



Planning Statement

Prepared by: Libre Solutions

On Behalf of: BT Group PLC

August 2026





SITE NAME:

PAVEMENT OUTSIDE 89 HERMITAGE ROAD, HITCHIN, SG5 1DG

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Installation of a proposed new global street hub, including the associated display of advertisements on both sides of the unit.
CLIENT NAME:	BT Group
REPORT TYPE:	Planning Statement
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1 INTRODUCTION

Application overview

This application for **Full Planning Permission** and **Advertisement Consent** is submitted by Libre Solutions on behalf of the BT Group to North Hertfordshire Council ('the Council') **on the Pavement outside 89 Hermitage Road, Hitchin, SG5 1DG.**

About BT

BT InLinkUK service was first launched in 2017 and since then 494 InLink units were rolled out in 23 UK cities, including 31 InLinks in Southwark. In 2019 InLinkUK went into administration and no longer support the supply of these units to BT, so meaning the InLink product is no longer available. The InLink estate is under the full ownership of BT and since then, they have been working on their own new and improved unit, namely BT Street Hub.

BT Street Hub Project

BT is continuing to move forward with public connectivity and Street Hubs will provide a sleek and modern answer to the demands of a digitally connected society. BT Street Hub has all the existing benefits of the previous structure but with better Wi-Fi range, air quality monitoring, insight counting and small cell mobile connectivity. The addition of the 5G small cells to Street Hubs is very much in line with current UK Government's guidance on telecommunications developments and the National Infrastructure Strategy. Since the start of the original BT InLink project, the Government's commitment towards telecommunications deployment has been strengthened and NPPF 19, para 112 in particular confirms 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)'.

The Street Hub will help future proof the high street making them smarter, safer, and more sustainable. Investment in the high street is at an all-time low, but that has not slowed BT down as they look to ramp up the upgrade of their kiosk estate with the rollout of new Street Hubs across the UK. They are continuing their commitment to invest and improve in the high street one Street Hub at a time, and with that decluttering these environments with the associated removal of existing BT phone boxes. Due to

the increased functionality of the new Street Hub, it is a slightly larger structure from the first generation InLink units, in which it is 34cm longer, 7cm wider and 8.5cm taller.

Summary of the Proposal

The application seeks the installation of **a new generation BT Street Hub** measuring, 2986mm in height, 1236mm in width and 350mm in depth.

EXISTING



PROPOSED



SITE ADDRESS: PAVEMENT OUTSIDE 89 HERMITAGE ROAD, HITCHIN, SG5 1DG

REFERENCE: LRD-97

Figure 1– Existing and Proposed Site and surrounding, (Source: Libre Solutions)

2 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This Planning Statement is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

1. Cover Letter
2. Planning Drawings
3. Anti-Social Management Plan
4. Global Media Street Hub Unit Dimensions
5. Street Hub Product Statement
6. Street Hubs Beyond Connection
7. Highways Notice

This planning statement is structured as follows:

- Site context
- Proposal description
- Pre-application consultation
- Assessment against national and local policy
- Summary and conclusion

3 SITE CONTEXT

Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises an established area of hard-surfaced public realm situated along Hermitage Road, within the defined boundary of Hitchin town centre.

The proposed Street Hub is to be located within the wide pavement directly fronting Wood and Stone Floors, which forms part of a modern, mixed-use development. The surrounding streetscape is predominantly urban and commercial in character, featuring active ground-floor frontages that accommodate a busy mix of retail shops, local services, and food and drink venues, with residential accommodation situated on the upper floors.

As a primary thoroughfare within the town centre, Hermitage Road experiences high volumes of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, which is further increased by a nearby bus stop. The introduction of the Street Hub in this location would integrate seamlessly with the existing street scene, providing a highly accessible digital utility for both shoppers and commuters without disrupting pedestrian flow.

Relevant Designations

- **Hitchin Conservation Area:** The entire site falls within the Hitchin Conservation Area. The Street Hub has been carefully designed and positioned to respect and preserve the historic character and streetscape of the surrounding town centre.
- **Secondary Shopping Frontage:** The site sits within a designated Secondary Shopping Frontage. This classification supports a flexible mix of businesses, services, and public facilities that add to the high street's variety and vitality.
- **Town Centre Boundary:** The site is located within the main Hitchin Town Centre Boundary, marking it as a highly sustainable and accessible location for modern communication infrastructure

4 PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for the installation of one Street Hub unit measuring 2986mm in height and 1236mm in width and 350mm in depth to be located on the Pavement outside 89 Hermitage Road, Hitchin, SG5 1DG. The installation of a Street Hub will support the telephone and wi-fi coverage of the area.

The installation of the proposed Street Hub unit forms part of a strategic plan for the removal of existing, outdated BT payphones and adapting to contemporary demands. In this instance, this is a new installation of a street hub which is not replacing a piece of the old infrastructure.

The proposed street hub will contribute to modernising and decluttering the council's streetscape, supporting the objectives of the UK Digital Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the relevant policies within the local Development Plan.

The Street Hub is positioned to integrate naturally with the existing street scene without blocking the pavement. It sits 0.5m back from the edge of the road and leaves a clear 3.1m gap between the unit and the front of Wood & Stone Floors, providing plenty of room for pedestrians to pass safely. Furthermore, its location keeps it well clear of key waiting areas, sitting 4.7m away from the flower bed and 10.9m down from the local bus shelter.

The new street hub, with its modern design and high-quality construction, will provide modern infrastructure to location with a heavy footfall, aligning with the characteristics of the surrounding urban area.

5 LEGISLATION AND NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

This application is for full planning permission under section 62 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 [the 1990 Act] and express advertisement consent under regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 [the Regulations]. Applications for full planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the 1990 Act). Under the advertisement Regulations, Express Consent is required for the advertisement element, notably the 2no digital screens on each side of the Street Hub. As per regulation 3 of the Regulations, applications for Express Advertisement Consent must be determined in the interests of amenity and public safety, considering (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and (b) any other relevant factors.

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

PART I – Section 3 of 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. The Regulations are a material consideration for the Express Advertisement Consent application.

The proposal fully accords with the requirements of these regulations which require local planning authorities to consider only amenity and public safety. In respect of amenity, the Street Hub is located within a commercial urban environment where illuminated displays are already an established characteristic. The design, scale and appearance of the unit are consistent with surrounding street furniture and do not detract from local character or any feature of architectural, cultural or historic interest. The removal of outdated BT kiosks also reduces visual clutter, resulting in a net improvement to the streetscape. In respect of public safety, the siting of the unit ensures that it does not obstruct pedestrian movement, sightlines or the interpretation of highway signage, nor does it interfere with CCTV, security systems or traffic-monitoring devices. The installation therefore meets the statutory tests of amenity and public safety and complies with the Regulations.

UK Digital Strategy

Digital connectivity 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.

The proposal directly supports the ambitions of the UK Digital Strategy, which recognises digital connectivity as a modern utility essential for everyday life and economic growth. The Street Hub provides free, high-quality public Wi-Fi and modern communication services that help ensure residents, visitors and businesses can easily access digital information and online resources. This improved connectivity contributes to digital inclusion, offering support to individuals who may not have immediate access to personal broadband. By enhancing access to digital services within the town centre, the proposal advances the Strategy's aim of building a digitally confident society capable of participating fully in the modern economy.

UK Infrastructure Strategy: A 10 Year Strategy (June 2025)

The Report identifies that high-quality infrastructure boosts growth and plays a vital role in delivering higher living standards. Investment in infrastructure, including digital connectivity, will improve transport and communications networks, thereby supporting productivity and efficiency improvements.

The proposal is fully aligned with the UK Infrastructure Strategy, which emphasises the importance of high-quality infrastructure in boosting economic growth, supporting productivity and improving living standards. The installation of the Street Hub represents an investment in modern digital infrastructure that improves public access to reliable connectivity and online services. By replacing outdated telephone kiosks with a multifunctional, efficient and contemporary unit, the proposal contributes to the Strategy's objective of upgrading existing infrastructure to meet current and future digital needs. As such, the development clearly supports national aims to deliver infrastructure that is resilient, accessible and capable of supporting a modern, competitive economy.

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (March 2022)

The Code of Practice has been fully revised, and the latest version was published by DCMS in March 2022. It acknowledges that the planning system plays a key role in delivering the digital infrastructure.

The proposal is fully consistent with the principles and objectives of the Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development (March 2022), which recognises that the planning system plays a vital role in delivering high-quality digital infrastructure in a sustainable and well-designed manner.

The proposed Street Hub contributes directly to the Government's aim of ensuring fast, reliable and accessible digital connectivity, supporting the ambitions outlined in paragraphs 8–12 of the Code, including the need for universal dependable coverage, modern telecommunications capability and infrastructure that enables economic, social and well-being benefits. Although the Code refers broadly to wireless infrastructure such as masts and cabinets, it also encourages all communication operators to follow its principles, which focus on good design, appropriate siting, and engagement with local communities.

The Street Hub replaces older, outdated telephone kiosks with a modern, streamlined unit that reduces street clutter, enhances visual amenity and provides improved digital services such as free Wi-Fi and emergency capability.

The installation therefore supports the Government's wider strategy for delivering high-quality digital infrastructure and aligns with the Code's emphasis on upgrading connectivity in a manner that is environmentally responsible, well integrated into the urban context, and beneficial to residents, visitors and businesses.

National and Local policies are most relevant to the submitted applications.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024		
Chapter	Policy Text (abridged)	Comments
2. Achieving Sustainable development	Paragraphs 7–14 of the NPPF define the purpose of the planning system as contributing to sustainable development, summarised as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The Framework (at paragraphs 10–11) establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision-making, this means granting permission for proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the plan is absent or out-of-date, granting permission unless (i) specific policies provide a clear reason for refusal, or (ii) adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits.	The proposed Street Hub constitutes a sustainable development: it delivers social, economic, and environmental benefits, including improved digital connectivity, enhanced public realm and accessibility, and support for economic activity. There is no conflict with the current Development Plan, and no significant adverse effects are identified; accordingly, the presumption in favour of sustainable development strongly supports approval.
6. Building a strong competitive economy	Paragraph 85–89 promote a strong, competitive economy, encouraging planning decisions that help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. The national policy recognises the importance of digital and technology sectors among priority growth areas.	The Street Hub supports local economic growth by providing free high-quality digital connectivity, enhancing the attractiveness of the public realm, facilitating business access, and promoting digital inclusion. It aligns with national economic objectives and supports innovation and productivity.
10. Supporting High-Quality Communications Infrastructure	Section 10 of the NPPF emphasises that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of high-quality communications infrastructure, including next-generation digital networks (e.g., 5G, full-fibre broadband). It encourages use of existing masts, buildings or structures before building new ones, and requires that the number of new masts and telecom infrastructure be kept to a minimum consistent with network need. Paragraph 123 clarifies that local planning authorities must determine electronic communications proposals on planning grounds only and must not seek to control competition between operators or impose	The Street Hub replaces existing BT payphone kiosks with a modern telecommunications infrastructure unit. It leverages established street-level infrastructure rather than introducing a large new mast, thereby aligning with the NPPF’s requirement to minimise new telecom sites while improving network capacity. The proposal is consistent with promoting high-quality digital infrastructure and facilitating future network upgrades.

	health safeguards beyond those set by international guidelines.	
11. Making effective use of land	Section 11 supports the effective and efficient use of land, encouraging redevelopment of previously developed or under-used land and ensuring that new development makes appropriate use of land in sustainable locations.	The installation of the Street Hub represents efficient use of existing urban infrastructure, replacing obsolete payphone kiosks and consolidating services. It enhances the utility of the site without requiring additional land take or urban sprawl, consistent with Section 11 objectives.
12. Achieving well designed places	Though the NPPF does not repeat detailed advertisement control, its design and sustainable development aim overlap with amenity and public safety considerations. Combined with national regulation, the proposal's design must respect visual amenity and not create hazards or nuisances.	The Street Hub's compact, slender design preserves pedestrian flow (footway width maintained). Its illuminated screens are in the context of a commercial streetscape where similar signage exists. There is no detrimental impact on the local visual character, street clutter, pedestrian or vehicular safety, or public amenity.
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic	215. 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.	The Street Hub does not adversely affect the setting of heritage assets and is appropriately scaled and sited within the existing streetscape.

National Planning Policy Guidance		
Chapter	Policy text (abridged)	Comments
Determining a planning application	Emphasises a positive approach to decision-making, working proactively with applicants to approve sustainable development where possible.	The Street Hub is a sustainable infrastructure proposal with no identified adverse impacts. The guidance supports approval where proposals accord with policy and deliver public benefits.
Effective use of land	Encourages efficient use of land and existing infrastructure, particularly in built-up areas, to meet development needs sustainably.	The proposal makes effective use of existing footway space and replaces obsolete payphone infrastructure, avoiding additional land take.

Design	Development should respond positively to local character, public realm quality, accessibility, and safety.	The Street Hub has a compact, contemporary design that integrates with existing street furniture, maintains pedestrian accessibility, and respects the surrounding town centre character.
Advertisements	Advertisements should be assessed in terms of amenity and public safety, considering location, scale, illumination, and cumulative impact.	The proposed digital advertising element is appropriate within a commercial town centre context, does not harm visual amenity, and does not create hazards to pedestrians or traffic.
Telecommunications	Supports expansion of digital communications infrastructure; encourages use of existing sites and minimisation of new structures; proposals should be assessed on planning grounds only.	The Street Hub replaces an existing payphone kiosk with modern telecom infrastructure, aligning with guidance to use existing street assets and improve network coverage without proliferation of new masts.
Town centres and retail	Town centres should be supported as accessible, vibrant locations providing services and infrastructure that benefit users and businesses.	The Street Hub enhances town centre functionality by providing digital connectivity for residents, visitors, and businesses, supporting vitality and footfall.
Health and wellbeing	Planning should support environments that promote social inclusion, access to services, and wellbeing.	Free public Wi-Fi and charging facilities support social inclusion and accessibility, particularly for people reliant on digital services.
Historic environment	Development affecting the setting of heritage assets should be proportionate, contextual, and avoid harm.	The Street Hub does not adversely affect the setting of heritage assets and is appropriately scaled and sited within the existing streetscape.

North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031	
Policy	Policy text (abridged)

Policy ETC5: Secondary Shopping Frontages	In the Secondary Shopping Frontages of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston, as shown on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted at ground-floor level: a) For shops, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, pubs or drinking establishments and takeaways; or b) For other main town centre uses⁸⁷ if it does not individually or cumulatively, undermine the retail function of the centre or detract from the centre's vitality and viability.
Policy SP4: Town Centres, Local Centres and Community Shops	The Council will make provision for an appropriate range of retail and service facilities across the District and are committed to protecting the vitality and viability of all centres. We will: a) Promote, protect and enhance the provision of shops, financial and professional services, café or restaurants, pubs or drinking establishments or takeaways in the following centres in our retail hierarchy: i. the town centres of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston.
Utilities, Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure	No direct strategic or development management policy, refer to NPPF.
Policy D1: Sustainable Design	Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals: a) Respond positively to the site's local context; b) Take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme, to: i. create or enhance public realm; ii. optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS); iii. reduce energy consumption and waste; iv. retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting; v. maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas; vi. future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle; vii. design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and viii. minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision; c) Have regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance;

	d) Within Letchworth Garden City have regard to the Letchworth Garden City Design Principles contained in Appendix 5; and
Strategic Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability	The Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. We will: a) Support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context
Strategic Policy SP13: Historic Environment	The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting. We will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through: a) Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance; b) Identifying sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or on the Council's 'At Risk' register; c) Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and other locally designated assets; and d) Publication of detailed guidance.
Policy HE1: Designated Heritage Assets	Planning applications relating to Designated heritage Assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that: i. Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting; ii. Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and iii. Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms. Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable): a) Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance; b) Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and c) Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public

	benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use. Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the Council shall refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.
Policy NE7: Reducing Flood Risk	Planning permission for development proposals will be granted provided that (as applicable): a) Development is located outside of medium and high-risk flood areas (flood zone 2 and 3) and other areas affected by other sources of flooding where possible.

6 ASSESSMENT AGAINST NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Assessment overview

The areas of assessment are set out as follows:

- Principle of development
- Amenity
- Design
- Heritage
- Public Realm
- Sustainable transport, accessibility and traffic
- Crime, Security and Safety

Principle of Development

Paragraph 119 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) confirms that advanced, high-quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being and that planning decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks.

The proposal involves the provision of a new Street Hub providing free public Wi-Fi, telecommunications services and smart infrastructure within a highly accessible town centre location. The proposal utilises existing street-level infrastructure and does not introduce a new or intrusive form of development.

The benefits of the Proposed BT hub, such as providing free Wi-Fi, directly respond to the nationwide need for enhanced digital connectivity. Section 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that high-quality digital infrastructure is essential for economic growth, social inclusion, and access to services, particularly in public spaces. By providing reliable connectivity in a well-designed and sensitively integrated manner within the public realm, the hub facilitates equitable access to digital services and helps bridge the digital divide. This aligns with national priorities to improve broadband access, promote social inclusion, and enable communities to engage fully with the digital economy, ensuring that public infrastructure contributes positively to both local and wider societal benefits.

Amenity

The proposed BT hub, offering many public benefits, would measure 2986mm in height and 1236mm in width and 350mm in depth, and is located within an area that is defined as the Town Centre. The amenity impact of the proposed infrastructure relates primarily to its design, its effect on public amenity, pedestrian movement, and its relationship with the surrounding area. The proposal will not give rise to any adverse impacts on accessibility or pedestrian circulation.

Paragraph 141 of the NPPF (2024) confirms that advertisements should only be restricted where they would result in demonstrable harm to the character or appearance of an area. The hub includes digital illuminated screens designed to integrate with the surrounding built environment. This site ensures that the development is contextually appropriate for the provision of illuminated advertising screens. The proposed screens respond to the more modern character of the neighbouring commercial building, ensuring a neutral impact on the wider area.

The location avoids dominating or obscuring historic features and complements the modern elements of the streetscape. Overall, the screens provide modern digital facilities in a manner that respects the visual amenity of the shopping parade, supporting both public information provision and connectivity.

In terms of noise, paragraph 198(a) of the NPPF (2024) requires development to mitigate noise impacts. The Street Hub includes controlled sound output, reduced night-time volume levels and directional speakers audible only to users standing immediately adjacent to the unit. These measures ensure that the proposal would not result in unacceptable noise impacts on nearby occupiers or detract from the amenity of the Area.

Design

Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF (2024) require development to be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and to contribute positively to the public realm. Locally, Policy D1 and Strategic Policy SP9 (Sustainable Design) of the Local Plan require development to enhance spaces and reflect local identity, including ensuring design has a safe and positive impact on the public realm and enhances the appearance of the street scene. In summary, development should be well-designed and consider the wider context of the application site.

The proposed Street Hub is a contemporary, purpose-designed structure with a slim vertical profile and limited footprint. Its materials, scale and form ensure that it is presented as modern street furniture rather than a dominant structure. The scale of the hub is modest in relation to the surrounding buildings and street width and would have a neutral impact on the character of the area.

The contemporary design and illuminated elements are reflective of the local centre environment, ensuring it integrates into this section of the parade without appearing incongruous or visually dominant in relation to the immediate neighbouring buildings on either side of the road.

Heritage

Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2024) requires development within Conservation Areas to preserve or enhance their character and appearance. Paragraph 206 of the NPPF confirms that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset must be clearly and convincingly justified, while paragraph 215 requires that less than substantial harm be weighed against public benefits.

The proposals do not impact any nearby heritage assets.

Public Realm

Paragraph 117(c) of the NPPF (2024) seeks to create places that are safe, secure and attractive and to avoid unnecessary street clutter.

The unit is located on a wide section of footway and will maintain clear pedestrian routes. The proposed digital hub provides a single, multifunctional piece of infrastructure that delivers tangible public benefits, including free Wi-Fi and free calls, which are well-suited to this area of the public realm within the town centre. The development, therefore, represents an enhancement to the public realm, improving functionality, accessibility, and overall user experience for members of the public.

Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Traffic

Paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF (2024) promote development that provides safe and convenient access for all users and confirm that development should only be refused on highway grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on safety.

The Street Hub is set back from the main road, ensuring it does not introduce any dominant or visually intrusive built form within the street scene particularly when read amongst the buildings within the vicinity. Its illumination will accord with professional lighting guidance, meaning the lit element of the proposal is not expected to give rise to highways concerns, particularly in a context already characterised by illuminated features.

The proposal does not generate vehicular traffic, servicing requirements or parking demand. No adverse impacts on highway or pedestrian safety are identified.

Crime, Security and Safety

Paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF (2024) requires development to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. Locally, Policy WD11 states that opportunities for the enhancement of town and local centres will be maximised, including the addition of security features as part of any proposals.



The Street Hub contributes positively to safety within the surrounding area through integrated lighting, passive surveillance, the ability to call emergency service facilities for free and the ability to display public safety messaging. A comprehensive Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan accompanies the application and sets out clear measures to address potential misuse.

7 PLANNING BALANCE

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of a single Street Hub unit on the public footway. The proposal forms part of a wider programme to modernise telecommunications infrastructure and improve digital connectivity within town centres.

Benefits of the Proposal

The proposal delivers a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits, consistent with the objectives of the development plan and national planning policy.

- From a social perspective, the Street Hub will provide free public Wi-Fi, emergency calling facilities, and device charging, supporting digital inclusion and accessibility for residents, workers, and visitors. This aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework's objective of promoting healthy, inclusive and safe communities, as well as Local Plan policies relating to inclusive design and social infrastructure.
- In economic terms, the provision of modern digital infrastructure at this town centre location supports business activity, visitor experience, and overall town centre vitality. Enhanced connectivity contributes to productivity and aligns with national and local policy objectives to support a strong, competitive and digitally enabled economy.
- From an environmental and land-use perspective, the proposal represents an efficient use of land by reusing existing street infrastructure and removing redundant phone boxes. This contributes to streetscape decluttering and avoids the need for additional land take or the installation of larger telecommunications structures, consistent with national policy and guidance on effective use of land and high-quality communications infrastructure.
- Data indicates that between Nov 2024-Nov 2025 over 1,900,00 calls have been made to essential charities for vulnerable people via BT Street Hubs. 2,010 calls to Childline, 1,640 Call to Youth Homelessness, 2,896 calls to Samaritans and 1,558 calls to Missing People.

The design of the Street Hub is compact, modern, and appropriate to its commercial context. It maintains adequate footway width, does not impede pedestrian movement, and integrates with existing street furniture. The proposal therefore accords with development plan policies relating to design quality, public realm, and pedestrian safety.

Potential Impacts

The potential impacts of the proposal relate primarily to visual amenity, public safety, and heritage considerations.

- In terms of visual impact, the Street Hub is of modest scale and slender form and is located within an established commercial streetscape where signage and street furniture are already prevalent. Any associated digital advertising is controlled in scale and illumination and would not result in visual clutter or harm to local character.
- Regarding public safety and accessibility, the unit has been carefully sited to maintain pedestrian flow and avoid conflict with existing street furniture, trees, and transport infrastructure. No adverse impacts on highway or pedestrian safety have been identified.
- In relation to the historic environment, the proposal does not result in harm to the setting of any designated or non-designated heritage assets. The scale, design, and siting of the Street Hub ensure that the significance of heritage assets, where present, is preserved.

8 CONCLUSION

When assessed against the Development Plan as a whole, and in the context of national planning policy and guidance, the proposal is fully compliant with relevant policies within the National and local policies.

The identified benefits of the proposal, including enhanced digital connectivity, improved public realm, support for commercial vitality, and efficient use of existing infrastructure, are substantial and carry significant weight. No material harms have been identified that would outweigh these benefits.

Accordingly, in the overall planning balance, the proposal represents sustainable development and there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The application is therefore considered acceptable in planning and advertisement consent terms and should be supported and approved.