



Planning Supporting Statement

Our Ref.	SUR-11
Street Hub Address	Footpath outside 30 West Street, Horsham, RH12 1PB
Postcode	RH12 1PB
National Grid Reference	E: 516980, N: 130648
Project Type	New site
Conservation Area	Approx. 60m West of boundary of Horsham Conservation Area
Statutory Listed Buildings	Approx. 60m West of Grade II Listed 21, 21A and 22, West Street

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0	Name	Name	Day/Month/Year
1	Sam Platt	Martin Brown	January 2026
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

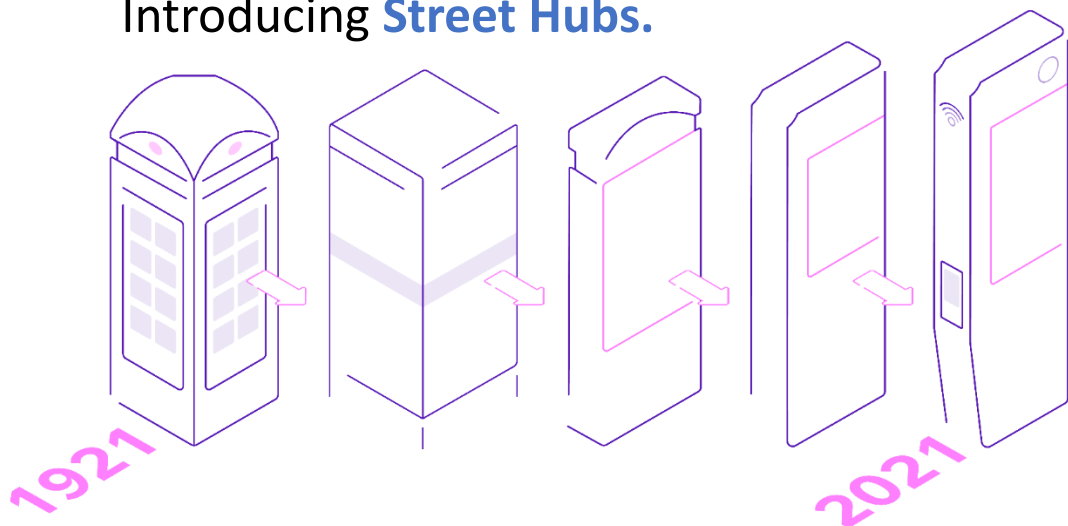
This Supporting Statement has been prepared by Telent on behalf of BT Group plc. The statement has been prepared in support of the planning application made to the Council for the installation of a 'Street Hub' and 2No. digital illuminated screens (one to each side of the unit) at the Footpath outside 30 West Street, Horsham, RH12 1PB (E: 516980, N: 130648). This application is made under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Regulations 2015 and express advertisement consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007. The right to install, operate and maintain communication apparatus is granted through Section 106 of the Communication Act 2003, due to BT's right as a Code System Operator.

Considerations of design and layout are informed by the context, having regard not just to any immediate neighbouring buildings but the immediate and wider townscape. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions and materials all help to determine the character and identity of the development.

1.2 Purpose of Street Hubs

2021 marked the 100th anniversary of the original K1 kiosk. Public connectivity moved on with the deployment of InLink units first launched in 2017, and now, BT are further updating and evolving the payphone estate to better serve today's digitally connected converged-media society through the new improved BT Street Hub.

Introducing **Street Hubs**.



In 2017, BT started working as part of an exclusive partnership with InLinkUK to ensure communities in urban areas throughout the United Kingdom are well-served in the digital age through the roll out of 'InLink' units. These were developed and deployed to replace and rationalize the existing network of payphones. A total of 494 InLink

structures were rolled out in 23 cities throughout the U.K. offering 1Gbps free public Wi-Fi, free UK calls, USB charging, an emergency services button and a range of other digital services for those in the vicinity. HD displays on each side of the unit are used to carry advertising, which helped to fund the units, but the screens also allow Councils 5% of free screen time on each Street Hub unit annually to promote and educate, equivalent to 876 hours per unit or 438 hours per screen. This content would be scheduled and (where needed) developed in partnership with BT and Global, and can tell residents and visitors about local services, local events and news, as well as warnings and public notices.

Through collaboration with councils, BT helped in creating a service that revolutionized streetscapes and helped in providing a connected city solution that delivers the fastest and most robust free public Wi-Fi service in the UK. Councils across the UK have used the InLink units to meet key challenges head-on, upgrading local infrastructure, tackling the digital divide, and freeing the high street from unnecessary furniture.

Unfortunately, InLinkUK (who were supplying the units to BT within the partnership) went into administration in 2019, and, as such, the InLink product is no longer available. Since then, BT have been working on a new and improved unit - the 'Street Hub'. The Street Hub has all the existing benefits of the previous InLink unit, but has improved Wi-Fi range, environmental sensors, insight counting and small cell mobile connectivity. This addition of the 5G small cells to Street Hubs is very much in line with current UK Government's guidance on communications infrastructure and the National Infrastructure Strategy. Consequently, when installed, residents, local businesses and visitors will get a faster, more reliable connection for calls and internet access.

BT are continuing to push public connectivity forward with the move to Street Hubs – a sleek, modern answer to the demands of a digitally connected, converged-media society. To this end, BT have made great progress so far, with over 950 Street Hub units live across the UK. Local Authorities across the country use Streets Hubs to meet key challenges head-on such as upgrading local infrastructure, tackling the digital divide, and freeing the high street from unnecessary furniture.

With Street Hubs, BT are further transforming the payphone estate by making streets smarter, with ultrafast Wi-Fi, public messaging, and better mobile connectivity. We are making them safer with ready emergency services. Furthermore, BT are making them more sustainable, with sensors allowing for 'smart city' planning and reduced street clutter.

These new units will be monitored 24/7, with weekly inspections and a minimum of bi-weekly cleaning services to keep the unit to a high standard of finish within the existing streetscape. All units will be fitted with a direct 999 call button to aid in the efficiency of operations of the emergency services, with emergency (i.e., Police) awareness messaging shown via their advertising screens on either side of the unit. Furthermore, Street Hubs are powered by 100% renewable carbon-free energy, making them sustainable and durable for years to come.

In 2021, former BT head of street, James Browne, said:

“Street Hubs form part of BT’s plan to transform the UK’s streets with a digital communications service designed for the 21st Century.

I’m really excited that we’re now evolving the service even further with a newly designed Street Hub 2.0 unit which is more sustainable while delivering free public Wi-fi services and improved 4G/5G mobile coverage to local communities.

The free digital services provided by our Street Hub units can play an important role in helping to revive the UK’s high streets following the pandemic.

We are working closely with local councils and communities to introduce the new units to more parts of the country, enhancing the UK’s future digital infrastructure, and bringing benefits to residents, businesses and tourists alike.”

1.3 The Importance of Mobile Connectivity

The ability to access mobile data and voice services is an integral part of modern life. Mobile devices are relied upon by consumers and businesses. Mobile connectivity is no longer seen as a luxury: the ability to make calls, access the internet and receive e-mail and text is seen as a necessity. Businesses, large and small, need mobile connectivity to operate effectively and to compete in an increasingly global market. In an emergency, the public rely upon mobile devices to call for help and the emergency services rely upon mobile services to respond.

1.4 UK Government Policy on Mobile Infrastructure Deployment

The UK government has identified the need for greater investment in mobile infrastructure to increase the widespread availability and capacity of mobile voice and data networks.

“The Government acknowledges that there has been a profound shift over the last decade in the way citizens approach and access digital communications. What was once seen as a luxury is now a basic need, and people expect to have access to fast broadband at home, irrespective of where they live, and use their mobile devices anywhere they go”. DCMS, May 2016.

The last few years have seen a number of UK-wide initiatives to improve coverage including:

- Coverage commitments in the 4G LTE spectrum awarded to Telefonica O₂ (February 2013) to deliver mobile broadband with 98% indoor premises coverage by the end of 2017
- National commitment by all four MNOs (December 2014) to deliver 90% geographic coverage by 2017
- Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) – investment by DCMS of up to £150m (to March 2016) in towers to deliver connectivity in complete mobile not-spots.
- Changes to the Permitted Development rights afforded to communications code operators (such as WIG) to allow new networks to be rolled-out more efficiently.

- Changes to the Electronic Communications to Code (December 2017) to allow mobile operators to more easily roll-out new communications infrastructure.

Digital connectivity in 2024 is now considered to be a utility, and modern life is increasingly impossible without it. Connectivity drives productivity and innovation and is the physical underpinning of a digital nation. Being connected is fundamental to the success in our modern world and Street Hub provides a cost-free way for communities to get online and take advantage of available opportunities. The Government has committed that every individual and every business should have the skills and confidence to seize the opportunities of digital technology and have easy access to high-quality internet wherever they live, work, travel or learn.

1.5 National Support for Modern Communications

There is significant UK Government support for the delivery of 5G, particularly as this new connectivity will be a step change from earlier generations of mobile connectivity and will be critical to economic growth and sustainable communities. In the coming years, 5G mobile connectivity will underpin the UK Digital Economy and bring significant social, economic and sustainability benefits of advanced modern connectivity. It is essential that the planning system looks to support and facilitate 5G infrastructure improvements, such as the small cell capability of Street Hubs, to meet the Government's Digital Strategy. In addition, modern connectivity, such as 5G, will be essential to help the Government meet its wider sustainability and climate change targets.

Published in November 2020, the Government acknowledges in its National Infrastructure Strategy that investment in our infrastructure is critical as the UK seeks to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Strategy puts innovation and new technology at its heart, in which the BT Street Hub is at the forefront of this technological revolution. The Government's ambition is to support fast and reliable digital connectivity that can deliver economic, social and well-being benefits because new technologies have enormous potential to improve the environment and the daily lives of people across the UK. The BT Street Hub can contribute to this with its suite of features, including Wi-Fi and small 5G cells capabilities, air monitoring and much more.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1 Site and Proposed Development

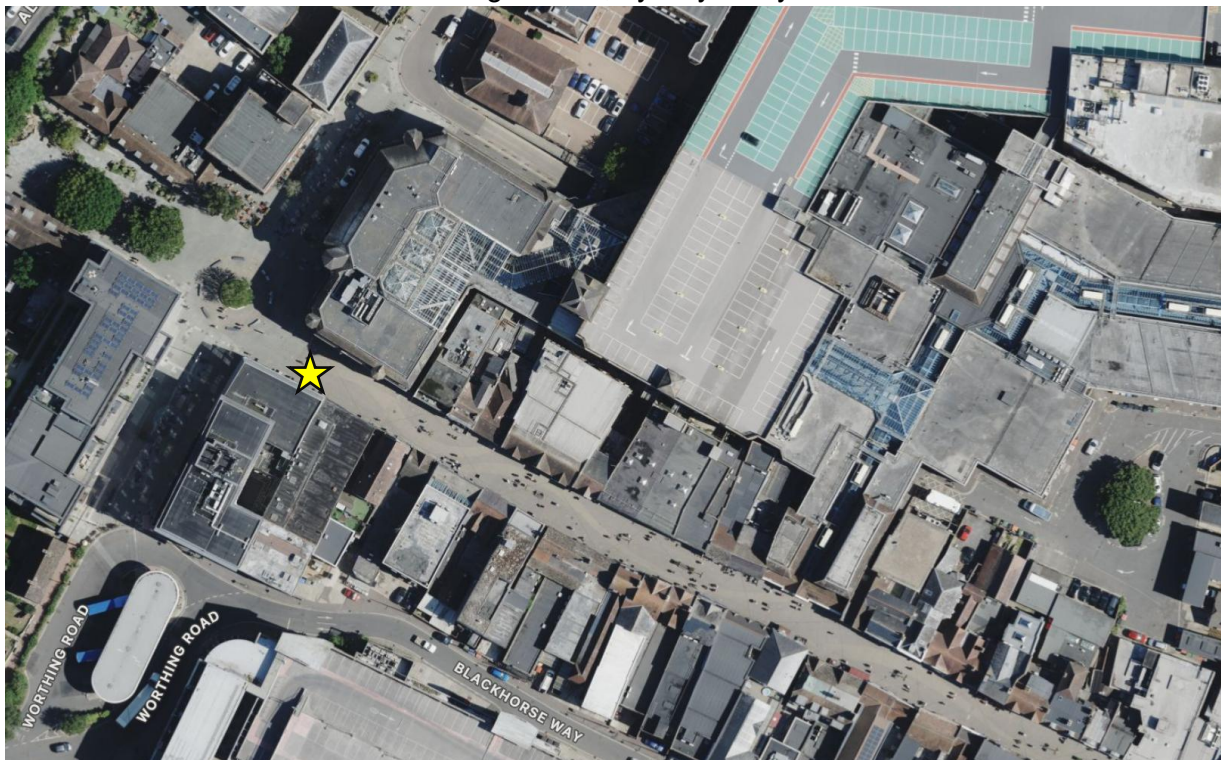
The application site comprises a section of pedestrianised highway on West Street in Horsham town centre, positioned outside of the commercial property currently occupied by Evapo vape shop and the former Poundland building (currently vacant). While vehicular movements are permitted elsewhere on the adjacent roads of Horsham town centre, access (including cyclists) is prohibited along West Street and as such is pedestrian only.

Designated as being within the settlement's '*Shop*' boundary in accordance with adopted Local Plan policy HB6 – Vitality & Viability of Town Centre, the streetscene at this point of Central Horsham is that of a highly commercial retail centre, with a wide range of shops, cafes, restaurants, bars etc. at ground floor levels of tall multi-storey buildings on both sides of the pedestrianised highway. Further mixed uses nearby include the Swan Walk Shopping Centre which hosts circa 50 stores, services and restaurants including well-known High-Street brands and smaller independent outlets. Car parking for over 900 spaces is also available. It is also worth noting Horsham Train Station is found a short distance North of the site, which further contributes to the prevailing bustling nature of this modern locale.

Whilst not located within the designation's boundary, it is important to highlight that the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area is approximately 60m East of the application site. Covering much of settlement's central area. The Grade II Listed buildings at 21, 21A and 22, West Street are also located on the boundary of this designation. A full description and assessments of the development's potential impact on the nearby heritage assets is set out in the Heritage Report section of this statement (page 28).

Whilst there are no existing telephone kiosks that can be removed as part of this development, the principle of telecommunications equipment has been established within this general location of Horsham town centre.

The site location is shown on the image below, by way of a yellow star for context.



Aerial view of site

The below image, taken when surveying the site, shows the street view context and general location of the proposed Street Hub.



Street view of site

The proposal would see the installation of a single Street Hub unit to be located on the section of Footpath outside 30 West Street, Horsham, RH12 1PB (E: 516980, N: 130648). This forms part of a strategic package of applications submitted to Horsham District Council, containing 3No. Street Hubs located within existing streetscapes in the Horsham area. It should be noted that these proposals for the installation of a total of 3No. Street Hubs will see with it the removal of existing, outdated and worn-down BT payphones, at no extra cost to the council – however in this instance no kiosks are available to remove as part of this proposal. This would help in achieving the advancement and decluttering of the council's streetscapes, in line with the UK Digital Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the relevant Development Plan for the area.

2.2 Street Hub Design and Dimensions

Street Hubs are free-standing structures featuring a fully accessible tablet interface and digital HD display screens on two sides. Overall, Street Hub dimensions are 35cm deep and 123.6cm wide and a height of 298.6cm to maximize the Wi-Fi range without dominating the street. A narrow base limits the footprint while ensuring access to wheelchair users.

Street Hubs have been designed to be accessible to all users, regardless of their physical or technological capabilities. Street Hubs are free to use, fully accessible community assets connecting and improving local streets in urban areas. At no cost to taxpayers or end users, Street Hubs provide communities with an unprecedented suite of essential urban tools including:

- Ultrafast public and encrypted Wi-Fi
- Powered by 100% renewable carbon-free energy
- Inspected weekly and cleaned at least every two weeks, monitored 24/7
- Free phone calls
- Display community and emergency (i.e. police) awareness messaging
- Ability to house IoT sensors such as air quality, traffic etc.

The Street Hub unit will be funded through the display of advertising in conjunction with other council and community content, via sponsorship from companies who will utilize the digital HD display screens on both sides of the unit. The two screens automatically dim at night to 600cd/m², following daylight hours and in accordance with the levels set for this type and size of screen (those under 10m) by the Institute of Lighting Professionals, Professional Lighting Guide 05 2015: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements - minimizing disturbances to residents in the evening.

The screens will display content at 10-second intervals, in the form of both the commercial content that funds the service, as well as a wide range of local community and council content. As such, the proposed Street Hub will provide 876 hours of free council advertising per year with the opportunity for discounted advertising for local business groups (such as BIDs and Chambers of Commerce) and their members through BT's Street Hub Partners Program.

This sponsorship will also cover the maintenance and servicing costs of the Street Hub. This is necessary to ensure the program remains financially sustainable. Displayed advertisements will comply with all advertising regulations and guidelines. Further detail is provided in the attached Street Hub Product Statement and associated documents.

Moreover, all Street Hubs are powered by 100% renewable carbon-free energy, with energy efficiency prioritized throughout the design process. This is most evident in the following features:

- A state-of-the-art LED-backlit LCD screen that consumes approximately 60% less power than Cold Cathode Fluorescent Tubes
- Screen filters reflect light reducing the need for high power, noisy cooling systems typically seen in competing solutions
- Industrial-grade components designed to function at high temperatures lower the need for cooling without compromising performance
- Passive design for cooling, i.e. aluminium casing for better thermal dissipation
- High-efficiency power supplies providing 80% or better efficiency, compared to 65-70% of typical components.
- Noise from cabinet and equipment should not exceed: 41dB at a distance of 3 metres during day, 35 dB at a distance of 3 metres during night, Operational volume should not exceed 60dB at a distance of 1 metre.

2.3 Application History

Having checked the Councils online planning search, it appears there is no relevant history at the application site itself.

However, it is important to note that digital and illuminated advertisement structures are found elsewhere within the District, often at retail parks and bus shelters. The applicants consider that this demonstrates that digital advertisement can be acceptable additions to the streetscenes and that this form of development can effectively assimilate into the surroundings of Horsham.

2.4 The Horsham District Council Rollout

This application is part of a wider scheme of Street Hub deployment across Horsham District Council. As stated previously, a total of 3No. locations have been identified for the installation of a Street Hub throughout the district.

In terms of roll-out, where possible and practicable, it is proposed to install Street Hubs either as a direct replacement for existing BT payphones, or in very close proximity to such payphones. As these existing payphones will be removed it should minimise impact on existing streetscenes by reducing street clutter, or at least not adding to it at particular locations. Whereby a new Street Hub is proposed, BT payphones will be removed, again where possible and practicable from the same streetscape, or same visual envelope, again to try to minimise impact on visual clutter.



While most of the proposed Street Hubs directly replace, or are very close to, existing payphones for removal, it is important to note that no kiosks are available to remove as part of this development. Nonetheless the proposed Street Hub project will help to deliver a comprehensive network of connectivity within the borough whilst decluttering Horsham District Council's streetscene.

3.0 Planning Policy

This section sets out the most relevant national and local planning policy concerning the proposed development.

3.1 National Planning Policy and Guidance

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) set out the Government's advertisement control planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied and is considered to be a material consideration for the Express Advertisement Consent application. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) state the following specifically in relation to advertisement control:

PART I – Section 3

Powers to be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety

3.—(1) A local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account—

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and
- (b) any other relevant factors.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1)(b)—

- (a) factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;
- (b) factors relevant to public safety include—
 - (i) the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - (ii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air;
 - (iii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

(3) In taking account of factors relevant to amenity, the local planning authority may, if it thinks fit, disregard any advertisement that is being displayed.

- (4) Unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed.

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Planning policy is provided at the national level by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF is pro – development with a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ seen as a golden thread, running through both plan making and decision taking’. The thrust of this guidance is positive and a reminder to LPAs that we need to build the requisite infrastructure to enable economic growth.

In this regard the Framework can be summarised as follows:

- Government policy is to support high quality communications infrastructure and systems as essential for sustainable economic growth;
- Government policy is to keep the inevitable environmental impact associated with electronic communications development to a minimum;
- The best way to minimise environmental impact is to avoid the unnecessary proliferation of new radio masts and sites;
- The starting point for planning new networks or the expansion of existing networks is therefore to use existing electronic communications sites as and when applicable;
- The emphasis on minimising environmental impact is greater per the sensitivity of the site. The emphasis on exploring and utilising site sharing opportunities is consequently higher in these circumstances;
- Best practice encourages a consultative approach and one that seeks to minimise potential visual impact and
- Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in certain specified designated landscapes, e.g. National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas, etc.;

The NPPF as a whole is aimed at encouraging a more positive approach to town planning. While the NPPF builds environmental protection into the definition of sustainable development, there is also a very clear emphasis that local planning authorities should be looking for ways to help development come forward and not reject applications simply on environmental grounds. This is emphasised in paragraph 10 of the NPPF, which states that in order that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF recognises that this is especially relevant where a

development might have other significantly important benefits such as being essential to meet, for example, enhancement and improvement to existing communications infrastructure.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF state that for ‘decision-making’, the presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

As such, development proposals that accord with the provisions of the Development Plan should be approved without delay. In respect of this guidance, the following sections of this statement demonstrate that the proposed development accords fully with all relevant Development Plan and NPPF policies and, therefore, permission should be granted for the development.

The importance of the proposed development in providing the upgrading and enhancement of the existing public phone kiosk network is clearly an important material planning consideration as it directly supports sustainability and is also precisely the type of new digital infrastructure that the NPPF is seeking to support. The development proposed is comparatively small scale, sited where such forms of development are now established part of street scenes throughout the country, designed in a way that is predominately consistent with the existing infrastructure setup and so should be acceptable in every respect.

However, for completeness we still highlight some of the key points within the NPPF as they help demonstrate why the application should be permitted:

Paragraph 7 advises that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It then states that: *“At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” [our emphasis];*

Paragraph 20 advises that strategic policies should *“make sufficient provision for.....telecommunications” and that it should “be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances”* (paragraph 86).

Paragraph 38, on “decision-making” states that authorities should “*work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible*”.

The NPPF builds on the aspiration to build a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 85 states: ‘*Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking in to account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken, should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation....*’

As highlighted previously, the NPPF directly addresses the need for enhanced wireless communication services, first mentioned in paragraph 20, which states that an LPA’s strategic policies must make sufficient provision for:

“b) *infrastructure for transport, telecommunications (our emphasis), security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)*”

Leading on from this, paragraph 119 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. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time.....*”. This wording echoes guidance set out in previous version of NPPF and emphasises the importance of reliable communications infrastructure for both economic growth and social well-being.

While supported, paragraph 120 of the NPPF retains the requirement to minimise the number of installations consistent with the efficient operation of the network but also includes being consistent with the needs of consumers and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion.

Paragraph 123 retains the guidance set out in previous versions of the NPPF version and states 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*”.

As can be seen from the above, the NPPF clearly acknowledges the benefits of modern electronic communications and seeks to encourage such development as being essential due to their role in supporting a modern economy, contributing to sustainable objectives, and enhancing local community access to a range of goods and services.

Local planning authorities are advised to respond positively to proposals for electronic communications development and this must include an understanding of the associated special problems and technical needs of developing and upgrading communications networks.

Public benefits are defined within the NPPF and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress. Benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

In addition to the above, paragraph 141 highlights that *“the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts”*.

In the case of this proposal site, the installation of the Street Hub unit would provide a modern, multifunctional alternative to the traditional ‘mast’ that would act as a communication hub within a dense urban area, while ensuring that the character of the area is not significantly adversely impacted upon in respect of matters relating to amenity and public safety.

Planning Practice Guidance

Specific guidance relating to advertising developments and on the interpretation of the Regulations is contained within the **Communities and Local Government Planning Practice Guidance** (“PPG”), which contains the current guidance on this subject. Section 8 of the PPG explains in greater detail the criteria for considering amenity issues in advertising proposals. More specifically, on the matter of scale the guidance suggests that advertisements should respect the scale of the surroundings.

“....for example, if the locality where the advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, the local planning authority would consider whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.”

It further advises that; *“This might mean that a large poster-hoarding would be refused where it would dominate a group of listed buildings, but would be permitted in an industrial or commercial area of a major city (where there are large buildings and main highways) where the advertisement would not adversely affect the visual amenity of the neighbourhood of the site.”*

On matters of Public Safety, the PPG states that:

“All advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. For example, at junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, on the approach to a low bridge or level crossing or other places where local conditions present traffic hazards. There are less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on

a site within a commercial or industrial locality, if it is a shop fascia sign, name-board, trade or business sign, or a normal poster panel, and if the advertisement is not on the skyline.”

3.2 Development Plan Policies

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, requires planning applications and appeals to be determined having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan and other material considerations, and section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

For the purposes of Section 70, the current adopted Development Plan for Horsham District Council is currently made up of a suite of documents comprising the:

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) is the overarching planning document for Horsham district outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP), and replaces the Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies documents which were adopted in 2007. The most relevant policies of the adopted plan with regards the application site are considered to be:

Policy 1 - Sustainable Development

‘When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission, unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.’*

Policy 5 - Horsham Town

'To promote the prosperity of Horsham town and maintain and strengthen its role as the primary economic and cultural centre in the District, and the wider economic area. Development will be allowed within the built-up area of Horsham where it:

- 1. Retains the town's key position as the main settlement within the District whilst protecting the unique characteristics of the town, including its historic character and high quality environment.*
- 2. Contributes to the provision of a range of services and facilities including those in arts, heritage and leisure that make the town self sustaining.*
- 3. Contributes to the economy of the town to support a vibrant high street and town centre that meets local and business demands, as well as supporting the wider economy including the Gatwick Diamond, and the economy of the south east including;
 - a. the provision of a wide range of employment*
 - b. retaining and enhancing its unique retail mix to meet both independent and national retailers requirements*
 - c. contribution to the evening economy through the provision of a range of leisure uses.**
- 4. Promotes high quality transport infrastructure which enables excellent pedestrian, cycling, bus and rail and vehicle accessibility for residents, visitors and business employees; and*
- 5. Delivers a mix of residential properties which meet the needs of the population and contributes to quality modern living that is compatible with a town centre setting.*
- 6. Retains, enlarges or enhances the existing formal and informal green spaces within the town'.*

Policy 12- Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centre

'Recognising the development hierarchy for the District, the hierarchy for the district's town and village centres is established as follows:

- Primary centre: Horsham town*
- Secondary centres: Billingshurst, Henfield, Pulborough, Southwater, Steyning and Storrington*
- Tertiary centres and outlying small retail units: Smaller village centres and shops*

The hierarchy of retail centres will be supported and enhanced through;

1. Positive measures to improve Horsham town centre as the primary centre. The other town and village centres within the district will be encouraged to help sustain their roles in meeting needs and acting as a focus for a range of activities, including retail, leisure, and recreation appropriate to the scale and character of the centre.

2. Promotion and encouragement of activities in town and village centres so they continue to be the prime focus for community life in the district by:

- a. Maintaining a diverse range and choice of suitable uses including retail, leisure, entertainment, sports and recreation, arts, culture, business and commercial uses as well as residential use.*
- b. A well designed and maintained attractive public realm.*
- c. Promotions, outdoor events and entertainment and markets.*

- d. A choice of accessible and affordable means of travel including public transport and adequate and convenient car parking.*
- e. Respect for historic character and good urban design principles.*
- f. A convenient, cohesive and concentrated primary area which contains a high proportion of retail (A1) uses where this has reasonable prospects for remaining viable.*
- g. In the larger centres encouragement for variety in the “offer” which for Horsham town centre has meant the identification of distinct “quarters” that define character and ambiance.*
- h. For the secondary areas defined within larger town centres a wider range of class A uses as well as other use classes can be located.*
- i. Suitable residential use in existing older and new buildings.*
- j. A vibrant and regulated evening economy compatible with adjoining uses.*
- k. Encouragement in innovation and support for improvements in retailing activity.’*

Policy 14- Shop Fronts and Advertisements

- ‘1. Applications for new, replacement and temporary shop fronts, including fascias, will be supported where the proposal respects the architectural style, character and form of the buildings or location of which they form a part, including appropriate use of materials, colours and illuminations.*
- 2. Within Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings, proposals will be expected to retain an existing traditional shop front and/or features of architectural or historic interest, through retention or restoration. This will include the use of traditional materials, traditionally painted fascias and hanging signs with muted colours. In some cases, discreet externally illuminated signs may be acceptable.*
- 3. Advertisements, including hoardings, illumination of hoardings and illuminated fascia signs should be sensitively designed, of an appropriate size and appropriately located. Advertisements should not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the buildings or area by reason of its scale, detail, character, design or illumination; impair on pedestrian or highway safety; or result in, or compound, the perception of clutter on the street scene.*
- 4. The cumulative impact of advertisements on the character and appearance of the surrounding townscape and landscape will be considered as part of any such application.’*

Policy 32- Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

‘High quality and inclusive design for all development in the district will be required based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context for development. In particular, development will be expected to:

- 1. Provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment;*
- 2. Complement locally distinctive characters and heritage of the district;*
- 3. Contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings and the historic landscape in which they sit;*
- 4. Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and contribute to the support for suitable complementary facilities and uses; and*
- 5. Help secure a framework of high quality open spaces which meets the identified needs of the community.’*

Policy 33- Development Principles

'In order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to:

- 1. Make efficient use of land, and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings whilst respecting any constraints that exist;*
- 2. Ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development;*
- 3. Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;*
- 4. Are locally distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, townscape features, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments;*
- 5. Use high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping; and includes the provision of street furniture and public art where appropriate;*
- 6. Presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development; and,*
- 7. Ensure buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, unless this conflicts with the character of the surrounding townscape, landscape or topography where it is of good quality.'*

Policy 34- Cultural and Heritage Assets

'The Council recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Applications for such development will be required to:

- 1. Make reference to the significance of the asset, including drawing from research and documentation such as the West Sussex Historic Environment Record;*
- 2. Reflect the current best practice guidance produced by English Heritage and Conservation Area Character Statements;*
- 3. Reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design; including the use of traditional materials and techniques;*
- 4. Make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, and ensuring that development in conservation areas is consistent with the special character of those areas;*
- 5. Preserve, and ensure clear legibility of, locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials;*
- 6. Secure the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through continued preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset;*

7. Retain and improves the setting of heritage assets, including views, public rights of way, trees and landscape features, including historic public realm features; and
8. Ensure appropriate archaeological research, investigation, recording and reporting of both above and below-ground archaeology, and retention where required, with any assessment provided as appropriate.'

Policy 39- Infrastructure Provision

'1. The release of land for development will be dependent on there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the additional requirements arising from new development, or suitable necessary mitigation arrangements for the improvement of the infrastructure, services and community facilities caused by the development being provided.

2. Where there is a need for extra capacity, this will need to be provided in time to serve the development or the relevant phase of the development, in order to ensure that the environment and amenities of existing or new local residents is not adversely affected.

3. To ensure required standards are met, arrangements for new or improved infrastructure provision, will be secured by planning obligation / Community Infrastructure Levy, or in some cases conditions attached to a planning permission, so that the appropriate improvement can be completed prior to occupation of the development, or the relevant phase of the development.'

Horsham Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2036)

The Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Forum is a designated body of the Unparished Area of Horsham Town which formally adopted its Neighbourhood Plan on 14 December 2022. Covering the period up until 2036, the most relevant policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are considered to be:

- Policy HB3 – Character of Development
- Policy HB4 – Design of Development
- Policy HB6 – Retaining and Enhancing the Vitality and Viability of Horsham Town Centre
- Policy HB7 – A Welcoming Public Realm

3.3 Planning Assessment

Modern cities require to provide both residents and visitors with digital connectivity to enable their day to day living and enjoy recreational activities, all of which contributes to the vitality of the city and its economic and social sustainability.

The aim to replace existing BT payphones with the improved Street Hub units will generally enhance the public realm and many streetscapes, whilst providing free digital connectivity and other services at no cost to the Council, to enrich the users experience of moving through this public realm. The advantage in terms of advertisement will remove the display of many adverts with deemed consent on existing phone boxes, replacing them with modern LED digital displays to which the Council will benefit from

5% free screen time (circa 438 hours a year per display or 876 hours per unit), all of which will be properly maintained and can be controlled through the requirement for express consent. The adverts will help support this function and as such are in intrinsic part of the development, which given the retail/commercial context of the locale would not be considered as being overly visually incongruous and are such pieces of equipment that are now more commonplace within streetscenes throughout the country.

Planning Policy

Within the National and Local Planning Policy, key themes emerge in relation to the strategic directions and policy objectives. The proposal for a Street Hub unit at this location appropriately responds to these policies by:

- Providing communication infrastructure in a strategic location that will be a high-quality design and provide enhanced digital connectivity;
- Improving public safety through providing access to emergency services, increased street illumination and reducing anti-social behaviour currently present in existing BT payphone booths;
- Achieving advertising displays that are appropriately illuminated and designed to ensure no hindrance to surrounding transport networks;
- Promoting accessibility and inclusivity with fully accessible community features;
- Enhancing and improving the quality of the public environment and ensuring valued characteristics are protected, to create safe, functional places with strong sense of connection; and
- Promoting sustainability with units being powered by 100% renewable carbon-free energy.

Overall, the proposal is considered to be a highly appropriate response to strategic vision and objectives.

Siting

The locations of the Street Hubs have been primarily identified to replace existing BT payphones, where possible and practicable, although it may see a relocation from the existing payphone site, but also to provide seamless fast, free Wi-Fi service throughout the key commercial, retail, and pedestrian areas within the council, whereby residents, visitors and businesses can all use this service, together with the additional benefits of the Street Hub. In addition, Street Hubs are proposed in areas whereby tourists enjoy recreational facilities, and as such services will enhance the overall tourist experience of the city.

At the conception stage, we have tried to focus on pursuing direct conversions of existing kiosks wherever practicable. Also, we have looked for locations with wide pavements, and where a sites relationship with existing street furniture avoids undue proliferation of clutter, along with further consideration in respect of siting. It should be recognised that BT's legacy estate of payphones has grown up organically over the years, in which the whereabouts of BT kiosks can sometimes sit in environments that

have changed dramatically around them. In some instances, the BT Street Hub project has been seen as an opportunity to improve the pedestrian environments by removing awkward BT kiosks and repositioning the new unit to a more in keeping spot in the street scene.

It is appreciated that streets are ever-evolving environments, amidst society's changing connectivity demands. BT has a universal service obligation with Ofcom to provide a street level phone service, so the selection process of kiosks to be removed had to cater for this, however there is a recognition that the use of phone boxes has dramatically changed since kiosks were first conceived, whilst now the need for Wi-Fi and mobile coverage has increased massively. In this respect we have tried to build a sequence of Street Hub sites wherever possible, so that this can improve the user connectivity experience as they travel through an area.

Likewise, as Street Hubs can provide the Council with valuable data as each unit has environmental sensors that can monitor air, sound and light, in most instances it is beneficial to plan a sequence of Street Hub sites along key routes, so that the information gathered can be better analysed. This free environmental data has its own dashboard and can assist the planning system actively manage patterns of growth in support of national air quality objectives and will be a useful source of real-time data in the delivery of the Council's own green agenda. In a similar vein, Street Hubs have the capability to monitor pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicle movements and so can help the Council to monitor and, where practicable, develop travel plans for the area.

Like all development, the introduction of anything new within a particular environment will always be, to some degree, a noticeable addition or change to those residents, businesses and regular passers-by found closest. However, it should be appreciated that the visibility of something that is new or the change in form of something that has an established presence on-site, like the removal of an existing or nearby a telephone kiosk and installation of a new Street Hub unit, does not automatically result in an overwhelming adverse harm occurring, irrespective of any potential land designations. The starting point and fundamental principle applied by the applicant is always to replace existing BT call boxes with Street Hub units where they will be in-keeping with their existing surroundings. In this regard it is seen as an opportunity to help future proof the high street making them smarter, safer, and more sustainable.

In progressing new Street Hub sites, so far as practicable we have sought to minimise the contrast between the development itself and its immediate environment through appropriate siting and design. The siting of each Street Hub has been considered having regard to the available footpath widths, the whereabouts of the existing payphones to be removed (i.e. more visually prominent locations than that of any potentially relocated location or heritage sensitive areas) and the visual character of that particular street scene where the new Street Hub is proposed. With regards to its associated advertisement screens, thought has been given to its immediate context and public safety in terms of pedestrian and vehicular movements. These criteria have been adjusted where necessary on a site-by-site basis to account for local context and policy requirements when reassessing the site's suitability to accommodate a new Street Hub unit.

Justification for the siting and appearance of the proposed Street Hub has been assessed against up to date national and local planning policies and any other material considerations. As a result, assessment would focus on whether the removal of the existing BT call boxes, when balanced against the replacement of new Street Hub at the application site or in close proximity to the site, creates a significant visual harm that would outweigh the public benefits in this instance.

Proposed Location

The location of the street hub is considered compatible with the surrounding area and the unit is considered to complement and contribute the public realm by way of ensuring no adverse impact to visual amenity, pedestrian movements or street clutter. Specifically, the location ensures the following with regard to the surrounding public realm:

Visual Amenity

- The unit is a high-quality design, ultimately resulting in an improved quality of the public realm and pedestrian experience.
- The proposed Street Hub unit would be sited in an area where telecommunications equipment has been a long-established part of the landscape
- The surrounding area is categorised as a typical high street commercial streetscape which includes an established advertising theme via shop front signage and advertisement. The proposed unit has been carefully located a suitable distance from existing street furniture to ensure no visual conflicts, however, maintains a position within the area where the advertisement theme is established.

Pedestrian Movement

- The unit is positioned to upgrade the existing kiosk estate and maintains alignment with existing on-street infrastructure, to ensure the primary walkway will remain unobstructed and will therefore not detriment the safe and accessible movement of people.

Street Clutter

- The unit is safely positioned to avoid conflicts with existing infrastructure or advertisements, thereby preventing any unnecessary addition to street clutter.

Additionally, the unit has been designed with compliant illumination levels to avoid any disruption or distraction to pedestrians or nearby commercial units.

With regard to highways safety, the position of the unit has carefully considered potential impacts on the surrounding road network and vehicles and is well-positioned to ensure site lines are maintained. Notably, the unit is positioned on a stretch of pedestrianised highway in line with the existing street furniture, ensuring the primary

walkway in front of the commercial properties is maintained. Additionally, the unit is well-designed with a compliant design to ensure no distraction or disruption to road users.

Furthermore, we consider the addition of the Street Hub unit in the proposed location will improve the pedestrian experience, particularly through the following:

- Providing in-direct street lighting from the illuminated advertising signs to increase pedestrian safety during night-time hours.
- Providing access to contact emergency services, phone charging ability and connection to Wi-Fi with no charge that are accessible for all members of the community.
- The unit will be a high-quality design complementing the existing development on site but also enhancing visual amenity.

Overall, we consider the proposed unit location to appropriately integrate within the streetscape whilst improving the safety and amenity of the public realm.

Appearance

The proposed BT Street Hub unit is an advanced, modern development which has been designed following significant improvements in technology and digital content over recent years. It can promote the image of the authority as a vibrant place, and we believe it will improve the quality of the immediate streetscape for residents, businesses and visitors.

The proposed design is slimmer and takes a more compact profile than the existing BT payphone boxes of the applicant's estate that the proposed Street Hub is indirectly replacing. The user interface is located at a low level and is a similar height to an existing BT payphone unit to ensure that it is accessible to all users.

The appearance of the BT Street Hub unit has a vertical emphasis and by reason of its reduced footprint would give a slender more elegant form of development when compared to an existing payphone kiosk. The appearance of the structure is not considered to be harmful to the wider street scene, especially when taking into account the nature of the existing phone kiosks nearby. We believe the appearance of the area and street scene will not be compromised by the proposed new BT Street Hub.

The new structure will be set within a highly commercial setting and busy pedestrian zone that provides access to the nearby shops and links with other streets; and as such the area is well-lit throughout the day. While it is accepted that the BT Street Hub advertisements will be more visible during the hours of darkness or in dull conditions, its appearance would not be out of keeping with the general locale which is well lit by streetlights, window displays and other light emission. In this context, the BT Street Hub design would not appear detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding streetscene or the setting of the nearby Conservation Area.

It is concluded that the design of the proposed Street Hub is justified, and its appearance is an improvement when compared to the phone kiosks to be removed. Therefore, it is considered that the appearance of the proposed Street Hub is acceptable and is in accordance with national and local planning policies.

Advertisements

Amenity impact concerns an assessment of the character of the local area, which includes the nature and type of surrounding land uses and the existing built form within the locality where the proposed advertisement is to be displayed. It is the impact upon local character and any feature of interest in the local environment that the proposed advertisement is assessed. In respect of public safety, the primary consideration is the likely effect an advertisement display would have on drivers and pedestrians and whether the display of an advertising in the position and manner is likely to prejudice public safety.

It is recognised that the purpose of advertising is to be seen but this does not mean advertisements are likely to present a distraction. Advertising is characteristically part of the fabric of commercial centres and are often located alongside main transport routes where drivers and pedestrians are highly likely to see a range of commercial images.

When seen in the overarching context of the street scene, it is considered that the location, size and height of the digital advertisement panels would, on balance, be acceptable in what is a commercial context. As previously discussed, it is believed that the siting and appearance of the BT Street Hub would not create significant harm to the amenity of the area that would outweigh the public benefits and other material factors of consideration.

In terms of public safety, the site of the BT Street Hub and the display of digital advertisements on its sides will allow for the continued safe movements of pedestrians as highlighted, and not impact vehicles within the surrounding area. In this regard, as previously concluded its presence within the street scene would not endanger public safety of those people who are taking reasonable care for their own and others' safety.

It is recognised that all advertisements are intended to attract people's attention, however in this case their siting and size would not create an untoward feature within the existing commercial street scene and general locale. The position where the BT Street Hub is to be located in relation to the road would not cause any interference with nearby road signs and or navigational lights. Viewed within the street scene setting, the digital advertisements would be partially seen by passing motorists but, due to their location away from the roadside, would not create confusion nor influence the behaviour of drivers to such a degree that they would cause a hazard by reason of their presence. Furthermore, given its location it would not give rise to any potential impact on visibility splays or sightlines. When viewed within the street scene context of the wider environment, it is not considered that the Street Hub would appear as an untoward feature to passing motorists.

Regarding pedestrian safety, the placement of the unit and advertisement displays has been carefully considered to maximise safety while minimising obstruction to the existing footpath. When installed the unit will maintain the primary footpath for a distance of 6.4m to the front of the unit and 2.8m to the rear. Ultimately, it's considered that the proposal will not negatively impact pedestrian flow.

In determining the above, consideration has also been given to the fact that the Department for Transport Manual for Streets (2007) confirms that there is no minimum width for footways. It suggests that in lightly used streets, the minimum unobstructed width for pedestrians should generally be 2000mm, and that in areas of higher pedestrian flow the quality of the walking experience can deteriorate unless sufficient width is provided. Inclusive Mobility (2002) advises that ideally the width of the footway should be 2000mm to facilitate two people in wheelchairs to pass each other comfortably. Where this width is not possible, a clear width of 1500mm should be provided, with an absolute clear minimum width of 1000mm in exceptional cases. The phrase 'clear' refers to the effective width taking into account permanent obstacles on the footway such as street lamp standards, trees, telegraph poles, bus shelters for example. Furthermore, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) itself recommends a minimum footway width of 1200mm.

The proposed usage for the screens has been set in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007:

1. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.
2. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to—
 - (a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - (b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
 - (c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.
3. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.
4. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.
5. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

The Transport for London's (TfL) policy document 'Guidance for Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice – 2013' [the TfL Guidance] has also been a key document in the design and site selection process.

In addition to the above conditions, each Street Hub location has been assessed against and would comply with the following additional criteria from the TfL Guidance.

- There would be no conflict with any traffic signs, signals, crossing points, schools, hospitals or low bridges.
- No sightlines or clearances would be affected.
- The TfL guidance states that 'Static digital advertising is likely to be acceptable in locations where static advertising exists or would be accepted.' There is existing traditional advertisement on similar sections of the respective roads in many cases.
- The geometry of the roads is not complicated, and the driving conditions are not considered to be demanding or complicated.
- The advertisements would not be experienced by a driver in conjunction with any other similar digital advertisements.
- As per the TfL guidance, the advertisements would be located as close to the driver's natural eye line as possible and facing as head-on to the traffic as is practical. The lighting levels noted above are within the levels set for this type and size of screen (those under 10m²) as set by the Institute of Lighting Professionals, Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (2015). A copy of this document is appended for clarity.

Heritage Statement

It is accepted that there will always be challenges faced in finding a balance between limiting any visual harm created by the siting of development upon heritage assets when weighed up against the public benefits it will bring to the area. It should also be considered that streets within conservation areas, like all streets, will always be subject to change through time, changing demand, and users expectation. This is of particular relevance when considering advertisement and telecommunication within street scenes throughout the country with a focus on sustainable and connected cities.

Paragraph 205 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should take into account the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, in order to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposed development.

In respect to the above, the proposed site is not located within the boundary of the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area but is approximately 60m away from the designation's Western boundary. Designated in 1974, the boundary of the Conservation Area was amended in 2001 to include new areas of the town centre. Thereby demonstrating the ever-evolving nature of the asset which covers a modern, bustling town centre locale. The Appraisal and Management Plan for this asset states that key positive characteristics of the Conservation Area are identified as:

- *The historic origins and development of the town through the medieval, Georgian and Victorian periods is still clearly discernible in the surviving townscape.*
- *Many buildings within the Conservation Areas are little altered from the time of their construction and designated in their own right as listed buildings. Many other unlisted buildings contribute positively to local character.*
- *The buildings within the Conservation Areas utilise local building materials in a range of vernacular and historic techniques, establishing and reinforcing a strong sense of place.*
- *The variation of uses within the Conservation Area reflect the mixed commercial and residential history of the area.'*

With regards shopfronts (which the application site is directly adjacent to) and 'new development' the appraisal and management plan document states:

'The main part of the Conservation Area is commercial in nature and shopfronts and associated signage dominate the ground floor streetscene. Traditional hanging signs are an attractive way of advertising and shopfronts should reflect the character and details of the building. There are a number of 1920s and 1930s traditional shopfronts remaining in the Conservation Area which should be retained. The Conservation Area also contains a variety of modern shopfronts that respect the character and detailing of their host building...

New development Opportunities for new development These must be considered carefully and the effect of new buildings on the setting of the Conservation Area, and on views both into it and out of it, particularly taken into account. New development must be sympathetic to its context in terms of its siting, scale (including height, size and massing), materials and details. It should also follow the existing pattern or grain of development, not obstruct important views, and not dominate buildings in the immediate vicinity. Materials should be carefully chosen to complement the Conservation Areas existing palette of materials'.

In considering whether a proposal would have any impact in respect of the setting of any heritage asset, Historic England's website provides a definition of what would be considered as the 'setting' of any heritage assets as follows;

- 1) *"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."*
- 2) *"The surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape."*
- 3) *"The setting of a heritage structure, site or area is defined as the immediate and extended environment that is part of, or contributes to, its significance and distinctive character. Beyond the physical and visual aspects, the setting includes interaction with the natural environment; past or present social or spiritual practices, customs, traditional knowledge, use or activities and other forms of intangible cultural heritage"*

aspects that created and form the space as well as the current and dynamic cultural, social and economic context.”

Additionally, in *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008)* English Heritage sets out the four key aspects which contribute to the overall significance of a historic building or landscape:

- **Evidential:** *“The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.”*
- **Historic:** *“The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.”*
- **Aesthetic:** *“The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.”*
- **Communal:** *“The meaning of a place for the people who related to it, or for whom it figures in their collective memory.”*

In this instance, there are no listed buildings close enough to the application site to be impacted by the proposal, the nearest being the Grade II Listed commercial property at 21, 21A and 22, West Street found on the Western boundary of the Conservation Area approximately 60m East of the site. The official Historic England List Entry for this asset (ID: 1027491) is set out below:

‘Row of late C18 to early C19 cottages, now converted into shops. 2 storeys. Red brick. Horsham slab roofs. Wooden eaves cornice. 6 windows, one of 3 lights. Sashes, glazing bars intact. Modern shop fronts on ground floor. Nos 21, 21A and 22 form a group.’

Given the minor scale of the proposed development and significant distance of separation, any impact on this asset or the wider Conservation Area designation is expected to be negligible.

In addition to the above, while the site is not located within the nearby boundary of the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area in assessing any proposal consideration has to be given as to the existing streetscene setting. In this regard, there are numerous examples of street furniture of a similar nature to that being proposed, which should be considered when assessing any potential impact on the setting and/or appearance of any heritage assets. As a result, the character of the Conservation Area in this instance, with particular regard to street level, is not exclusive of similar structure to that being proposed and therefore the proposal in this instance should not be considered as being visually incongruous within the existing streetscene setting or that of the wider Conservation Area. This was covered in a recent appeal decision (*Appeal Ref: ADA-180-2017, 40 High Street, Dundee*), whereby the inspectorate outlined that:

“I do not agree with the council’s view that the proposed illuminated advertisements would have an adverse impact on amenity. I observe that the area’s character is heavily influenced by the busy retail and commercial environment at street level, featuring information boards and other street

furniture, a number of existing advertisements, and shopfronts with illuminated signage and display windows with internal lighting, including in the adjacent Primark store. I do not consider that the introduction of the proposed digital advertisement displays would be at odds with this character. The size of the proposed advertisements is broadly comparable with others in the area. Although the site's busy city centre location means the proposed advertisements would be seen by large numbers of pedestrians, their positioning between two street trees means they would not be overly prominent in the street scene. The advertisements would generally be viewed in context with the modern Overgate shopping centre nearby, with its illuminated signage and window displays, and would not appear obtrusive in that setting. I therefore do not consider there would be any harm to the amenity of the area, including the character or appearance of the conservation area, which I am satisfied would be preserved. I also do not consider there would be any adverse impact on the setting of any of the listed buildings in the area."

Furthermore, within a separate appeal in Blackpool (Appeal Ref: APP/J2373/H/22/3305072, Whitegate Drive, Blackpool), the inspectorate determined that:

"The appeal site falls within the Raikes Hall Conservation Area (the RHCA) whose significance is partly derived from the largely unaltered original grid street pattern of attractive suburban residential properties. Whitegate Drive is one of the main routes through the RHCA and contains an array of businesses, including the retail unit and café immediately adjacent to the appeal site. This gives the locality a strong commercial character. The appeal site makes a neutral contribution to the RHCA."

However, if the Council consider that there would be some harm to the setting of the heritage asset in this instance, any such harm would be, at worst, considered as being 'less than substantial', whereby the NPPF under Paragraph 202 states that 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including.....'. Such benefit is clearly set out within the supporting documents submitted in support of this application.

When seen in perspective within the street scene, it is considered that the proposed siting and orientation of the BT Street Hub, will not appear incongruous or have a significant material impact on the setting or views of the Conservation Area. It is ultimately considered that any minor harm upon the aforementioned heritage assets would be outweighed by the significant public benefits of the Street Hub in what is a vibrant part of the city.

In considering the above, the proposed location would represent the best solution in terms of material planning considerations in this instance.

Noise Management

As one of many features, Street Hubs provide free phone calls via a speaker and microphone system. Information submitted in support of this application identifies the steps taken to ensure that these calls, like all the features of the Street Hub, help improve the amenity of a local area whilst also respecting the expectations of local community over time. It should be noted that the noise management plan refers specifically to the noise from the Street Hub. Noise from pedestrians, users of the Street Hub, or from other nearby sources are not included and would typically be considered matters for the Police and other authorities who have the appropriate and relevant powers to act on such issues if necessary.

The Street Hub has been designed so that they create a 'sound cloud' for the person making a call with noise levels sufficient to make calls with background noise for the surroundings. Whilst this generates a reasonable conversational volume in proximity to the Street Hub, it is intended to result in minimal to no noise being noticeable further away. The average volume settings are 65dB average at 3m distance from each Street Hub. Users may also choose to use headphones when making calls or using the tablet, which deactivates the speaker for the duration of their use.

It is worth noting that the Street Hub are situated on public streets, in the most part close to roads where high volumes of traffic will be seen, examples of background noise experienced on streets are details below:

Noise Level, dB	Example
60-70	Conversational Speech
70-80	Average traffic on Street Corner
80-90	Heavy lorries at 6m

Daytime (07:00 – 21:00)

Street Hub have controllable volume levels. This will default to 50% at the start of any user activity during the day and can be increased and decreased based on the preferences of the user.

Night Time (21:00 – 07:00) Between the hours of 21:00 to 07:00 all Street Hub will be governed so that the volume cannot be increased to greater than 60% of the maximum volume.

Exceptional Circumstances

Noise is managed by exception based on feedback from users and the local community. If feedback is received that the Street Hub may be causing detrimental environmental impact, the following actions are taken:

1. Understand the reason for the issue and any extenuating circumstances. At this point BT will separate out any Police or community safety matters and work directly with the relevant authorities, and support the local residents in raising these issues through official channels where appropriate.



2. Verify the evidence provided against the Street Hub's call history and other operational data as required. This will allow an understanding of the the number, time, and frequency of outbound calls being made and better understand the severity of the reported situation.
3. Once the situation has been verified, BT will typically look to apply local bespoke volume governor controls appropriate to the situation. We have found that reducing the Street Hub 's maximum volume to 40% during relevant periods tends to resolve issues where they have been identified.

In addition to the above, BT will continue to monitor the situation and listen to ongoing feedback from the community as we do take matters seriously. BT continue to learn as part of their roll out as to how Street Hub are fitting in to the community. To date, there has been no issues in respect of matters relating to potential noise nuisance.

4.0 Conclusion

BT Street Hubs have the potential to significantly enhance the provision of local community communications facilities and services. It is precisely the type of high-speed digital infrastructure that the government is seeking to support as part of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It will deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits by providing a suite of essential urban tools/services, including free ultrafast Wi-Fi to residents, businesses and visitors in this area. Overall BT Street Hubs will help future proof the high street making them smarter, safer, and more sustainable through their adaptable design and function.

The proposed BT Street Hub structures are of a high quality, accessible design that would be a significant improvement when compared to the existing payphone kiosks. Modern signage which is interactive and multi-faceted in its use has become more acceptable on the street scape due to its functionality, clean and modern look. We consider the proposal in this case to be appropriately sited; to reduce street clutter, to improve available footway widths, not to negatively affect heritage assets nor adversely affect amenity or public safety.

We believe this statement has demonstrated that the BT Street Hub proposal is in accordance with national policy set out in the NPF4 and local development plan policies, in which we would hope that this application can be supported by your Council.

4.1 Proposed Schedule of Operating Conditions

To give assurance each Street Hub will operate as intended, we recommend the following conditions (or a version there of) as previously suggested, be included as part of any advertisement consent:

- a. *Within three (3) months of development commencing, the existing BT payphones indicated for removal, shall be removed in their entirety and the land made good to the same condition as the adjacent land.*
- b. *The intensity of the illumination of the two digital display screens shall not exceed 600 candelas per square metre (cd/m²) between dusk and dawn in line with the maximum permitted recommended luminance as set out by 'The Institute of Lighting Professional's 'Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements'.*
- c. *The digital display screens shall not display any moving, or apparently moving, images (including animation, flashing, scrolling three dimensional, intermittent or video elements).*
- d. *The minimum display time for each piece of content on the digital display screens shall be 10 seconds.*

- e. *The interval between each piece of content on the digital display screens shall take place over a period no greater than one second; the complete screen shall change with no visual effects (including swiping or other animated transition methods) between displays and the display will include a mechanism to freeze the image in the event of a malfunction.*
- f. *No content on the digital display screens shall resemble traffic signs, as defined in section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.*