

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	26/00140/TEL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Maxine Wishart
<u>WARD:</u>	Prescot North	<u>PARISH:</u>	Knowsley Parish Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Flukers Brook Lane Woods At Cottage Farm , Knowsley		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	PRIOR APPROVAL DETERMINATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF 1 NO. REPLACEMENT 25M LATTICE MAST ONTO A NEW CONCRETE BASE TO ACCOMMODATE 9 NO. ANTENNA AND ANCILLARY RADIO EQUIPMENT, 1 NO. 0.3M TRANSMISSION DISH, 2 NO. 0.6M TRANSMISSION DISH, 2 NO. EQUIPMENT CABINETS AND ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT THERETO WITHIN EXTENDED FENCED COMPOUND.		

Site Description

The site is located within an existing farm field and is designated as Green Belt. The application site is accessed from Fluker Brook Lane a narrow lane serving a small number of residential dwellings, farms and agricultural land crossing east to west over the M57 Motorway from Knowsley Lane. The site is secured by a gate across Flukers Brook Lane where the Lane continues beyond the gate to Flukers Brook Farm and residential dwellings comprising: Flukers Brook Farm Cottage; 1 & 2 Flukers Brook Farm Cottages; Granny Flat Cottage Farm, The Shant Flukers Brook Farm and The Manor House.

To the west of the application site lies a woodland, The Rough (Local Wildlife Site and Tree Preservation Order No.1 1978), farm buildings and the residential dwellings within the farm complex are located to the southeast.



The site is located at the edge of an agricultural field. Other land around the site to the north, east, south and further west beyond the woodland is made up of mainly open agricultural land. The M57 lies beyond the agricultural land and Flukers Brook Lane to the east. Flukers Brook (main river) is located approximately 45m to the south of the application site.

There is an existing base station site adjacent to the application site which comprises of a 22.5 metre monopole mast with an open headframe supporting antennas and associated equipment on a steel grillage on top of a concrete base within a timber fenced compound. The compound is surrounded by planting which screens the compound and the lower part of the mast from view.



Access from Flukers Brook Lane to the application site can be made on foot or by vehicle via an access track through the agricultural land.

Proposal

The proposal is for a replacement telecommunications mast and associated equipment which is permitted development under the terms of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO). The principle of the development, including the need for the facility, is therefore accepted by the legislation, and is not a matter for

consideration in this application.

The application relates to an application for a 5G upgrade to an existing established electronic communications base station which was granted planning permission in 2005 (05/00034/FUL).

The proposal comprises of the following works:

- Removal of existing 22.5m high mast;
- 25m lattice mast onto new concrete base;
- 9 no. antenna and ancillary radio equipment onto new headframe;
- Relocation of 1 no. 0.3m transmission dish and 2 no. 0.6m transmission dishes onto proposed headframe;
- Installation of 1 no. GPS Module onto proposed gantry pole within compound;
- Extended fenced compound.
- 2 no. new equipment cabinets; and
- Ancillary development.

Consultations

Knowsley Parish Council - No comments received.

Prescot North Ward Members - No comments received.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 7 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice. No representations have been received.

Planning History

APP. NO: 05/00034/FUL
PROPOSAL: INSTALLATION OF 22.5 METRE HIGH TELECOMMUNICATIONS MONOPOLE WITH 3 NO. ANTENNAS AND 2 NO. DISHES TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT CABIN AND 1.2 M HIGH FENCING AROUND COMPOUND.
DECISION: Granted
DECISION DATE: 17 March 2005

APP. NO: 12/00323/TELPD
PROPOSAL: INSTALLATION OF 1NO. TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABINET.
DECISION: Permitted Development
DECISION DATE: 15 June 2012

APP. NO: 12/00208/FUL
PROPOSAL: RETENTION OF 30 M HIGH TELECOMMUNICATIONS LATTICE MAST WITH 1 NO. DISH, 3 NO. ANTENNAE, ASSOCIATED CABINETS/ EQUIPMENT AND 2.1 METRE HIGH HERAS FENCING (PREVIOUSLY ERECTED UNDER EMERGENCY POWERS) FOR A FURTHER TEMPORARY PERIOD.

DECISION: Granted
DECISION DATE: 11 July 2012

APP. NO: 15/00785/TELPD
PROPOSAL: REMOVAL OF 3NO EXISTING ANTENNAS, INSTALLATION OF 3NO REPLACEMENT ANTENNAS AND INSTALLATION OF 1NO CABINET (SAMO)
DECISION: Permitted Development
DECISION DATE: 22 December 2015

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.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles
CS5 - Green Belt
CS8 - Green Infrastructure
CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
CS21 - Greenspaces and Trees

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

DQ4 - Trees and Development
ENV2 - Noise and Vibration
ENV8 - Telecommunications Developments

The principle of development is established by the GPDO and the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO do not require regard be had to the development plan. The relevant development plan policies and NPPF is a material consideration in this application insofar as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

Background

Planning permission was granted in March 2005 for the installation of a 22.5 m high telecommunications monopole with associated equipment and compound (Ref: 05/00034/FUL).

In January 2010 equipment was erected under emergency powers for a temporary period (6 months) under what was then Class 24 of the GDPO 1995. Equipment comprised of a 30m high mobile mast; associated antennas; equipment cabinets and generator within a compound surrounded by 2.1m high Heras fencing. This was installed approx. 30 south of the 22.5 m mast with its associated equipment and compound.

The installation of a telecommunications cabinet was subsequently deemed to be permitted development in June 2012 (12/00323/TELPD). In July 2012 permission was granted for a limited period for the retention of the temporary apparatus which required the equipment and all associated works to be removed from the site and land restored to former condition within one month of the equipment being de-commissioned or by 31 January 2013 whichever was sooner (Ref:12/00208/FUL). That equipment was removed from the site.

In 2015 notice was given to the Council of intention to carry out works deemed to be permitted development for the removal and replacement of 3 no. of antennas together with 1 no. cabinet was deemed permitted development (15/00785/TELPD).

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

Under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO) planning permission is granted for the installation, alteration or replacement of any electronic communications apparatus, provided that it meets the limitations and conditions set out at paragraphs A.1 and A.2, and the procedural requirements set out at paragraph A.3.

In accordance with A.3 (4) of Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO, the applicant has applied *to the local planning authority for determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development.*

If the proposal is deemed to be permitted development, under the provisions of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO and prior approval is required, the local planning authority must therefore only assess the proposal solely on the basis of its siting and appearance, taking into account any representations received.

Main Issues

The main issues are:

- whether the proposal is permitted development in relation to Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO.
- if permitted development whether it is subject to prior approval.
- the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed development on the

- character and appearance of the area;
- living conditions of nearby residents taking into account impacts on outlook and noise;
- highway safety; and
- if any harm would occur, whether it is outweighed by the need for the proposed development.

Whether the proposal is Permitted development - Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO

The installation, alteration or replacement of electronic communications apparatus is permitted development under Class A (a) of Schedule 2, Part 16 of the GPDO, subject to the limitations and conditions.

Where a proposal is not found to be permitted development, it is not necessary to go on to consider whether to grant prior approval.

The limitations set out under A.1 (1) of Class A of Schedule 2, Part 16 of the GPDO states that:

Development is not permitted: ground based apparatus.

A.1 (1) *Development consisting of the installation of electronics communications apparatus (other than on a building) is not permitted by Class A (a) if -*

- ...(d) *in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast, the height of the mast, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the greater of the height of the existing mast or a height of—*
 - (i) *30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or*
 - (ii) *25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or*

The proposed mast would not exceed 30m above ground on unprotected land.

Development is not permitted: radio equipment housing

A.1 (9) *'Development consisting of the installation, alteration or replacement of radio equipment housing is not permitted by Class A(a) if—*

- (a) *the development is not ancillary to the use of any other electronic communications apparatus;*
- (b) *the cumulative volume of such development would exceed 90 cubic metres...*

It is accepted that the proposed new cabinets would be electronic communications apparatus. The existing and the proposed new equipment cabinets taken cumulatively would not exceed 90 cubic metres.

Turning to the conditions for permitted development, Class A development is permitted subject to the condition. The proposed mast would not exceed 25m in height which is allowed on unprotected land under A.2 (3) (c) (ii) of Class A (a) of Schedule 2, Part 16 of the GPDO.

The limitations set out under A.2 (3) identify the developments that are permitted

development, without the need for prior approval, and those that require an application for prior approval following the process set out under A.3.

Having regard to A.2 (3) (c) (ia) (aa) of Schedule 2, Part 16 of the GDPO which states that:

'the alteration or replacement of a mast, other than on a building, which—

...(aa) is less than one metre wide where the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by two thirds... '

The test as to whether prior approval is required is therefore based on whether the replacement mast in this instance would exceed the width of the original mast by two thirds. The existing mast measured at its widest point is shown as 700mm on the submitted plans and the proposed mast at its widest point would measure approx. 3290mm. Taking this into account, as the existing mast is less than 1m wide and would exceed the original mast by more than two thirds, prior approval is therefore required.

Turning to the ancillary equipment housing, A.2 (1) Class A (a) development is permitted subject to the condition that (b) *The siting and appearance of any...(iv) radio equipment housing...constructed, installed or replaced which does not require prior approval under A.2(3) are such that the visual impact of the development on the surrounding area is minimised.*

A.2 (3) (c) (iii) allows *the construction, installation, alteration or replacement of radio equipment housing, where the volume of any single development, other than a single development within a permitted compound [emphasis added], exceeds 2.5 cubic metres.*

From the information submitted the cabinets would be located within the existing permitted compound.

In conclusion, therefore the development is permitted development subject to the prior approval of the LPA for siting and appearance as required under A.3 of Class A (a) of Schedule 2, Part 16 of the GDPO.

Character and Appearance

Part 16 of the GPDO establishes that if the proposal is permitted development, then it is accepted in principle by virtue of the legislation. The provisions of the GDPO do not require regard be had to the development plan, the local planning authority can only therefore, have regard to the policies of the development plan and any related guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) only insofar as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

Core Strategy Policies CS2, CS5, CS8, CS19 and CS21 and Saved Policies DQ4, ENV2 and ENV8 are material considerations as they relate to issues of siting and appearance. In particular saved Policy ENV8 seeks to ensure that telecommunications installations would not, by reason of its scale, siting or design, have an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area, or amenity of nearby residents. It continues to indicate that telecommunications development is generally not acceptable in environmentally sensitive areas (like Conservation Areas, residential areas, or the Green Belt) unless

there are no suitable alternative sites, and the proposal minimises visual impact through careful design, siting, and screening. Similarly, the NPPF is also a material consideration, insofar as it relates to siting and appearance. Section 10 of the NPPF provides guidance in relation to 'Supporting high quality communications' and Section 12 – 'Achieving well-designed place' which outlines the government's commitment to good design.

Paragraph 120 of the NPPF advises that *'...the number of masts should be kept to a minimum consistent with the need of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged.'* It goes further to state that *'Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.'*

Para 123 of the NPPF states that *'Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.'*

The NPPF also attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Decisions should ensure new developments integrate into the environment and aim to ensure that they are visually attractive places through good design and landscaping. Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and on design guidance...(para. 139).

Policy CS2 requires that "New development in Knowsley will be expected to support the following development principles: 'Principle 4 c) Promoting good quality design and ensuring that development respects its setting taking into account relevant design requirements and best practice.'

Policy CS19 in the Core Strategy states: *'To enhance the local distinctiveness, identity and accessibility of places, new development within Knowsley will be expected to: maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, development proposals will be required to:*

- a) *Avoid unacceptable impacts on existing residents, business occupiers, and future occupiers;*
- b) *Minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, including good levels of natural surveillance and security; and*
- c) *Accommodate future maintenance and long-term management requirements.'*

The NPPF directly relates to the need for advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure and states that planning decisions *'should support the expansion of electronic communications networks including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G)...*

Saved Policy ENV8 in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan at Criterion 1. states that *'Proposals for new telecommunications masts and associated antennae and buildings will not be permitted unless the applicant has demonstrated that the following criteria would be satisfied:*

- a) *Where the proposal is for a free-standing mast, the need for the development*

could not, for technical reasons, be met in a more environmentally acceptable manner by:

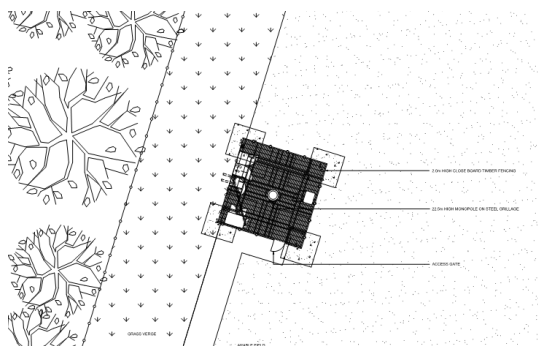
- *Sharing an existing mast or site,*
 - *Erecting antennae on an existing building or other structure;*
- b) *The development would not, by reason of its scale, siting or design, have an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area, or the amenity of nearby residents.'*

Criterion 2. of the policy states that *'New telecommunications development will not be permitted within environmentally sensitive areas, such as Conservation Areas, residential areas or the Green Belt, unless the applicant has demonstrated that there are no other suitable alternative sites outside such areas and that appropriate steps have been taken to minimise any visual impact through careful siting, design and screening.'*

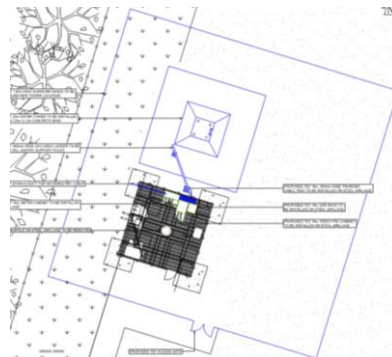
The main issues are therefore the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed telecommunications development on the character and appearance of the area, and if harm would occur, whether this is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed, taking into account any suitable alternative sites.

The proposal would include:

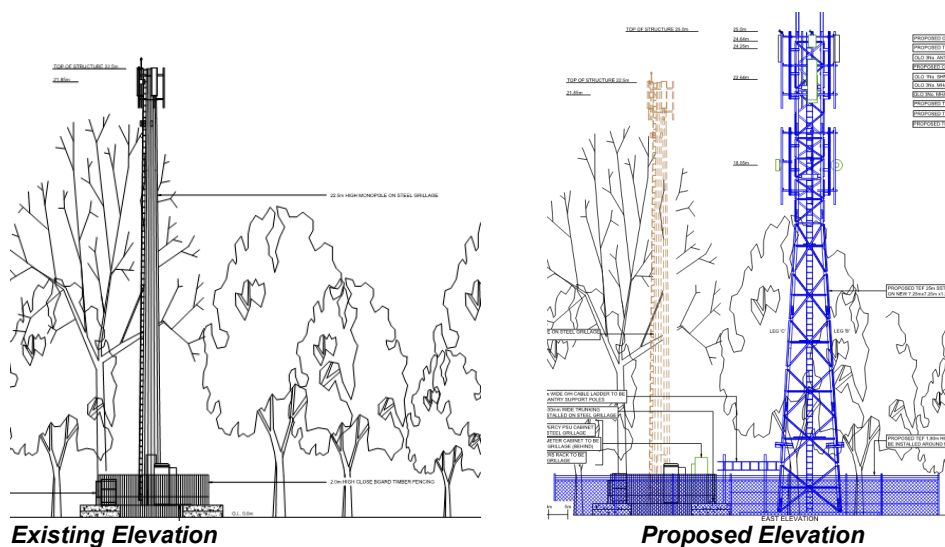
- Removal of existing 22.5m high mast from existing steel grillage within existing compound;
- Erection of new 25m lattice mast onto new concrete base which would have dimensions of 7.25m x 7.25m;
- 9 no. antenna and ancillary radio equipment onto new headframe;
- Relocation of 1 no. 0.3m transmission dish and 2 no. 0.6m transmission dishes onto proposed headframe;
- Installation of 1 no. GPS Module onto proposed gantry pole within compound;
- Extended fenced compound comprising 1.8m high chain-link fencing;
- Retention of existing compound and equipment
- 2 no. new equipment cabinets; and
- Ancillary development including 300mm wide o/h cable ladder on gantry support poles



Existing Site Plan



Proposed Site Plan



The applicant has stated that the deployment of 5G would utilise the Mobile Network Operator's (MNO) existing 4G networks such as the base station already existing at the application site. It is likely to carry different mobile connectivity services in parallel with high data uses operating through the new 5G higher capacity network apparatus subject of the application.

The applicant has indicated that the height and scale of the proposed development is the minimum required to meet technical requirements, and the mast has been designed to minimise its visual impact. Nonetheless, the proposed installation would be a taller, bulkier and a more prominent piece of infrastructure, than that which exists. In addition, the compound would be extended quite substantially. The existing compound is screened by planting. The style of mast is out of character with its rural setting, and due to its height and appearance, it would have a greater impact on the character and appearance of the area than the current equipment.

The NPPF is clear that decision makers for applications for the expansion of electronic communications networks should be supported. Therefore, the severity of the harm must be weighed against the need. Weighing in its favour, the equipment would be seen against the backdrop of The Rough, the adjacent woodland, albeit the larger headframe would extend beyond the height of trees for operational requirements. The siting of a mast, albeit a more slimline structure, and the existing screened compound, that would accommodate new equipment is screened now form part of the established landscape.

The proposal relates to an upgrade of an existing site rather than a new structure elsewhere. The application cites the need for coverage requirements and is essential infrastructure. Having regard to all of the above, it is considered that, on balance, the visual harm arising from the mast and its associated compound is outweighed by the wider social and economic benefits that the development would deliver, and the identified harm is therefore justified by the demonstrated need and would therefore accord with the NPPF and the above mentioned Local Plan and Saved UDP policies.

Residential Amenity

Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy states that development proposals will be required to avoid unacceptable impacts on existing residents, business occupiers, and future

occupiers. Saved UDP Policy ENV8 requires that new telecommunications equipment will not be permitted if the development would by reason of its scale, siting or design, have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of nearby residents.

The nearest residential dwellings are located on the Flukers Brook Farm complex (Flukers Brook Farm, Granny Flat, The Manor House & The Shant) and further to the southwest Flukers Brook Farm Cottages, 1 & 2 Flukers Brook Farm Cottages). These properties are sited approx. 200m from the application site.



Other properties on Flukers Brook Lane are sited approx. 400m to the east beyond the M57 motorway.

The nearest dwellings to the south are located approx. 350m away on Hollow Croft and Boode Croft, in Stockbridge Village; separated from the site by intervening agricultural land and Little Wood park and greenway. The nearest residential properties to the north comprise two isolated properties on Alder Lane (Thunderbolt Cottages) which are some 450m away beyond agricultural fields and separated by woodland.

Properties lying on a residential estate within Croxteth Park and within the administrative boundary of Liverpool City Council are located to the northwest of the site which are in excess of 500m away.

Whilst some of the nearest residential buildings are set within a courtyard setting and would have no direct views of the mast from their property, it is inevitable that the mast and equipment would be visible from some of the nearby residential properties, in particular the Farmhouse and Flukers Brook Farm Cottages located to the south east of the application site.

However, the equipment would be seen against the back drop of 'The Rough' woodland but as the current mast is higher than the trees and is more slimline in appearance, the equipment would be visible. The proposed mast and equipment would be most clearly visible from the access road into the farm and from the hardstanding fronting the farm complex, and of course the adjacent agricultural fields.

The existing mast is taller than the surrounding trees but has a more slender profile, nonetheless, this equipment is still visible. The proposed mast and associated equipment would therefore be more noticeable, particularly from the farm access road, the hardstanding area in front of the farm complex, and the adjoining agricultural fields.

However, given the intervening distances and topography between the development and residential dwellings, it is not considered that the development would appear so unduly intrusive to the detriment of surrounding occupiers to warrant refusal in this

instance.

The proposed equipment would meet ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure.

Noise

The supporting planning statement indicates that *'the proposed radio equipment housing will need to be mechanically ventilated to avoid overheating of equipment. The ventilation equipment is only likely to operate during the day during hot weather.* The equipment therefore has potential to emit noise.

However, whilst the GDPO includes responsibilities for certain classes of permitted development in relation to noise, it is not a specific requirement of Part 16 and the applicant has not provided any further detail in relation to noise.

It is acknowledged that the noise can be a consideration in relation to its siting. However, it is likely that any noise emitted from equipment would be low level. Moreover, there is an existing established telecommunications site where associated equipment is currently sited.

Since this matter is not for consideration under the prior approval regime. Nevertheless, given the siting of the equipment and the separation from residential properties, and that there is existing equipment associated with the existing equipment, noise impacts are unlikely to be significant but should noise issues arise following if prior approval is granted, this can be addressed under other statutory provisions. No observations have been received from nearby properties.

On balance, the siting and appearance is not considered to adversely affect the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers and would comply with Policy CS19 and Saved Policy ENV8 of the UDP in relation to amenity.

Trees

The new fence compound would be located approx. 1.5 m from the edge of the woodland, the concrete base for the new mast some 5.3m away. It is not considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on these trees.

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 proposed siting and appearance of the mast and associated equipment would not create any highway safety concerns.

Health Considerations

Paragraph 122 of the NPPF requires that applications for electronic communications development should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. Criterion c) states that *'for a new mast or base station, evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure and a statement that self-certifies that, when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met.'*

At paragraph 123 the NPPF states that *'local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.'*

The application is supported by a Declaration of Conformity with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Public Exposure Guidelines to confirm that the proposed equipment would not exceed the guidelines for public exposure. The ICNIRP declaration takes into account the cumulative effect of the emissions from the installation and all radio base stations present at, or near the proposed location.

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 and therefore meets the requirements of paragraph 122 and 123 of the NPPF in relation to public health.

Benefits of the Development

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF highlights the importance of advanced high quality and reliable communications infrastructure which is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.

Paragraph 120 advises that the number of masts should be kept to a minimum consistent with the need of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. It goes further to state that *'Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.'*

The applicant submits that the site has been selected by the operator as this would provide the required level of 5G network coverage.

The applicant puts forward the case that a replacement mast is required as the existing mast is structurally incapable of supporting more radio apparatus at the height required for 5G. *The proposed lattice structure, can accommodate current and future network needs on a single structure, reducing the need for additional installations in the area, consistent with paragraph 120 of the NPPF which seeks to minimise the proliferation of masts.*

The applicant further supports the application indicating that, in summary:

- The 5G base station is needed to support the national mobile network and improve local connectivity.
- Its location at an existing Cellnex UK site helps limit visual impact.

- Upgrading the existing base station with a replacement mast is considered the best solution.
- It avoids the need for a new site, which would require additional land, infrastructure, and resources.
- This approach minimises overall development impacts compared to building a separate base station nearby.
- The proposal replaces an existing mast, meaning the structure is already an accepted feature in the landscape.

Green Belt Considerations

The site is in the Green Belt, however, as the principal of development is granted, through permitted development rights, issues of inappropriate development or “very special circumstances” do not apply.

Nevertheless, considerations relating to siting and appearance are relevant and have been considered above. The applicant puts forward that given technical requirements. Having regard to all of the above, it is considered that in the planning balance, the visual harm of the mast and associated compound against the broader social and economic benefits that it would provide, the harm is outweighed by the need.

Alternative Sites

In accordance with paragraph 120 of the NPPF and the *Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England* (2022), operators are required to prioritise reuse of existing telecommunications infrastructure to minimise environmental and visual impacts. UDP saved policy ENV8 also requires that proposals for new telecommunications masts must demonstrate that technical need cannot be met in a more environmentally acceptable way by:

- Sharing an existing mast or site, or
- Installing antennae on an existing building or structure.

Paragraph 122 of the NPPF requires that applications for electronic communications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This shall include:

...c) for a new mast or base station, evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure

...

The *Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England* (2022) para. 27 requires that planning authorities should consider the technical and operational considerations for installation sites and consider the need for a site within a limited search area alongside the public benefits of improved connectivity. Para. 27 states that...’ *In general it should not therefore be appropriate for planning authorities to seek wider evidence of alternative sites beyond that required by the NPPF, unless they consider the proposed development is unacceptable having regard to the relevant material planning considerations.*’

No alternative sites are put forward; however it is acknowledged that the proposal relates to an existing site and the applicant has complied with the requirements of NPPF.

Conclusion

It is acknowledged that the proposed development would give rise to a range of benefits which weigh in its favour. Paragraph 119 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of advanced, high-quality and reliable communications infrastructure, and the applicant has identified a number of social and economic advantages associated with the proposal. Officers do not dispute the significance of these benefits.

Having regard to all of the above, it is considered that, in the planning balance, the visual harm arising from the mast and associated compound is outweighed by the broader social and economic benefits the development would deliver and the identified need for the infrastructure.

For the reasons set out above, the siting and appearance of the proposed development are considered acceptable. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with Policies CS2, CS5, CS8, CS19 and CS21 of the Local Plan: Core Strategy, saved Policies ENV8, ENV2 and DQ4 of the UDP, or the guidance contained within the NPPF.

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 granted subject to the following condition:

1. Prior to the installation of the 1.8m high chain link fence compound the developer must agree an appropriate shade of green for the finish. The fencing shall be finished in the agreed colour prior to its installation and retained as such thereafter.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
26/03/2026	UK-MY-003027-00-004-ML005	REV. 5	LOCATION PLAN
26/03/2026	UK-MY-003027-03-101-MD011	REV. A	PROPOSED SITE PLAN
26/03/2026	UK-MY-003027-03-151-MD011	REV. A	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
26/03/2026	UK-MY-003027-03-152-MD011	REV. A	PROPOSED ANTENNA PLAN

Signed Case Officer¹: M Wishart

Signed Authorising Officer²: Alan Kilroe

Date: 19 May 2026

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