

## **Regeneration and Economic Development Department**

**APPLICATION NO:** 21/00438/TEL **APPLICANT:** MBNL (EE (UK) LTD AND H3G (UK) LTD)

**WARD AFFECTED:** Northwood

**DEVELOPMENT:** INSTALLATION OF A 18 METRE HIGH POLE WITH WRAP AROUND CABINET BUILT AROUND THE BASE, 3NO. NEW EQUIPMENT CABINETS AND ASSOCIATED ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT.

**LOCATION OF SITE:** Pavement Fronting The Peacock Public House, Bigdale Drive, Northwood, Kirkby, Knowsley, ,

### **KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION –**

Primary Residential Development - Primary Residential Development

Water Restricted Surface Area - North Area - Kirkby

### **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

H5 - Development within Primarily Residential Areas

National Planning Policy Guidance

### **TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS:**

Cadent Gas Limited - No objections ( advisory gas mains in the vicinity of the application site)

Highway Authority - No objections

### **NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION:**

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 122 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice.

There have been 2 letters of objection from ward councillors Cllr Harry Bell, Cllr Eddie Connor and Cllr Marie Stuart.

They raise the following issues :-

1. We have far too many masts in the Northwood ward, they bring down the tone of the area as well as being unsightly.
2. There must be areas outside our housing estates where these masts could be erected.
3. There are three masts in the immediate area already (one on Bigdale Drive and 2 on Minstead Avenue). This proposal will make 4 masts and 10 cabinets.
4. There are also the Emergency services mast on the local Flats at Quarrygreen.
5. The Supplementary Information Form says the mast share solution should be used to reduce the number of masts.
6. Why is the erection of mast in other areas an eyesore but not in Northwood.

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## **PLANNING HISTORY**

15/00768/TEL – ERECTION OF 15M HIGH TELCOM MAST AND 4 CABINETS – PRIOR APPROVAL GRANTED JANUARY 2016

16/00140/TELPD – INSTALLATION OF ONE EQUIPMENT CABINET – PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT MARCH 2016

16/00611/TELPD – REMOVAL OF EXISTING CABINET AND REPLACEMENT OF LARGER CABINET – PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT SEPTEMBER 2016

18/00684/TELPD – INSTALLATION OF ONE CABINET –PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT NOVEMBER 2018.

20/00248/TEL - INSTALLATION OF 20M HIGH TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLE AND BASE CABINET TOGETHER WITH THE INSTALLATION OF 3 NO. EQUIPMENT CABINETS AND ASSOCIATED ANCILLARY WORKS – REFUSED JULY 2020

## **ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT:**

### **SITE AND PROPOSAL**

The application site comprises an area of footway to the eastern side of Bigdale Drive, there is an existing 15m high mast 4.8m to the north of the site.

The application site is located in a Primarily Residential Area as identified in the Local Plan Proposals Map, however, the area immediately surrounding the site has a more commercial character with a petrol filling station to the west of the site, a vacant public house to the east and a car park and local shopping centre to the south.

This application proposes the installation of an 18m high telecommunications pole and the installation of three equipment cabinets. The mast and the equipment cabinets would be finished in a light grey colour.

The existing telecoms mast on Bigdale Drive (which was installed by the applicant) accommodates equipment delivering 2G, 3G and 4G networks. The proposed new mast would also accommodate 5G technology. The applicant has confirmed that the existing mast would be removed from the site within 3-6 months of the installation of the new mast and they are agreeable for a condition to secure its removal.

### **ASSESSMENT**

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

#### **Visual and Residential Amenity**

The area surrounding the application site is relatively open and 'low-rise' with areas of car parking and amenity land surrounding the public house building to the east and structures on the petrol filling station and church opposite the site not exceeding more than around 8m in height. This means that the proposed mast would be visible in medium range views.

An application for a 20m high mast on the same site (20/00248/TEL) was refused in 2020 because it would have resulted in 2 street works masts and 7 equipment cabinets in a 15m stretch of highway along Bigdale Drive, which along with the 2 masts on Minstead Avenue (that are used by another operator) would have resulted in visual clutter that would have a detrimental effect on the street scene and the visual amenity of the area.

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This application proposes a smaller mast than the previous submission (2m lower) and the applicant has also confirmed that the existing adjacent 15m high mast would be removed within 6 months of the proposed mast being installed (if permission is granted) and this could be secured by condition. The applicant has explained that the existing mast is required to be retained for a short period of time to allow the proposed mast to become integrated into the network.

In the short term the proposal would result in one additional pole in the area resulting in harmful visual clutter like the previous proposals. However, once the existing mast is removed the total number of masts in the immediate area of the site would remain at three and although the new mast would be 3m higher than the existing mast, it is not considered that this would have a significantly greater impact on the character of the area than the current arrangement.

The nearest existing homes are approximately 60m from the location of the proposed mast. The site is adjacent to a Public House, with a betting office on its opposite, far side. On the opposite (western) side of Bigdale Drive is a furniture store, chapel and Petrol Filling Station. To the south is a car park for the district shopping centre and beyond is a parade of shops with flats above,

There are residential properties further north along Bigdale Drive at a distance of 62m and 69m and to the east of the site at a distance of 77m. To the west of the site in Quarry Dale houses are located a minimum of 60m from the site of the mast.

Given the total height of the mast, whilst some residents may have partial views of the structure, given the intervening distance this would not result in any adverse impact on residential amenity of existing local residents.

#### Benefits and Alternative Sites

The National Planning Policy Framework states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being, and that planning decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. The proposed development would help to deliver an expansion of the electronic communications network and this should carry some weight in favour of the development.

Several alternative sites were considered by the applicant prior to submitting this application, including sharing one of the existing masts nearby. Rooftop installations, such as on the Peacock Public House building, William Hill, Northwood Chapel and Quarry Green flats were also considered and discounted for various reasons, including that the existing masts are not suitable for sharing, buildings are too low to obtain required signals, or too high, which would cause interference with other base stations in the area. The explanations given for dismissing the sites are considered to be reasonable.

No alternative highway locations were identified by the applicant. However, such an alternative site where less harm would be caused to the visual amenity of the area is not immediately apparent.

## **HIGHWAYS**

The Council's Highway Engineer has raised no objections to this proposal. An 'Informative' is suggested in respect of the any licences required from the Highway Authority due to works being undertaken on the adopted highway and the necessary permits required should any temporary road closures be required.

## **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.

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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 (2019). The application is also for the Council's "Prior Approval" (of siting and design) and not a planning application.

## **CONCLUSION AND REASON FOR DECISION.**

The proposed mast and equipment cabinets would have a detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the area because in combination with the existing 15m high mast on Bigdale Drive they would cause unacceptable visual clutter. However, a condition can be imposed requiring the existing mast to be removed within 6 months of the installation of the proposed mast, and although short term harm would be caused to the visual amenity of the area whilst both masts are in place, this harm would be outweighed by the long term benefits of the development – particularly in the absence of an obvious alternative site for a telecommunications mast where no such harm would be caused to the visual amenity of the area.

On balance the development is acceptable and is considered to be in compliance with the guidance in NPPF and Local Plan policies CS2, CS19, CS7 and saved UDP policies H5 and ENV8

## **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 planning condition

- 1) Within 6 months of the installation of the proposed telecoms equipment the existing 15m high telecoms mast on Bigdale Drive and its associated antenna and equipment cabinets (as shown on Plan LO528-M004 Rev D) shall be removed from the site and the associated areas of adopted highway shall be made good in accordance with the requirements of Local Highway Authority.

Reason :- To ensure that the existing pole, antenna and equipment cabinets are removed from the site as soon as the proposed telecoms pole is integrated into the network. This would ensure that the street scene does not become cluttered with unnecessary telecoms equipment and to comply with saved UDP policies H5 and ENV8

## **SCHEDULE 1**

| Date Received | Ref. No    | Version | Drawing/Document Title    |
|---------------|------------|---------|---------------------------|
|               |            |         |                           |
| 05/07/2021    | L0528-M004 | REV D   | SITE LOCATION PLAN        |
| 24/05/2021    | LO528-M004 | REV D   | PROPOSED ELEVATIONS       |
| 24/05/2021    | L0528-M004 | REV D   | PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT      |
| 24/05/2021    | -          | -       | SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION |
| 24/05/2021    | -          | -       | ICNIRP CERTIFICATE        |

## **Informatives**

1. This permission does not entitle the developer to obstruct or carry out works within the Adopted Highway or across a Public Right of Way whatsoever. Any proposed temporary closure or works affecting either will require consent which must be obtained from the

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Streetworks team. Please email [NRSWA.TeamDRES@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:NRSWA.TeamDRES@knowsley.gov.uk) for further information.

The rectification of surfaces and other elements on completion of works in accordance with current specification as per highways statutory guidance for the reinstatement of openings (SROH) is a further requirement of any subsequent permission.

2. See letter from Cadent Gas.

Mark Quinn

6 July 2021

Alan Kilroe  
16 July 2021

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