

Knowsley Council
Regeneration and Economic Development Directorate.
Delegated Planning Report

APPLICATION NO:	23/01981/TEL	CASE OFFICER:	Andrew Hunt
WARD:	St Gabriels	PARISH:	N/A
LOCATION:	Pavement At The Junction Of Manor Farm Road And Meadow Drive, Huyton, Knowsley L36 0SG		
PROPOSAL:	THE INSTALLATION OF AN 17M HIGH SLIM-LINE MONOPOLE, SUPPORTING 6 NO. ANTENNAS, 2 NO. EQUIPMENT CABINETS, 1 NO. ELECTRIC METER CABINET AND ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT THERETO.		

Site Description

The application site is a prominent grassed area at the junction of Meadow Drive and Manor Farm Road, Huyton. The area is irregularly shaped with a footpath running diagonally through the area. There is an existing tree at the north eastern part of the site and a telegraph pole at the north western part along with two smaller streetlights next to the footpath. The site is surrounded by residential properties to the north, south east and west and a bus stop immediately to the north west.

Proposal

The proposal is for the installation of a 17 m high slim line monopole, supporting 6 no antennas, 2 no equipment cabinets, 1 no electric meter cabinet, and ancillary development thereto. The monopole and cabinet would be located at the north eastern part of the site on the corner and would be located on the paved area.

Consultations

Highways – The equipment would appear to be out of character with the area and other alternative locations may be considered more appropriate from a highways perspective. (Although pedestrians would likely still be able to navigate the footpath during maintenance periods and driver visibility is not believed to be obscured)

Representations

The application has been publicised by a site notice and letters sent to 54 neighbours.

1 Objection has been received from Councillor Cath Golding on the ground of impact on the character of the area and impact on highway safety from reduced visibility.

There have been 104 individual and independent objections to the application from members of the public consisting of the following main points:

- The scale of the mast and equipment is out of character and will harm the

visual appearance of the area.

- Harm to highway safety through reduced visibility.
- Negative health impacts of 5G Masts on humans and wildlife.
- 5G Masts require significant electricity use which will impact climate change.
- Other Locations (such as industrial parks) are more appropriate.
- Potential for anti social behaviour.
- There will be a large visual contrast with single storey bungalows.
- Impact on property prices.

Planning History

None Relevant.

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles

CS7 - Transport Networks

CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

ENV8 - Telecommunications Developments

ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT:

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the installation of a 17m high slim-line monopole, supporting 6 no antennas, 2 no equipment cabinets, 1 no electric meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

This application is not an application for planning permission but an application for 'prior approval' under national planning regulations (the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended)) for the siting and appearance of proposed telecommunications equipment. Therefore, only these matters – of siting and appearance - can be considered when deciding the application.

SITING AND APPEARANCE

Policy CS19 requires that developments respond to and integrate positive characteristics of their immediate surroundings and complement and enhance existing landscape, topography and green infrastructure.

The proposal would be located in a prominent area of greenspace at the junction of Meadow Drive and Manor Farm Road. It would be located at the north western part of the site in a prominent semi-circular area on the corner. The road and pavement curves at this location forming an irregular semi-circle. This highlights and draws visual attention towards the area and gives the area prominence within the street scene.

The scale of the mast would be out of keeping with the buildings and structures nearby. The mast would visually dominate the nearest buildings - 49 and 52 Manor Farm Road which are bungalows, it would also be almost twice the height of the two storey buildings to the west and south west (17 metres compared to 8 metres). The mast would be significantly higher than the tree, streetlights and telegraph pole in the vicinity of the site and would be closer to the road making it more prominent in the street scene.

The mast would be an incongruous and over dominant feature of the area and harmful to the character of the area. There would be no screening when viewed from Manor Farm Road and no feature to soften the visual appearance of the mast in all directions except south east. Therefore, the mast would be highly visible from the surrounding area, this combined with the large height of the mast (17 metres) would result in significant harm to the streetscene.

The applicant has failed to demonstrate through a robust, comprehensive and detailed assessment that there are no alternative sites where the proposal could be accommodated without the significant harm of the proposed location. The level of detail provided in relation to alternative sites is cursory.

Overall, the mast would be a looming, dominant and disproportionate addition to the area. It would create a perception of visual clutter and would be significantly harmful to the streetscene. The development is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS2 and CS19 and UDP policy ENV8 and NPPF para 115.

AMENITY

Core Strategy Policy CS19 requires that development to avoid unacceptable impacts on existing residents, business occupiers, and future occupiers.

The mast would be the following distances to nearby properties:

- 49 Manor Farm Road – 16.06 metres
- 52a Manor Farm Road – 22.57 metres
- Semi Detached Property to the west (North) – 27.80 metres
- Semi Detached Property to the west (South) – 29.05 metres

It is considered that the development will cause significant harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties by adversely affecting the outlook of properties.

49 Manor Farm Road

The mast is in very close proximity to residents at 49 Manor Farm Road being around 16 metres away from the property. Number 49 also has a side window which allow unobstructed views of the mast opposite.. Due to the open nature of the area, there would be no screening between the mast and the residential building to the north, and combined this would cause severe harm to amenity.

52a Manor Farm Road

52a Manor Farm Road would also be significantly affected by the mast. it would be slightly further away but would still be just 22 metres away with no screening. There would still be significant views of the mast from the side window of 52a to the significant detriment of residential amenity.

Semi Detached Properties to the west

The mast would also be in close proximity to the semi detached properties to the west. Both properties would face towards the mast with distances of 27.80 (for the northern dwelling) and 29.05 (for the southern dwelling). Both properties directly face east onto the location of the proposed mast. The mast would therefore be directly visible from all front facing windows at the property to the significant detriment of residential amenity. Due to the open nature of the area, there would be no screening between the mast and the residential building to the west. The existing tree would not provide screening (from the west) as it is located to the south east of the proposed mast.

Semi Detached Properties to the South west

The mast would also be in close proximity to the semi detached properties to the south west. Both properties would face towards the mast with distances of 31.39 (for the east dwelling) and 31.77 (for the west dwelling). Both properties directly face north east onto the location of the proposed mast. The mast would therefore be directly visible from all front facing windows at the property to the significant detriment of residential amenity. Due to the open nature of the area, there would be no screening between the mast and the residential building to the west. The existing tree would not provide screening (from the south west) as it is located to the south east of the proposed mast.

Other Properties.

The mast would also have an impact on the amenity of other properties. Although as these properties are further away, the impact on amenity is not considered to be significantly harmful.

General Impact on Amenity

The mast would be highly visible from the habitable rooms of several neighbouring properties and would be a dominant visual presence. It would constitute a constant visual reminder of the proximity of the mast and would cause a severely harmful impact on the outlook from the properties.

It would introduce an alien and discordant feature into an area with an existing residential use. The outlook that would result from the mast would not be consistent with a good standard of residential amenity. The development is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS2 and CS19, UDP policy ENV8 and NPPF para 115.

HIGHWAYS

The National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The development will not cause significant harm to highway safety. Whilst, the location of the proposal is not ideal and other locations would be preferable from a highways perspective. It would not involve development that would significantly affect the road or pavement network. It is considered that the position of the mast will not create highway visibility issues This is supported by the views on the council's highways department who have no objection. Overall, the application complies with Core Strategy Policy CS7.

OTHER MATTERS

Health Considerations

In response to health concerns raised, the Government's planning advice (based upon advice from Public Health England (PHE) who provide advice to the Government on public health issues) is that there is no convincing evidence of harm

to human health from 5G provided that international guidelines for exposure to radio waves are followed and in this case the applicant has confirmed that these guidelines will be followed.

PHE have stated that, based on existing research, it is considered that there is no convincing evidence of harm from exposure to radio waves within the international guideline levels. Further government advice confirms that the internationally accepted guidelines will continue to apply to the 5G network rollout across the UK. The guidelines on limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields were agreed by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection ("the ICNIRP guidelines"), an independent organisation which is formally recognised by the World Health Organisation.

The guidelines on human exposure to electromagnetic fields are based upon the consensus view of research carried out over many years and including the frequencies used by 5G and all other mobile /wireless technologies. Furthermore, it is advised that there have been over 100 expert reports on electromagnetic fields and health published internationally over the past two decades, with over 3,000 studies informing these reviews and the existing scientific exposure guidelines.

Further (recently updated) guidance from PHE reiterates this position and moreover states that:-

"... there should be no consequences [from 5g] for public health". In taking planning decisions, government guidance to Councils (from 2019) is that Councils should not "...set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure."

As such, health is not a material planning consideration in this instance given that this application is for prior approval (with only matters of siting and appearance to be considered); and in any event the telecommunications operator has confirmed that the international guidelines will be met, which PHE and the government indicate should satisfy local planning authorities that a telecommunications installation is safe.

Benefits of the proposal

The applicant states that there is a specific requirement for an installation on the application site to ensure that the latest high quality 3G and 4G service provision is provided in this area of Knowsley. The proposed column will also ensure that new 5G coverage can be provided at this location. This ensures that coverage and capacity requirements are maintained and enhanced. A site in this location will fill the gap in service provision and provide high quality, reliable, advanced 3G, 4G and 5G to this urban area of Knowsley.

The applicant's Supplementary Information Form sets out the benefits of 5G, which are not disputed and as noted in Paragraph 112 of the NPPF, advanced telecommunications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being and this should therefore weigh in favour of the development.

Property Prices

The potential impact on property prices is not a relevant planning considerations as

only the siting and appearance of the mast may be taken into account.

CONCLUSION

The proposal is acceptable in principle under the 2015 GPDO, however the developments siting would cause significant harm to the streetscene and to residential amenity, this harm is not outweighed by the benefits of the proposal. The development is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS2 and CS19, UDP policy ENV8 and NPPF para 115.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Council has determined that pursuant to Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended, the applicant be informed that prior approval is required and refused for the following reason(s):-

- 1) The proposed development would be detrimental to the character of the area and to the streetscene. In particular, it would result in an incongruous and over dominant structure within the area, resulting in significant harm to the street scene in a prominent location. The proposed development would cause significant harm to the outlook of occupants of nearby residential properties resulting in an adverse effect on their amenity. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016, saved Policies H5 and ENV8 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006 and NPPF para 115.

Signed Case Officer¹:

Andrew Hunt

Signed Authorising
Officer²:



13 September 2023

Date:

Informatives

N/A

1 I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

2 I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed