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|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Application Number:</b> | P/ADV/2025/06384                                                                            |
| <b>Webpage:</b>            | <a href="https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/">https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/</a> |
| <b>Site address:</b>       | Pavement opposite 66-67 The Esplanade Weymouth DT4 8DE                                      |
| <b>Proposal:</b>           | Installation of 1no. internally illuminated double sided LCD display screen                 |
| <b>Applicant name:</b>     | Verity Cheyne                                                                               |
| <b>Case Officer:</b>       | Rob Piggot                                                                                  |
| <b>Ward Member(s):</b>     | Cllr Orrell                                                                                 |

**1. Reason application is going to committee:** The application site is land owned by Dorset Council.

**2. Summary of recommendation:**

Refuse for the following reason:

The proposed BT Street Hub would be a harmful addition to the historically sensitive and significant Esplanade promenade within the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area, given its siting, scale, design, appearance and colour with inbuilt LED screens being visually intrusive, adding to the proliferation of street furniture and being read alongside existing LED advertising screens which have been installed along the Esplanade. Whilst it is noted that there would be public benefits from the proposed hub, namely increased coverage of 5G and the provision of Wi-Fi, this is not considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which the hub would cause. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies ENV4, ENV10, ENV12, ENV14 and WEY1 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) and Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan (2026) policies W13, W39, W44 and W45 and chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**3. Key planning issues**

| <b>Issue</b>                                                                 | <b>Conclusion</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Scale, design, impact on character and appearance                            | The proposed unit is considered to be in relatively close proximity to recently installed LED advertising units of similar size and function. It is considered that the unit would result in the proliferation of advertising and increase both physical and visual clutter on the promenade.    |
| Impact on the living conditions of the occupants and neighbouring properties | The BT Hub would not be harmful to residential amenity, given the separation distance and north/south orientation of the unit.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Impact on landscape or heritage assets                                       | The scheme would be located in a sensitive historic area, in Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area. It is considered that the unit would harm the significance of the Conservation Area, being detrimental to the street scene due to the height, mass, colour and illumination of the proposed |

| Issue                                       | Conclusion                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             | structure and due to the accumulation of visual clutter in this historic setting.                                                                                                                  |
| Economic benefits                           | The provision of Wi-Fi would be of benefit to the tourist offering for Weymouth, with increased 5G coverage improving mobile connectivity for both personal and business use, along the Esplanade. |
| Highway impacts, safety, access and parking | The proposal would be acceptable in terms of impact to highway safety, with conditions required to ensure the units would not be distracting to road users.                                        |
| Crime / Policing                            | The unit would be acceptable, where an Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan is conditioned.                                                                                                       |

#### 4. Description of site

- 4.1 The application site is located on the promenade/walkway which runs along the northern side of The Esplanade, being in the middle of the promenade, opposite 66 & 67 The Esplanade, and King's Statue (George III), with the café/kiosk known as The View being approximately 20m to the southeast. It is within Weymouth's Defined Development Boundary (DDB), the Weymouth Town Centre Strategy Area (WEY1), and The Esplanade South (WEY5).
- 4.2 The site is within Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area, and in proximity of numerous listed buildings. These include Johnstone Row (Grade II), Statue House (Grade II\*) and King's Statue (George III) (Grade I). The Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2012) shows a number of key views in the local area, particularly from the beach towards the Esplanade.

#### 5. Description of Development

- 5.1 Advertisement Consent is sought to replace an existing payphone kiosk with an illuminated LED advertising unit which incorporates Wi-Fi and 5G technologies, known as a 'BT Street Hub'. The proposed hub would be approximately 1.2m W x 2.98m H x 0.35m D. The existing telephone kiosk/booth to be removed is approximately 0.9m W x 2.2m H.
- 5.2 It has been confirmed during the life of the application that the unit would provide 5G and Wi-Fi transmission/coverage. Wi-Fi coverage would cover an approximately 150m radius, and 5G coverage would be approximately 150m – 200m. These would be activated upon installation and would come at no cost to the Local Authority or end user.

#### 6. Background and relevant planning history

P/PAP/2022/00737 - Decision: RES - Decision Date: 17/05/2023

Street hub unit

P/ADV/2024/02760 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 05/07/2025

Install internally illuminated double sided digital advertising panel to replace existing advertising drum

## 7. List of constraints

Grade: II\* Listed Building: STATUE HOUSE, JOHNSTONE ROW (TERRACE) List Entry: 1038260; - Distance: 16.22

Grade: II Listed Building: JOHNSTONE ROW (TERRACE) List Entry: 1038259; - Distance: 23.65

Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area

LP - WEY 1; Weymouth Town Centre Strategy; Weymouth Town Centre

LP - SUS2; Defined Development Boundary; Weymouth

LP - WEY5; The Esplanade (South); The Esplanade (South)

LP - ENV 4; Area of Archaeological Potential; Town Centre North of Harbour, Weymouth - Dorset Council Land Freehold: Weymouth Beach Promenade from Weymouth Pavilion to Brunswick Terrace, Weymouth - Reference FH004434

Dorset Council Land Freehold: Weymouth Beach from Alexandra Gardens to Brunswick Terrace, Weymouth - Reference FH004439

Natural England - RAMSAR - Distance: 3140.8

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (5km buffer): Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs (UK0019861); - Distance: 3057.02

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (5km buffer): Chesil & The Fleet (UK0017076); - Distance: 3120.71

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (5km buffer): Crookhill Brick Pit (UK0030349); - Distance: 3489.67

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) impact risk zone

Flood Zone 3 (record ID 11253093.0)

EA - Spatial Flood Defences

Flood Risk Zone 3a

SFRA 2 Boundary

Portland heliport consultation zone (within 13km) - Distance: 4766.17

## 8. Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

### Consultees

- 1. Dorset Council - Highways** No objection, however concerns with the light levels/brightness both during daytime and nighttime. Level of illumination to be reduced to match ambient levels, not a constant 5000cd/m<sup>2</sup>, with night levels to be 300cd/m<sup>2</sup>. Note that there should be a mechanism to default to a blank screen in the event of malfunction/when not in use.

Recommend that a condition be placed to prevent intermittent/flashing lights, exposed cold cathode tubing, animation or reflective material, and that a lighting scheme be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for agreement.

**2. Dorset Council - Asset & Property** No comments received.

**3. Dorset Council Conservation Officer** There is no objection to the removal of the existing BT Payphone. However, the proposed installation of 1no. BT Street Hub is considered detrimental to the street scene due to the height, mass, colour, animation and illumination of the proposed structure and predominantly due to the accumulation of visual clutter in this historic setting. The proposal would not enhance the historic promenade, would have a negative impact on the neighbouring heritage assets and would have a detrimental effect on the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

**4. Dorset Council Telecommunications Lead:** Significant degradation in user-experience from all four mobile phone networks during summer months. Connectivity in Weymouth Town Centre would be beneficial, with significant number of visitors, businesses and residents, and would support digital inclusion. Any Wi-Fi, 5G should be correct technology and to be maintained by provider.

**5. Dorset Council - Env. Services - Protection:** No adverse comment.

**6. Weymouth Town Council** The Council objects to the application on the grounds of layout and density, design, visual appearance and materials, and the impact on the Conservation Area. This is subject to Weymouth not losing out on WiFi enhancement.

**7. Melcombe Regis Ward Member** No comments received.

**8. Dorset Police Architectural Liaison Officer**

Concerns raised as follows:

- Where free Wi-Fi is available, it can attract groups of people who then act anti-socially
- The proposed locations fall within areas with higher-than-average rates of crime and ASB
- Colleagues in other police forces have advised that there have been incidents of misuse of the 999-call button, mainly in city centre or high traffic locations in the night-time economy.
- The ability to make free calls could allow abuse of that service, including the hubs being used to facilitate the distribution of drugs or nuisance calls, particularly for domestic abuse/stalking victims. It is noted that incoming calls have been deactivated, thus preventing misuse for drug distribution.
- The hubs are solid units and would therefore block natural, formal and informal surveillance (including CCTV) and offer a hiding opportunity for offenders.
- No consultation/contact has been made with Dorset Police to date, despite identifying as such in the Anti-Social Management plan submitted.

Whilst Dorset Police does not formally object to this planning application of BT Street Hub installations in principle, at this stage, in order to ensure Dorset Council is able to comply with its duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area to include anti-social behaviour. Conditions are recommended, they being the activation of integrated CCTV camera; Strict compliance with Street Hub Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan; Removal of existing BT Payphone.

## **Representations received** - None

### **9. Duties**

s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a listed building or its setting, there is a general duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

### **10. Relevant policies**

#### **Development plan**

In this case the development plan comprises:

#### **Local Plan Adopted West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan:**

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

- ENV4: Heritage assets
- ENV10: The landscape and townscape setting
- ENV12: The design and positioning of buildings
- ENV14: Shopfronts & advertisements
- ENV16: Amenity
- COM7: Creating a safe & efficient transport network
- WEY1: Town Centre Strategy

#### **Made Neighbourhood Plans**

Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan 2021 to 2039 (made 29/01/2026):

- W13: Panoramas, Vistas and Views
- W39: Weymouth Town Centre
- W44: Design
- W45: Heritage Assets
- W46: Transport and Travel

#### **Material considerations**

#### **Emerging local plans:**

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

### **The Dorset Council Local Plan**

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options consultation took place between January and March 2021, with further consultation between 18 Aug – 31 October 2025. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the draft plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

### **National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended 2025)**

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless specific NPPF policies protecting areas or assets provide a strong reason for refusal and/or any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, with particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well designed places and providing affordable homes.

Other relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4 'Decision making': Para 39 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and 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.

- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places' This indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 131 – 141 advise that:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Paragraph 141 - 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.

- Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'- Paragraph 212 says that when considering designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account (para 216).

### **Other material considerations**

#### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

All of Dorset:

Dorset Council Interim Guidance and Position Statement Appendix B: Adopted Local Plan policies and objectives relating to climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable design and construction. December 2023.

Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance For West Dorset area:

Weymouth & Portland Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (2002)

Weymouth & Portland Urban Design (2002)

Landscape Character Assessment (Weymouth & Portland)

Conservation Area Appraisals:

Weymouth – Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal adopted December 2012

## **11. Human rights**

Article 6 - right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted development plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the human rights of the applicant or any third party.

## **12. Public Sector Equalities Duty**

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims: -

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The Street Hub proposed is not of such a size that it would block or prevent access to pavement by those with buggies or using a wheelchair/mobility scooter.

## **13. Public Benefits**

The proposals would provide a number of financial and non-financial benefits, including public benefits. These are summarised in the table below:

| What                                                                                                                                                                                                | Amount / value |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Material considerations                                                                                                                                                                             |                |
| Improved digital offering to visitors and residents in Weymouth, providing potential wider economic benefits to businesses in Weymouth.                                                             |                |
| Improved digital inclusion                                                                                                                                                                          |                |
| Improved access and facilitation of emergency services communication – both through the 5G and Wi-Fi functionality, 999 calling facilities, and the use of the LED screens for emergency messaging. |                |

| What                                                                        | Amount / value |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Potential for improved environmental monitoring, through air/odour testing. |                |
| Non material considerations                                                 |                |
| None identified.                                                            |                |

#### 14. Planning Assessment

- 14.1 The application is for advertisement consent and therefore the only considerations in the determination of the application are amenity and public safety.

##### Design and Character

- 14.2 The BT Hub is proposed to be located in a highly visible and sensitive area of The Esplanade, being within a high footfall area of the promenade, located at a key pedestrian junction of The Esplanade, in the setting of King George III statue. Further to this, the newly adopted Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan identifies The Esplanade as an important landscape feature, with the location of the BT Hub falling within a Key View Direction from Viewpoint V11. It is noted that The Esplanade, promenade and surrounding area can be characterised as illuminated during evening, nighttime, with various forms of street lighting in close proximity.
- 14.3 The proposal would result in the removal of an existing phone kiosk; however, the proposed BT Hub unit would be sited in close proximity to an almost identical advertising unit, installed approximately 35m to the south of the proposed unit, with another approximately 60m to the north. It is considered that, cumulatively, they would appear as a proliferation of advertising on the promenade. Whilst it is acknowledged that the wider setting of the proposed unit would be characterised as illuminated, it is considered that the BT Hub would be read alongside the existing LED advertising units, thus cluttering the street scene, public realm and historical setting.
- 14.4 The proposal is considered to cause harm by virtue of its siting, scale, colour and illumination, and therefore it is not considered that the proposal contributes positively to the local identity and distinctiveness of The Esplanade, nor does it harmonise with the positive character of the area. The proposal would therefore not accord with Local Plan Policy ENV10, ENV12, ENV14 and WEY1, nor Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan policies W13 and W44.

##### Heritage Impact

- 14.5 The proposal would be in the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area and would be in the setting of several heritage assets: King George III Statue (Grade I), 66-67 The Esplanade Johnstone Row (Grade II) and various Victorian Shelters along The Esplanade. Section 66 and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that due consideration be given to the significance, appearance and character of listed buildings and Conservation Area which may be affected.
- 14.6 The Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2012) shows a key view and a 'townscape effect' adjacent to the site. The significance of this part of the CA can be summarised as The Esplanade providing an important example of late Georgian town planning, related firmly to the sea and the historic uses of the late 18th and early 19th century that has defined the character of The Esplanade, which has been, and continues to

be, associated with visitors, entertainment, leisure and fun. As such the CA is considered to have historic, architectural and communal/social heritage significance. Furthermore, the quality of The Esplanade and its bay have been recognised and appreciated since the start of noble and royal patronage of the Georgian resort and as such is considered to have aesthetic heritage significance. The CA appraisal sets out that *“The Esplanade is of national significance in the history of the seaside resort and in terms of social history”*.

- 14.7 The Council’s Conservation officer has reviewed the proposal and have raised concerns with the height, mass, colour, animation and scale of the proposed structure, not being in accordance with the street furniture colour scheme along The Esplanade, and more specifically, being located between 2 no. existing LED advertising units. They state that: *‘From my site visit it is evident that there are already many similar advertising boards along this historic promenade. Some are positioned closer than others, but several are visible in any one view.’* They further state that: *‘The height, mass, animated and illuminated form of the proposal would add a prominent and imposing feature to the Esplanade. The existing internally illuminated double sided digital advertising panels are already having an impact on the street scene, and it is considered that this proposal and would create an unacceptable accumulation of visual clutter in a prominent and historic location. Furthermore, the proposal would further impede views of the promenade and Esplanade buildings from the walkway and the Victorian shelters.’*
- 14.8 The Conservation Officer summarises that: *‘Based on the assessment detailed below, there is no objection to the removal of the existing BT Payphone. However, the proposed installation of 1no. BT Street Hub is considered detrimental to the street scene due to the height, mass, colour, animation and illumination of the proposed structure and predominantly due to the accumulation of visual clutter in this historic setting. The proposal would not enhance the historic promenade, would have a negative impact on the neighbouring heritage assets and would have a detrimental effect on the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area’*. They then go on to conclude that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm, and that the public benefits would not outweigh this harm.
- 14.9 Given the significance of the Esplanade, as a key feature of Weymouth and the Conservation Area, the Conservation Officer’s view is considered proportionate and it is considered that the proposed BT Hub would lead to less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area. However, given distance and/or visual separation between the proposed unit and various individual heritage assets it is not considered that there would be harm to the setting of either King George Statue (40m to the west), the Victorian Shelter (75m to the south) nor 66-67 The Esplanade Statue House/Johnstone Row (20m to west). This notwithstanding, as has previously been identified in Section 13 above there are considered to be public benefits associated with the scheme. However, it is not considered that these public benefits outweigh the less than substantial harm identified.
- 14.10 On this basis the scheme is not considered to accord with Local Plan policy ENV4, Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan policies W39 and W45 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF. In reaching this conclusion regard has been had to Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

#### Residential Amenity

- 14.11 The proposed BT Hub is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact to residential amenity, given that the unit would be oriented with the panels facing north and south. It is noted that the unit would allow for calling and there would be an audible element, however, it is not considered that this would be any worse than the general noise found on The Esplanade itself, with a road separating the unit from tourist and residential accommodation to the west.
- 14.11 The Environmental Health Team have reviewed the proposal and have no comments to make.

- 14.12 Notwithstanding the low level of impact to neighbouring properties, if the scheme were to be granted consent, then it is recommended that the lighting be controlled by way of a lighting management plan, to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

#### Highway Safety

- 14.13 The Highway Authority have reviewed the proposal and have stated that it would appear acceptable in principle, however this would be subject to conditioning to ensure that illumination levels do not lead to a danger to highways safety, being overly bright and thereby distracting. This assessment is considered to be reasonable and proportionate and as such if consent were to be granted a lighting scheme should be agreed by the Highway Authority and Local Planning Authority.
- 14.14 On this basis the scheme is considered to accord with Local Plan policy COM7 and Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan policy W46.

#### Crime/Policing

- 14.15 Comments have been received from Dorset Police, raising concerns that the BT Hub could be used for criminal purposes, and lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour, in an area which has a higher-than-average rate of crime and anti-social behaviour. It is suggested that the Wi-Fi and free calling facilities could lead to nuisance calls, and the solicitation of drugs. This notwithstanding, it is considered that the unit would also be of benefit where it would provide a facility for emergency calling, alongside the public benefits from Wi-Fi and 5G improvements, furthermore, an Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan has been submitted, and this would be conditioned as part of any consent granted. Whilst it is assumed that CCTV is in operation on The Esplanade, Dorset Police have recommended that any integrated camera within the BT Hub be activated when installed, to ensure the monitoring of any calling of 999. They have also requested the removal of the existing BT payphone. Lastly, Dorset Police have raised concerns with regard to the potential for the proposed Street Hub to block or obstruct site lines and therefore be used by someone to evade or conceal themselves.
- 14.16 Local Plan policy WEY5 makes reference to anti-social behaviour in the area where the unit would be located and therefore weight should be given to related concerns. In this regard, it is accepted that the submitted Anti-Social Management Plan would be the appropriate manner in which to address these concerns. Whilst it may be the case that the new street hub could be used for concealment, and that nuisance calls may be made from it, it should be noted that this could be achieved now, given the existing phone box remains in situ. The removal of the existing phone kiosk would be conditioned as part of any consent, given this application is for the replacement of that unit.

#### Other Matters

- 14.17 It should be noted that the matter of the loss of economic benefits to nearby advertising units, through the introduction of a competitor, would not be a material consideration in this planning assessment.
- 14.18 In terms of public health and non-ionising radiation protection, a statement of conformity with public radio frequency guidelines has been provided.

### **15. Environmental implications**

- 15.1 Given the type and small-scale nature of the proposed development it is not considered that there would be any significant environmental impact as a result.

### **16. Planning Balance**

- 16.1 It is considered that for the reasons set out above that the development would have subject to conditions an acceptable impact on highway safety and residential amenity in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan. Subject to a planning condition requiring the implementation of the anti-social behaviour management plan the

development is not considered to likely result in an unacceptable impact in respect of crime and anti-social behaviour.

16.2 The development would result in the public benefits of:

- improved digital offering to visitors and residents in Weymouth, providing potential wider economic benefits to businesses in Weymouth
- improved digital inclusion
- improved access and facilitation of emergency services communication – both through the 5G and Wi-Fi functionality, 999 calling facilities, and the use of the LED screens for emergency messaging
- potential for improved environmental monitoring, through air/odour testing

16.3 The proposed development would be located within the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area in what is identified in both the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan as a key view. The significance of this part of the CA can be summarised as The Esplanade providing an important example of late Georgian town planning, related firmly to the sea and the historic uses of the late 18th and early 19th century that has defined the character of The Esplanade, which has been, and continues to be, associated with visitors, entertainment, leisure and fun. As such the CA is considered to have historic, architectural and communal/social heritage significance. Furthermore, the quality of The Esplanade and its bay have been recognised and appreciated since the start of noble and royal patronage of the Georgian resort and as such is considered to have aesthetic heritage significance. The CA appraisal sets out that *“The Esplanade is of national significance in the history of the seaside resort and in terms of social history”*.

16.4 It is considered that the proposed development by reason of its siting, scale, design, colour and appearance would add to the proliferation of street furniture (despite the removal of the existing telephone box) and other paraphernalia on the sea front and as a result of the inbuilt LED advertisement screens would be a visually prominent addition which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This harm is considered to be less than substantial and so in accordance with chapter 16 of the NPPF consideration must be given to whether the public benefits would outweigh the identified harm.

16.5 Whilst public benefits have been identified and could be secured by planning condition the weight to be attached to these is considered to be limited. It is considered that despite the limited weight which can be attached to the public benefits that is not sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets. As such the development is contrary to Policy ENV4 of the adopted local plan, Policies W39 and W45 of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan and chapter 16 of the NPPF. It would have a detrimental and unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area contrary to the development plan policies ENV10, ENV12, ENV14 and WEY1 and Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Policies W13 and W44.

## 17 Recommendation

17.1 Refuse for the following reason:

1. The proposed BT Street Hub would be a harmful addition to the historically sensitive and significant Esplanade promenade within the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area, given its siting, scale, design, appearance and colour with inbuilt LED screens being visually intrusive, adding to the proliferation of street furniture and being read alongside existing LED advertising screens which have been installed along the Esplanade. Whilst it is noted that there would be public benefits from the proposed hub, namely increased

coverage of 5G and the provision of Wi-Fi, this is not considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which the hub would cause. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies ENV4, ENV10, ENV12, ENV14 and WEY1 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) and Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan (2026) policies W13, W39, W44 and W45 and chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.