

Regeneration and Economic Development Department

APPLICATION NO: 21/00923/FUL

APPLICANT: H3G (UK) Ltd

WARD AFFECTED: Prescot South

DEVELOPMENT: REMOVAL OF EXISTING 15M HIGH TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST (AND ITS ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT) AND ERECTION OF 20M HIGH TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST WITH WRAPAROUND CABINET AND 4NO. EQUIPMENT CABINETS

LOCATION OF SITE: Grass Verge Outside Henley Park , Delph Lane, Prescot, Knowsley.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION –

Strategic Road Network - Strategic Road Network

RELEVANT POLICIES

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

National Planning Policy Framework

TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS:

Whiston Town Council - No Comments Received

Highway Authority - No objections in principle

NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION:

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 57 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice. No representations have been received.

PLANNING HISTORY

11/00473/FUL

Full planning application for the installation of a dual user 17.5 metre high telecommunications monopole housing 6no. Telefonica and Vodafone multi-band antennas stacked one above the other together with 4 no. equipment cabinets surrounded by 6 no. concrete bollards.

Refused 07/11/11.

12/00078/TEL

Installation of 15m high telecommunications pole together with associated equipment cabinets

Refused 14/02/12. Allowed on appeal 06/12/12.

16/00401/FUL

Full planning application for the removal of existing 15m high telecommunications monopole and installation of replacement 15m high telecommunications monopole and 1 no. equipment cabinet together with associated works. Approved 12/08/16.

ARTICLE 35

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating with the applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT:

SITE AND PROPOSAL

The application site is located on the western side of the B5201 'Delph Lane' and relates to an area of grassed highway verge that lies between the footpath and Henley Park. There are a number of mature trees which run along the edge of Henley Park and the grass verge includes two existing 15m high telecommunications masts. A surface car park and apartments are located on the opposite side of Delph Lane.

This application seeks full planning approval for the erection of a 20m high telecommunications mast, the installation of associated equipment cabinets and the removal of an existing 15m high telecommunications mast which lies opposite the surface car park approximately 3-6 months following the new installation coming into operation.

The applicant has stated that *"Full consideration has been given to alternative sites and other existing masts in the vicinity. However, the proposed location and design are considered to provide the optimum solution in this instance, the upgrade of this existing site will enhance the coverage of the existing 2G/3G/4G network and also implement 5G technologies providing enhanced coverage to the public and emergency services alike. The site has to fit into an existing network, this location will allow advancements in capacity and will give the opportunity for further people to work from home as well as support emergency services in receiving real time data, inevitably enhancing 2G/3G/4G communications which is imperative in times of crisis, as shown with the recent COVID-19 pandemic."*

Additionally, re-use of an existing site represents the preferred option, as outlined in the NPPF "

Alternative sites considered and discounted are as follows.

Henley Park – Contrary to policy to site a mast within greenspace when the proposed site on Delph Lane is available.

Whiston Hospital – Hospital building on edge of search area therefore would not be the most efficient siting of equipment. Could lead to a requirement for a further mast further north of the existing.

Nightingale House, Stoney Lane, Whiston. – Outside of the search area.

Lancaster House, Delph Lane – Rooftops of apartment blocks host solar panels and are therefore not available for additional equipment to be sited.

Whiston Cross, Delph Lane (North of Time Park) – Immediately adjacent to residential properties , not preferable in comparison to existing site which has less impact on residential amenity.

Delph Lane – (Close to Junction with Warrington Road) – To the south of existing site - more visual impact than chosen site.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy provide the following advice on telecom installations.

Paragraph 114 states:

“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) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high-quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).”

Paragraph 115 states:

“The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs 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. 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.”

Paragraph 118 states:

“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.”

Saved Policy ENV 8 in the Relacement UDP requires that telecommunications 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, and states that new telecommunications development will not be permitted within environmentally sensitive areas unless there are no other suitable sites and appropriate steps have been taken to minimise visual impact through careful siting, design and screening.

Policy CS2 in the Core Strategy promotes good quality design and to ensure the development respects its setting.

Policy CS4 in the Core Strategy states planning will be used to encourage homeworking through improvements to digital communications and telecommunications infrastructure.

Policy CS19 in the Core Strategy states that new development would be expected to maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings and avoid unacceptable impacts on business occupiers.

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

The application proposes that an existing mast will be removed within 3-6 months of the proposed mast coming into use and this can be secured via planning condition. The principal consideration is therefore whether the effects of the proposed mast would be significantly worse than the existing.

The proposed mast would be similar in design to the existing mast on site comprising a relatively slim pole commonly referred to as a street works installation, which are often located on or near the public highway.

The street works pole with wrap around cabinet is proposed to be sited within the existing grassed highway verge adjacent to the Henley Park site boundary. The pole would be 5m higher than the existing pole and therefore would have a slightly greater impact on visual amenity and the street scene however it is not considered that this would cause significant harm.

The freestanding cabinets would be a similar scale to the existing cabinets. The applicant has agreed for them to be painted a dark green colour to blend in with the park background and this can be secured by planning condition.

For a short time there would be two telecom masts within close proximity, however the applicant has confirmed that the existing mast would be removed within 3 - 6 months of the proposed mast coming into operation and the grass verge re-instated to its original condition. This can be secured by way of planning condition.

On balance the proposal would be in compliance with Saved UDP policy ENV8, and Core Strategy policies CS2 and CS19.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Suitable footway widths will be maintained with this relocation of equipment and visibility of adjacent junctions will remain unaffected in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS7

The street in question is a busy route and the highways team have advised that the installation works should be carried out outside of peak network times, or over weekends in order to help to mitigate any obstruction to the free flow of traffic during installation. It is not considered reasonable to secure this by planning condition as it would not meet the tests for imposing conditions, although it can be passed onto the applicant by way of an informative.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The proposed mast would be sited approximately 28m from the rear elevation of Lancaster House which is a block of 3 storey flats. Whilst some of the occupiers of the flats (1st and 2nd floors) would have clear view of the 20m high monopole it would be viewed against the back drop of the park and given the separation distance it is not considered that the proposal would have a significant impact on the amenity of the nearby occupiers, although some minor harm would be caused.

Notwithstanding this the applicant was asked to consider re-positioning the mast closer to the existing installation so it would be located further away from the flats. However, they dismissed relocating the mast further to the south because it would be likely to encroach on both nearby tree branch spreads and tree root areas (from Henley Park). The chosen site avoids the need for any tree works as the tree cover is sparser in this area. This is considered reasonable.

The proposal would therefore be in compliance with saved policy ENV8 and Core Strategy policy CS19.

OTHER ISSUES

HEALTH IMPACTS

The applicant has submitted an 'ICNIRP certificate' which confirms that the proposed installation is in full compliance with the requirements of the radio frequency (RF) public exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation (ICNIRP), as expressed in EU Council Recommendation of 12 July 1999.

Given that the applicant has confirmed compliance with the ICNIRP regulations, the Local Planning Authority should not consider health impacts any further in accordance with the guidance in the NPPF (2021).

CONCLUSION AND REASON FOR DECISION

The proposal is required to enhance the coverage of the existing 2G/3G/4G network and also implement 5G technologies providing enhanced coverage to the public and emergency services alike.

The proposed mast and cabinets would replace an existing installation on Delph Lane approximately 28m to the south and although the proposed mast would be 5m higher than the existing mast, it would be similar in design and appearance and on balance would not have any significant impacts on residential or visual amenity.

The proposal would be in compliance with the relevant saved UDP and core strategy policies listed above in addition to guidance in NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions.

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) The equipment cabinets hereby permitted shall be finished in RAL 6009 - Fir Green .

Reason : In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure compliance with Policy CS19 in the Knowsley Local Plan, Core Strategy (adopted January 2016) and Saved policy ENV8 in the Replacement Knowsley Unitary Development Plan , adopted June 2006.

- 4) The local planning authority shall be notified in writing prior to the telecommunications mast hereby approved commencing operation. A scheme for the removal of the existing mast and associated equipment cabinets and the reinstatement of the highway verge shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the proposed mast coming into operation. The approved scheme shall be completed within 6 months of the mast commencing operation.

Reason : To ensure that the existing mast is removed in a timely manner and the grass verge is re-instated back to its original condition and to ensure compliance with Policy CS19 in the Knowsley Local Plan, Core Strategy (adopted January 2016) and Saved policy ENV8 in the Replacement Knowsley Unitary Development Plan , adopted June 2006.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
07/02/2022	L0532-M001	REV A	SITE LOCATION PLAN
07/02/2022	L0532-M001	REV A	EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAYOUT PLANS
03/12/2022	L0532-M001	REV A	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

Informatives

- 1 The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority

2. It is advised that the installation works should be carried out outside of peak network times, or over weekends in order to help to mitigate any obstruction to the free flow of traffic during installation.

Mark Quinn

25 February 2022