



Planning Supporting Statement

Our Ref.	3-HIN003
Street Hub Address	Footpath outside 3 Market Place, Hinckley
Postcode	LE10 1NT
National Grid Reference	E:442592 N:293875
Project Type	Conversion
Conservation Area	Within Hinckley - Town Centre Conservation Area
Statutory Listed Buildings	Nearby Barclays Bank (Grade II listed building)

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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 3 Market Place, Hinckley (E:442592 N:293875). 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.

This planning statement is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- Supporting Planning Drawings;
- Product Statement prepared by *BT Group*;
- Unit Dimensions prepared by *BT Group*;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan prepared by *BT Group*;
- Professional Lighting Guide prepared by *Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP)*.

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.



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 section of footpath outside 3 Market Place, Hinckley. This section of the footpath is currently occupied by 1No. existing BT phone booth. This proposal seeks approval for the direct conversion of existing BT phone booth to an upgraded singular Street Hub unit.

The site is located on a wide portion of pedestrian footway to the north of Market Place which is a single-lane one-way carriageway servicing west flowing traffic. To the north, the footpath connects to retail shopfronts and continues further north-east to an additional commercial area. To the east, the footpath is occupied by a bicycle hoop and a raised planter bed. To the south, across Market PI are additional commercial tenancies. To the west, the footpath is occupied by an above-ground utilities box and public bin. Further west, the footpath connects to Regent St which accommodates commercial sites. The proposed unit is positioned to directly convert the existing kiosk which maintains its alignment with existing street infrastructure at this portion of the footway.

The site is location within Hinckley - Town Centre Conservation Area and is located nearby Barclays Bank (Grade II listed building).

The surrounding area is categorised as a commercial area. The advertising theme includes fascia advertising displays associated with retail shopfronts.

The proposal includes the removal of 1No. existing BT phone box, as mentioned, on the footpath outside 3 Market Place, Hinckley. The removal of this phone box will assist in the decluttering of footpaths in the wider area and enhance the broader area's visual amenity. Details of the kiosks proposed to be removed is provided in the table below.



The site location is shown on the image below.



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 3 Market Place, Hinckley LE10 1NT (E:442592 N:293875). This forms part of a strategic package of applications submitted to Hinckley and

Bosworth Borough Council, containing 3No. Street Hubs located within existing streetscapes in the Council 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. 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 300cd/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, there is no relevant history relating to the proposed site.

2.4 Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council Rollout

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

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. All of the proposed Street Hubs directly replace, or are very close to, existing payphones for removal. The proposed Street Hub's will help to deliver a comprehensive network of connectivity within the borough whilst decluttering the 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.”

70.2 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 document for Hinkley is the Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Development Plan (2006-2026), which is made up of the following documents:

- Core Strategy (2009)

The Local Plan is currently undergoing review for the 2020 to 2041 Local Plan, however, this has not yet been formally adopted and has not therefore been considered as part of this application.

Core Strategy (2009)

The current local plan is the Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Development Plan (2006-2026). The Local Plan (2006-2026) includes the Core Strategy which provides the vision and spatial strategy for the borough.

Whilst this document is considered dated, the following policy of is relevance to the proposal:

Policy 1: Development in Hinckley

To ensure development contributes to Hinckley's character and sense of place and that the town's infrastructure can accommodate the new development, the council will:

- *Expect development to respect Hinckley's industrial heritage through sympathetic reuse of existing buildings unless it can be demonstrated that this is not achievable*
- *Require new development to respect the character and appearance of the Hinckley Conservation Areas by incorporating locally distinctive features of the conservation area into the development*
- *Require new development to enhance the poor public realm within the town centre*

Spatial Objective 2: Regeneration of Urban Centres

To deliver the regeneration of Hinckley town centre, as a vibrant, thriving sub regional centre, which provides opportunities for retail, leisure and commercial activities, whilst

supporting the vibrancy and vitality of Earl Shilton, Barwell and Burbage as important urban local centres.

Spatial Objective 6: Infrastructure Provision

To ensure that development contributes to the necessary infrastructure required by new development, through provision of new, or where appropriate, enhancement of existing infrastructure (for example through appropriate developer contributions).

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 proposed Street Hub unit has been strategically identified to replace and upgrade the 1No. BT Phone kiosks that exist at this site. We consider the conversion to a Street Hub unit appropriate and in keeping with the surrounding context and established advertising theme.

The unit will maintain its position on the footpath, in line with the existing kiosk and aligned with existing on-street infrastructure, including bicycle hoops, services box and planter bed, to ensure no impact on pedestrian desire lines or visual amenity. Aligning with the existing on-street infrastructure and converting the existing kiosk will ensure pedestrian movements are maintained for this portion of the footway without compromise to sight lines or addition of streetscape clutter. Furthermore, the unit is considered consistent with the established advertising theme for the surrounding area which includes modern commercial shopfronts with varied colours, materiality and illumination of ground-level advertisements.

The location of the street hub is considered to complement and contribute the public realm by way of ensuring no 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 that has been well positioned to upgrade the existing kiosk, ultimately resulting in an improved quality of the public realm and pedestrian experience.
- The surrounding area is categorised as a commercial area which includes an established advertising theme. The proposed unit has been carefully located a suitable distance from existing advertisements to ensure no visual conflicts or clutter, however, maintains a position within the area where the advertisement theme is established

Pedestrian Movement

- The unit is positioned to replace and upgrade the existing kiosk 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 addition to street clutter.

With regard to pedestrian and highway safety, the unit is well-located to replace the existing kiosk ensuring the safe and accessible movement of people remains unobstructed. The proposed conversion of the existing kiosk to a street hub unit would not introduce any new structure to the footway and would therefore not impact visual sight lines or compromise pedestrian movements along this portion of the footway. The unit maintains a suitable setback from the carriageway to ensure no interference or disruption to drivers, acknowledging Market PI is smaller road only accommodating west flowing traffic in a single-lane formation. Ultimately, the unit is considered well-sited on the footpath and will not generate any adverse impacts to pedestrian or highways safety. Additionally, the unit has been designed with compliant levels of illumination to ensure no disruption or distraction 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.
- Providing access to contact emergency services, phone charging ability and connection to WiFi 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 a slimmer and more compact profile than existing BT payphone box, providing a suitably modern alternative. 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. 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 commercial setting and pedestrian area 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 the streetscape.

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 behavior 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 an appropriate footpath width with 5.1m to the nearest building and 1.9m to the kerb. 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.

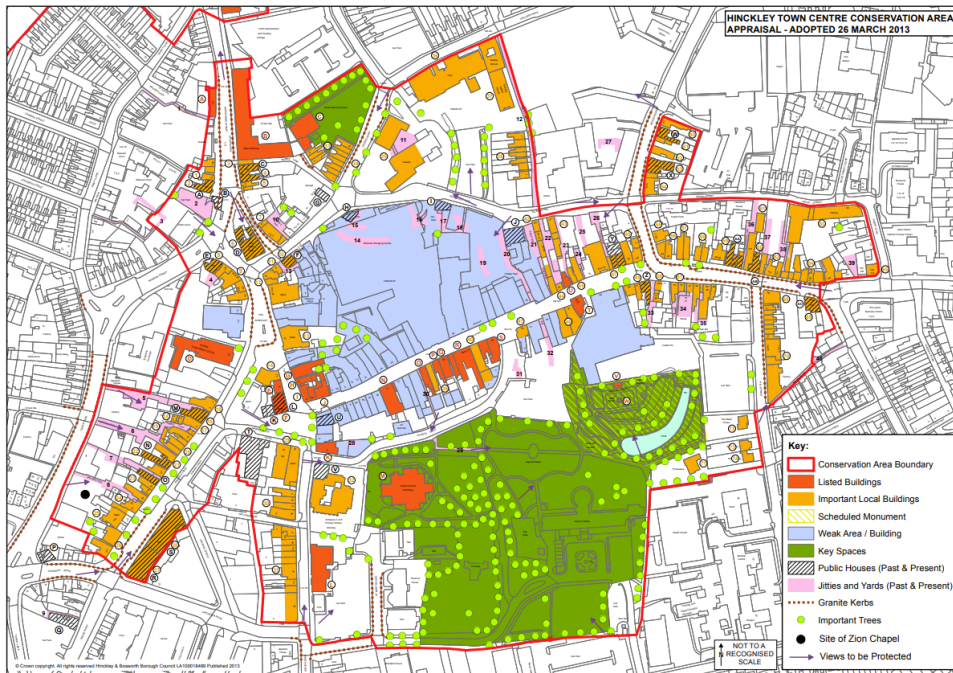
In respect to the above, the proposed site is located within Hinckley - Town Centre Conservation Area. The specific interest that justifies the designation of the Conservation Area is outlined below, per the relevant appraisal:

“Hinckley Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- Its significance as part of the mid 18th to early 20th century development of the Borough.*
- The group value of surviving buildings and spaces related to the development of the commercial centre.*
- The value of civic and public buildings reflecting the development of the community.*
- The survival of buildings relating to the borough's industrial past.*
- Its importance as an historic record of the economic development of the Borough.*
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's historic buildings, both locally and nationally.*
- Local details that collectively and individually give the conservation area a distinctive identity, such as the strong sense of enclosure, the quality of the surviving historic buildings, the survival of original architectural detailing, the commercial and civic uses, and the relationship of closed and open spaces.*
- The emergence of a local character achieved through repeated use of locally distinctive materials and detailing.*
- The historical importance of four major local hosiery employers (the Atkins, the Davenports, Davis and the Bennetts) and their influence on the community and built environment in and around the town centre.*

- *Streetscapes typified by a uniformity of building line, roofscape, fenestration and materials. All of which give a consistency of character.*
- *The importance of framed views within streets and the vistas to St Mary's Church from a number of viewpoints from around the town.*
- *Overall there is a vibrant urban character defined by its built form, mix of uses, mixed tenure and independent businesses.*
- *A medieval street pattern, including long, gently winding main streets with narrow lanes, jitties and yards running off.*
- *High quality public green spaces in the form of the park, the church and vicarage grounds and the chapel grounds with a high degree of visual and physical access which enforces the impression of spaciousness and is part of the community's identity.*
- *The semi-mature vegetation along Regent Street which softens the hard architecture and contributes to the skyline and streetscape."*

The Conservation Area boundary is shown in the map below:



Appraisal Map (sourced from Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council, Adopted 23 March 2013)

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.”*

The site is located nearby Barclays Bank (Grade II listed building) The official listings of these heritage assets per the Historic England website is detailed below:

Barclays Bank

Statutory Address: 6A The Borough, Hinckley, LE10 1NR

Details

A mid-C19 town hall, altered and repurposed as a bank in the early-C20

MATERIALS: red brick with stucco details. Hipped L-shaped slate roof.

PLAN: roughly rectangular on plan with its principal elevation facing east.

EXTERIOR: the south (Market Place) elevation is of two bays, with the left-hand bay projecting slightly forwards. The corners of the upper floors have stucco quoins. The ground floor is decorated with banded stucco above a plain stucco plinth, with string courses at the level of the windows sills and window headers. Above each of the ground-floor windows is a slim semi-circular arch with a central keystone incised with a flower motif. The arches themselves have been infilled and stuccoed. The ground-floor windows have narrow glazing bars arranged in three rows, with the lowest row one large pane flanked with two narrow panes, and six panes above. The right-hand window has a simply decorated cornice inset into the window opening above the panes. At first floor level the left-hand window is smaller than the right, but both have a stucco ornament above them with angled headers and a central keystone. The left-

hand window contains two small two-over-two sashes with a central mullion, the right-hand window contains a uPVC window with applied glazing bars. At second floor there are a pair of small two-over-two windows on the left-hand side, and a blind window with sill on the right.

The east (The Borough) elevation is of five bays, in an even, symmetrical design. As with the south elevation the corners of the upper floors have stucco quoins, and the ground floor is decorated with banded stucco above a plain stucco above a plain stucco plinth. The left-hand bay contains the entrance door which has a simple timber doorcase with entablature. All of the openings have semi-circular arches with a central keystone incised with a flower motif. At first floor level five, evenly-spaced, square-headed windows each have stucco ornament with angled headers and central keystones. All of the windows have been replaced. At second floor level there are no windows on the east elevation. Instead, there is an even row of five blind recesses which reach up to the eaves of the roof. Four pargett plates (three at ground level and one in line with the upper windows) are sited on the east elevation.

The unit is considered appropriate with respect to the character of the Conservation Area which is primarily focused on the area surrounding the surviving historic buildings (including now listed buildings) and street pattern. The proposed siting is considered inconsequential to the significance of the Conservation Area and will not detract from the aesthetic importance of the nearby heritage asset as it is positioned within a highly commercial context that has evolved over time with the nature of the change of uses. The unit will not impact the existing façade or building materials that define the aesthetic purpose of the streetscape and will complement the ground-floor retail shopfronts that include modern elements and advertising.

In this context, the inclusion of street hub unit in the proposed location is considered appropriate. Given the site's location to replace the existing kiosk, in line with existing on-street hoarding advertisements, the unit is considered suitably sited to ensure it will not detract from the architectural or historic character of the Conservation Area and nearby heritage assets. The unit is considered to complement the transition in architecture at this location and will not appear incongruous. The unit is therefore considered to be in keeping with the evolving character of the area, aligning with the presence of other commercial and modern elements in the immediate surroundings, and will not detract from the area's purpose or heritage significance.

In addition to the above, there are numerous examples of street furniture and advertising displays of a similar nature, 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 area or listed building 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. 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 Conservation Area and 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 and heritage asset. It is ultimately considered that any minor harm upon the Conservation 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.*