

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0641/26

Recommendation: REFUSE

Site: Land South Of 2 Broadwater Street West Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Proposed installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital LCD advert screens (following removal of 2no. phone kiosks)

Application Number: AWDM/0642/26

Recommendation: REFUSE

Site: Land South Of 2 Broadwater Street West Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: 2no. digital LCD display screens, one on each side of the Street Hub unit.

Date of Site Visit: 16/07/2026

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional Neighbours Notified: N

Site and Surroundings

The application site relates to a section of pavement on Broadwater St West just to the north of the junction with Broadwater St East. The site is located outside the Tesco Express supermarket. Within the immediate vicinity is a mature street tree, the Tesco trolley stand and street furniture including a street line, electricity pole, 6 Sheffield bike stands, rubbish bins, bollards and a parking sign.

A disabled parking bay is also located adjacent to the footpath.

Two redundant phone boxes over 80m to the north would be removed as part of the proposal.

To the east of the site lies Broadwater Conservation Area. Numerous listed buildings are located within the conservation area including 7-13 Broadwater St East, 19-21 Broadwater St East and others further to the east. To the south are 4-8 Broadwater St East and a section of wall of the Churchyard. All are Grade II listed.

The Church of St Mary, a prominent building located in spacious grounds to the south of Broadwater St East, is a Grade I listed building.

Proposal

These applications seek full planning permission and advertisement consent for the installation of 1 BT Street Hub. The supporting letter describes a streethub as:

BT Street Hubs provide a network service to the immediate area without the requirement for harsh, utilitarian street additions (e.g. Telecommunication Masts) while simultaneously acting as an advertisement, interactive tourist information hub, air quality monitoring hub with an ability to connect with emergency services. This proposal sensitively integrates telecommunications equipment through a valuable addition to the street scene. The Street Hub network will provide residents and visiting populations with an unprecedented suite of essential urban tools which offer the following key benefits:

- *Make telephone calls for free*
- *Access local information and navigation via built-in screens on each side of the unit*
- *Charge electronic devices (phones/tablets) via built-in USB ports*
- *Access free ultra-fast Wi-Fi (up to 1Gbps and 4/5G capabilities)*
- *An emergency button, allowing contact with the emergency services*
- *Public messaging capabilities*

The dimensions of the hub are given as 1236 x 350 x 2980.

The street hub would be located orientated south-east/ north-west between the streetlight and the Sheffield stands. It would be 3.78 metres from the edge of the pavement and the disabled parking bay.

Relevant Planning History:

None relevant for this site

Consultations

Worthing Society: No response

WSCC (as LHA):

This application is for the installation of one new BT Street Hub and removal of two BT phone kiosks. This application is for two digital LCD display screens, one on each side of the Street Hub unit. The site is located on Broadwater Street West, a A-classified road subject to a speed limit of 30mph.

The proposed unit will be located within land maintained as public highway. The proposed location is not anticipated to result in an obstruction to pedestrians utilising the footway given that there is sufficient space for pedestrians to manoeuvre around the Street Hub.

The proposed Street Hub will provide two digital internally illuminated LCD advert screens. The Planning Statement indicates that the applicant would be agreeable to a condition restricting the BT Street Hub to a maximum luminance level of 600cd/m² in the hours of darkness; however, in accordance with Table 10.4 of The Institute of Lighting Engineers' Professional Lighting Guide 05/23 "The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays" (2023), the maximum luminance level for an advertisement within the E3 environmental zone is 300cd/m².

Whilst the LHA would not raise any highway safety concerns to the principle of the proposed BT Street Hub, we would request that the applicant reduce the proposed luminance level within the hours of darkness to accord with the maximum luminance level for the location's environmental zone. The LHA consider that this could be dealt with via condition, however the LPA may wish to resolve this matter prior to determination.

The Statutory Undertaker will need to submit the necessary notification to the Highway Authority independently and any traffic management will need to be agreed with WSCC Highways prior to works taking place.

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

If the LPA are minded to approve the application, the following conditions should be applied: (Conditions to restrict illumination during darkness and daylight hours, to not include moving images and to not change more than every 5 seconds)

Neighbour Representations

15 objections were received for the full application and 9 objections were received on the advertisement consent on the grounds of:

- Unnecessary advertising, primarily an advertising hoarding with a cursory phone/ wifi/ etc attached.
- Constantly changing screens, an assault on the senses.
- Disturb and negatively impact people, animals, insects, moths, bats and birds, contrary to any 'Biodiversity Net Gain' plan.
- There are plenty of studies now showing eye damage caused by the blue light on screens. Do we really need yet more?
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires local authorities to have 'due regard' to the impact of any proposed policy - including planning decisions regarding the installation of illuminated advertising boards - on groups with protected characteristics, which includes light-disabled people and those susceptible to flickering digital screens, those with conditions such as autism, epilepsy or mental health conditions
- Designed to be deliberately distracting, together with the huge bulky, solidity of the structure.
- Likely to attract graffiti and antisocial behaviour despite the promise of monitoring it. Who will pay for the security, cleaning, repairs and maintenance?
- The types of electronics in these hubs emit ultra-sonic frequencies which affect both wildlife and people who can hear outside of normal spectrums. These frequencies cause headaches and nausea in those who can hear them. There are no plans to monitor noise emission, nor how to regulate it.
- Energy consumption. How can it be justified in view of Sustainability / Net Zero goals? The council should be aiming to reduce energy consumption, not adding energy guzzling Street Hubs at a time when many are struggling to heat their homes. Digital advertising screens use a great deal of electricity. A conservative

estimate is that one large digital advertising screen (6.4 metres x 3.1 metres) uses more electricity than 11 average UK households.

- Long term health impacts from EMF radiation, there should be an ICNIRP certificate and no go zone, have cumulative impacts been assessed,
- Sneaking 5G into an area because it isn't a mast app that lots of people would object to
- Eyesore, out of place, cluttered streetscape, not sympathetic to surroundings, urbanised, unsightly blemish
- Impact on local property prices and business
- Replacement of boxes is not like for like. Old phones boxes are relatively see through, offered privacy and stood quietly. Why not just remove the old boxes without cluttering the area.
- Street furniture serves a useful purpose but the features provided here are largely redundant
- Road safety – designed to distract drivers, near a disabled bay
- Issues with what will be advertised on the screens
- Impact on children in terms of tech overuse
- Increased surveillance from CCTV
- Light pollution

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM6, Dm13, DM14, DM24
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2026)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment:

The key considerations are the effect of the proposed street hub on the character and appearance/visual amenity of the area; and the effects on highway/public safety.

The above policies are a material consideration, including policy DM5 which requires all new development to (amongst other things) be of a high architectural and design quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area; enhance the local environment by way of its appearance and character and make a positive contribution to sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area; to make a positive contribution to creating a safe and secure environment by integrating measures for security and designing out opportunities for crime; ensure that lighting incorporated into developments provides the minimum for public safety, is energy efficient and avoids light pollution.

Policy DM6(b) requires proposals to ensure that the public realm is safe, accessible for all, inclusive, attractive, well-connected, easy to understand and maintain, and relates to the local historic context. It is expected that new development will incorporate the highest quality design, landscaping, green infrastructure, street furniture and surfaces. DM6(e) states that express consent will only be granted for advertisements which respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and do not create a danger or hazard to public safety. Policy DM24 requires that conservation areas and listed buildings are either enhanced or preserved.

Impact on visual amenity

The immediate context is commercial in character made up primarily of shops, cafes/restaurants/takeaways etc. on both sides of Broadwater St West. The associated scale and appearance of buildings and shopfronts and the amount of pedestrian and vehicular activity is consistent with the role and function of the area's designation as a District Shopping Centre designation.

The nearby busy parking bays are controlled between on Monday to Saturday between 8.30am and 6.00pm with 'no return within 1 hour' ensuring a constant churn of short-stay vehicle movements and activity of shoppers and other visitors to the District Centre coming and going.

While it would be sited in line with the bike racks and streetlight, it would have a completely different appearance. The bike racks are low to the ground ensuring views are available over them. The streetlight is much narrower in comparison to the BT unit with views visible around it. On the other hand, the combination of the height, width and solid form of the proposed Street Hub would mean that it would be prominently visible in views along Broadwater St West and in views from Broadwater St East and would block views within the district centre.

In views from the north the structure would appear a dominant and over illuminated structure which would be located in the setting of the Broadwater Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings. The proposal fails to preserve or enhance setting of the conservation area and listed buildings.

It is noted that the degree of illuminance is significantly brighter and more prominent than other advertisements in the area.

Whilst the benefits of wi-fi access, free charging for mobile devices, wayfinding, and an emergency call button capability are acknowledged, it is considered this does not outweigh the harm identified to local character and distinctiveness.

It is recognised that two existing BT units would be removed but these are located some 80 metres from the application site so are considered a small public benefit. In the event that planning permission were recommended for approval, a condition would be required that these units were removed prior to any works to install the BT hub.

Highway and Public safety

The Local Highway Authority has not raised any highway safety concerns in principle to the proposed Street Hub subject to the luminance level during hours of darkness being limited to 300 cd/m² to accord with the maximum luminance level for this site which is E3 (Suburban – Medium District Brightness). A condition to this effect has been suggested.

The proposed Street Hubs are virtue of their siting and design are intended to be eye-catching. There are a number of potential interruptions to the free-flow of traffic along this stretch of Broadwater St West which road users must carefully navigate including vehicles parking in the disabled bay, traffic turning into Broadwater St East, and a

pedestrian island providing a safe crossing space just to the south of the disabled bay. Whilst the proposal is unlikely to have severe impacts on the transport network, there is sympathy with the concerns raised by third parties that the visual prominence of the Street Hub in this location will pose a distraction to drivers where even a momentary loss of concentration could be dangerous and increase the risk of collisions involving other vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians.

In terms of pedestrian safety, it is recognised that this unit would be located just to the north-west of the Tesco entrance. Due to the road layout, the footpath continues to the north-west. It is likely that pedestrians either leaving Tesco or travelling from the south would cross over from the eastern side of the footpath to the western side between the bike racks and streetlight. The placement of the BT hub in the centre of these existing features, near a disabled parking bay, would create another obstacle which pedestrians and people with disabilities would have to navigate to safely pass around the area. scale and bulk of the unit would limit views of the other side of the pavement in this location.

PPG confirms that the prevention of crime is a public safety consideration. Concerns have been raised about the risk of the Street Hub encouraging anti- social behaviour involving misuse of free call services. The Council's Community Safety Officer, in their comments on the Goring Road applications (AWDM/0643/26 and AWDM/0644/26), has confirmed that this has not been an issue in other locations in the town centre where Street Hubs have been installed. The Street Hub Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan explains that call restriction technology has been developed using an algorithm that allows the latest Street Hub models to assess call data, recognise misuse and block numbers which are deemed problematic.

Other matters

With regard to concerns raised about potential health effects, the submitted ICNIRP declaration is considered adequate for confirming that the proposal meets the relevant safety standards and would not pose a risk to public health.

Recommendation:

REFUSE full permission for the reason:

1. By reason of its prominent siting, size, height, form, bulk and excessive illumination the proposed Street Hub would be an intrusive and dominant feature within the street scene, and its strident appearance harmful to local character and amenity and the setting of the adjacent conservation area and listed buildings. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies DM5, DM6 and DM24 of the Worthing Local Plan and the relevant policies of the NPPF.
2. By reason of its prominent siting, size and excessive illumination the proposed Street Hub would increase the risk of distraction to highway users to the detriment of highway safety and would impede pedestrian flow on this section of the pavement contrary to policy DM6 of the Worthing Local Plan.

REFUSE advertisement consent for the reason:

1. By reason of its prominent siting, size, height, form, bulk and excessive illumination the proposed Street Hub would be an intrusive and dominant feature within the street scene, and its strident appearance harmful to local character and amenity and the setting of the adjacent conservation area and listed buildings. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies DM5, DM6 and DM24 of the Worthing Local Plan and the relevant policies of the NPPF.
2. By reason of their prominent siting, size and excessive illumination the proposed Street Hub advertisements would increase the risk of distraction to highway users to the detriment of highway safety and would impede pedestrians and those with disabilities and would therefore be contrary to policy DM6 of the Worthing Local Plan and the relevant policies of the NPPF.

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Louise Prew

Date: 19/08/2026

Authorised by: Stephen Cantwell

Date: 24/08/2026