serves as an area of grassland in no particular use. A small shelter provides the only built feature on the site. The site is severed from the larger area of open space to the north-east by a building and car park area.

The site is open in aspect from Elizabeth Road, though only at the point of passing the site. The land is otherwise relatively enclosed on all boundaries by a combination of landscaping and mature trees to the north and west, and an existing building (currently in use as a dog day care centre) to the east. A further area of open space lies south of the site.



Aerial view demonstrating the context of the surroundings to the site

★ = location of proposed development

The context of the surroundings is a mix of uses. Land north-west of the site comprises an infant and junior school, while east of the site lies the aforementioned dog day centre building and car park. Beyond this lies an area of open space. Further open space is provided to the south. Otherwise, the wider surroundings are residential, although the nearest property is some distance away.

Relevant Planning History

A review of the planning application register reveals three planning applications associated with the adjacent building to the east. The most relevant being application APP/17/00231 which sought the change of use of the building from a community centre to a dog day care unit. Permission was granted in May 2017, and the permission has since been implemented.

3.0 Planning Policy Assessment

Policy Context

The site is located within the jurisdiction of Havant Borough Council.

At a local level, planning policies are contained within the Havant Core Strategy (2011) and Havant Allocations (2014) documents. National planning policy in the form of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework is also of relevance.

There are also some Government national policies and documents relating to the provision of faster internet connections that are considered a material consideration in the assessment of this application.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)

Paragraph 2 of the NPPF notes that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 11 advises that decisions (on planning applications) should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As such, development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

Section 10 sets out guidance relating to supporting high quality communications. Paragraph 112 notes that advance 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** (our emphasis).

Paragraph 113 notes that where new sites are required (for communications infrastructure), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

Paragraph 116 advises that local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

Paragraph 130 makes the point that where the design of a development proposal accords with local planning policies, design should not be used by local authorities as a valid reason to object to development.

Local Planning Policy – Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011) & Havant Borough Allocations (2014)

In the context of the Havant Local Plan, the site lies within a settlement boundary and is not subject to any site constraints¹. The site and surroundings are not identified as protected open space, though other open land within the wider area is afforded this allocation.

The policies relevant to the site and the proposed development are CS2, CS16, CS17 and CS19 of the Core Strategy, and Policy AL1 of the Allocations Document. These policies are looked at in more detail below.

Policy CS2 – This policy relates to employment development. Part 8 of the policy notes that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that encourage smart economic growth and *promote advances in information and communications technologies* (our emphasis).

¹ https://cdn.havant.gov.uk/public/documents/Map%204_2.pdf

Policy CS16 - This policy provides general guidance on what constitutes good design, and lists several criteria that development proposals are required to comply with. The policy notes that development respond to the local context and produce a positive relationship between buildings, street, and street spaces.

The design of the development is appropriate for infrastructure of this type. Efforts have been made to minimise the visual impact by ensuring the external colour of the cabin and fencing is dark green (RAL 6002 and RAL 6005), so as to blend in with the greenery in and around the site. A camouflage screen will also be located around the boundary fence to further improve the visual appearance of the development.

The location of development within a mixed use setting ensures the development does not look out of place for the context of the surroundings. The development will be visible from Elizabeth Road, though mostly from direct views passing the site. The development is obscured by the school boundary landscaping to the west and north, and the existing dog day centre building to the east.

Overall, the design is considered appropriate, taking account of the location and surrounding development, and the advice contained within paragraph 113 of the National Planning Policy Framework, while also giving due weight to the considerable benefits the development will bring to residents and businesses of Waterloooville.

Policy CS17 – This policy simply advises that development should take place within the urban settlement boundaries, and that development in countryside locations is generally restricted.

Policy CS19 – This policy relates to effective provision of infrastructure, including telecommunications infrastructure. The policy advises that infrastructure development will be supported subject to compliance with 9 criteria. Of the 9 criteria, only two are considered relevant to this proposal, those being criteria 1 and 6.

Criteria 1 requires that development makes the most effective use of existing infrastructure, including opportunities for co-location of facilities.

RESPONSE: The site will be operated by a company known as Toob Ltd. The company already operate a gigabit internet service in Southampton, offering speeds of up to 900Mbps (both download and upload speed). Their service has received overwhelmingly positive reviews.

The site operator deploys full fibre optic cable from their exchange data centre into the premises, which is considered the most reliable and future proof method of delivering high speed internet. It can carry from 1 Gigabit to 10 Gigabits or more, ensuring the development is 'future proofed'.

As a private company, Toob are not able to share their infrastructure with competitors. This criteria is mainly aimed at mobile operators sharing mast sites. The infrastructure is needed to allow Toob to offer a higher speed internet service than any other provider in the local area and compete with the likes of BT, Virgin Media etc.

However, Toob does have future plans to provide wholesale services to other Internet Service Providers and resellers, which will enable other third parties to use Toob's network and sell under their own brand name.

Criteria 6 seeks to ensure that new infrastructure supports the local economy.

RESPONSE: The proposed development will allow full fibre (to the premises) access across the entire Waterlooville urban area.

High speed broadband is now recognised as a fourth vital utility supporting people and communities to further enable working, education, communications, healthcare and entertainment in the home during and beyond the Covid 19 pandemic. As such, the proposal will fully comply with the requirement of criteria 6 to support (and enhance) the local economy.

Policy AL1– This policy seeks to ensure that all development is sustainable, and advises the Council will support all proposals that make a positive social, economic and environmental contribution to community and business life.

Emerging Planning Policy

It is noted that the Council have submitted a new local plan (February 2021). The plan has limited weight until it becomes adopted.

In any case, a review of the Waterlooville proposals map² reveals that the site remains unchanged, in that it remains in the urban area and is not classified as protected open space, or subject to any other constraints.

Other Policy Considerations

Central government are keen on ensuring that access to full fibre internet is sped up, and that Councils have their part to play in delivering the necessary infrastructure. This is detailed (among other documents) within the following:

1. Government press announcement 27/8/20³... "Government ministers are calling on local councils to help ensure people can access better broadband

² <https://cdn.havant.gov.uk/public/documents/CD05%20Waterlooville%20Policies%20Map.pdf>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ministers-call-on-councils-to-help-deliver-digital-connectivity-ambitions>

and mobile connectivity crucial to the UK's coronavirus recovery". A summary of this announcement is as follows:

- Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman and Local Government Minister Simon Clarke have today written to local authorities setting out how they can help boost gigabit broadband rollout and 5G mobile coverage.
- Government ministers are calling on local councils to help ensure people can access better broadband and mobile connectivity crucial to the UK's coronavirus recovery
- We want to help people get access to fast and reliable connectivity. It is a top priority for this government.
- Councils have a vital role to play in the rollout of digital infrastructure and while there is good work going on up and down the country, there is more we can do.

2. OFCOM (UK telecommunications regulator) "Supercharging investment in fibre broadband" announcement 8/1/20⁴, summarised as follows:

- As demand for internet data accelerates, the UK's infrastructure needs to be upgraded. Full-fibre broadband connections can deliver much faster speeds than copper – up to one gigabit per second. They are also up to five times more reliable, and less likely to slow down when lots of people use them at the same time.
- So today we are proposing new, flexible regulation that will help fuel a full-fibre future for the whole of the UK.
- Having a choice of networks has delivered significant benefits to people, such as innovation, better services and competitive prices. In 2017, we set out a range of pro-investment measures that

⁴ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2019/supercharging-investment-in-fibre-broadband>

kickstarted full fibre rollout by a range of broadband companies. Since then, full fibre coverage has trebled.”

3. Government manifesto pledge - “The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review - setting the UK’s broadband targets”⁵. A relevant extract notes that “*The aim is to see 15 million premises connected to full fibre by 2025, with coverage across all parts of the country by 2033*”.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-digital-uk#the-future-telecoms-infrastructure-review---setting-the-uks-broadband-targets>

4.0 The Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the construction of a fibre optic cabin unit. The cabin measures approximately 3.5 x 3.5m. The proposal also requires an external metre cabinet (measuring approximately 2.32m x 0.74m) to be installed on the southern elevation of the cabin. The cabin will be 3m in height. The site will be enclosed with fencing, proposed to be 3m high, and will incorporate a woven privacy screen to camouflage the development from the surroundings.

The development will utilise the existing parking area associated with the adjacent building (currently a dog day centre). A new footpath will be created from the car park, leading to the compound, with a pedestrian gate providing access to the compound.

The overall area of the land within the fence line comprises approximately 6.5m x 6.5m, resulting in a site area of 42.25 sq m.

Principle of Development

The development lies within an urban area, and within a defined settlement boundary. Policy CS17 confirms that most forms of development should be directed towards urban areas, while Policy CS2 supports development that will enhance information and communication technologies. Furthermore, the principle of development is also established by guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 112 in particular).

In addition, other government policy not related to planning (detailed above) confirms the need for local authorities to encourage the growth of full fibre infrastructure.

The site does not lie within an area of protected open space. The loss of this small area of land is unlikely to result in any detrimental impact on the surroundings, especially as the land is severed from the larger (and more usable) area of open space to the east. It is considered the land is of no great value as open space, and would be better served by the development proposal, given the benefits the proposal will bring to the Waterloo area.

Scale & Appearance

The scale of the proposed development would be single storey in height, which is lower than any of the surrounding development. The built development is kept to the smallest operational size possible. At around 12.25 sq m, the cabin is clearly small in scale in comparison with the built form within the surroundings.

The appearance is appropriate for the type of development proposed, while its impact has been reduced by ensuring the building and fencing (incorporating camouflage woven screen) will be coloured green, to ensure it blends in with the surrounding greenery.

Landscaping

The site is reasonably well screened by existing landscaping around the site. The proposed development seeks to retain the existing landscape features and will not intrude into the root protection areas of any nearby trees.

The landscaping prevents any views from the north and from those travelling from the west of the site along Elizabeth Road. The site is fully open in view from the south and will be visible from both Elizabeth Road and the public open space to the south. Views will be more limited from the east as the existing dog day centre building will obscure views from this aspect.

Overall, the site as currently presented is of no landscape merit, and the proposed development will integrate comfortably with the surroundings.

Parking & Traffic Generation

Once operational, it is anticipated that on average, a maximum of two visits per week would be needed (1-2 hours per day on site) for general maintenance purposes. Access to the site would be via the existing car park to the east. The car park provides sufficient parking and turning space to serve the development, while not adversely affecting the dog day care centre business that also utilises the car park.

The level of traffic generated by the proposal is considered acceptable, and will barely be noticeable in comparison with the traffic movements associated with the various uses around the site.

Noise

Given the previously discussed traffic generation associated with the site, there will be little noise impact on the surroundings so far as traffic noise is concerned. The cabin will contain the noise of the equipment within. There are two external air conditioning units, which will generate a low ambient noise when in operation.

In any case, the cabin is located within a mixed use area, so is not located in a particularly sensitive location so far as noise is concerned. The proposal is not particularly close to residential development. This ensures that the development (once operational) will have no notable impact on the surroundings from a noise perspective.

5.0 Conclusions

The site is located within Waterlooville, and within an area of mixed use, including a school to the north-west, public open space to the south and east, and a building being used as a dog day care facility to the immediate east. The nearest residential use is some distance from the site. The proposed development comprises the installation of infrastructure necessary to operate a gigabit full fibre internet service within the Waterlooville area.

The proposed scheme accords with the relevant development control policies in the Havant Local Plan (Policy's CS2 and CS19 in particular), and aligns with the policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. There is a clear principle of development for full fibre infrastructure such as that proposed in this instance, both through planning policy and other government policy as detailed above.

The scale of development is small, in comparison with the form of the built up surroundings. The appearance is typical for infrastructure such as this, but the visual impact of development has been softened through the chosen colour palette of dark green for the building and fencing, and the proposed camouflage screen. Overall, the development will sit comfortably in the street scene. Due weight should also be given to the significant benefits the development will bring to the wider area.

In summary, it is considered that the proposals are appropriate, are supported by planning policy and will not impact upon any interests of acknowledged importance. The proposal will bring considerable benefits to the wider area, and we therefore conclude the proposed development should be supported by the Council accordingly.