



Speaker Notes: Vodafone Mast, Conker Lane, Dorridge

(Max 500 words / 3 minutes allowed)

The Forum's position is that the quality and detail of this proposal fails to meet the standard required to satisfy policy requirements regarding siting and design:

- that development is not materially harmful
- that the need or benefits clearly outweigh the loss
- to demonstrate very special circumstances.

The overriding concern - evidenced in the 25+ objections - is the impact on highly valued Local Green Space (LGS). LGS has protection equivalent to Green Belt.

Members, please note the appeal case quoted is NOT comparable - it was not LGS, nor contrary to a NP policy.

The assertion is that the installation will 'not be unduly harmful.' Residents disagree; it will significantly harm the appearance, character and enjoyment of the amenity.

- The full height of the installed mast is 21 metres - continually repeating 18 metres is misleading. Towering well above all existing trees, it will be the only man-made intrusion visible within the LGS natural environment.
- At ground level, the so-called 'small footprint' totals 19 metres long, surrounded by secure fencing. Not small.
- The site is immediately alongside a well-used walking track. This track is NOT ancillary to the central open parkland; it's an important part of leisure space within an area of trees (see photo). The track is very narrow where it passes the site - it will need cutting back heavily to allow vehicle access.
- The arboricultural report indicates removal of trees and shrubs that, when in full leaf, completely screen the railway infrastructure. Removal risks exposing not only this, but also the railway signal gantry currently invisible from the LGS.
- Access for construction, servicing and security protection is very challenging. It will affect the Conker Lane pedestrianised path and require infrastructure traversing the whole of the LGS site. No details provided on how this will be done and managed.

Needs and benefits. Beyond a generalised map showing improved area coverage, there's no detail of the specific need or technical requirements determining this particular site and, most importantly, **why the search area boundary has been defined where it is** – which, of course, determines potential site locations.

Siting and design. Generic statements are made such as, "the proposed height of the mast is unavoidable, given that it is to support the antennas of two operators and for coverage reasons." In this and other areas, more robust justification is required given the especially sensitive site context and need to demonstrate very special circumstances. For example, a signal analysis showing the impact of a lower mast, or to substantiate rejection of alternative sites.

In short, Chairman, Members, we ask: does the detail available convince you that policy requirements are met; that there's no more suitable location? that every attempt has been made to lessen impact? that the planning conditions will control installation and minimise adverse impact on such highly valued LGS?

The Forum is not convinced. We urge you to refuse the application. We stand ready to work with the Council and the applicant to help clarify need and how this can best be fulfilled.