

Regeneration and Economic Development Department

APPLICATION NO: 21/00399/TEL

APPLICANT: Hutchison UK Ltd

WARD AFFECTED: Page Moss

DEVELOPMENT: PRIOR NOTIFICATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A 15 M HIGH MONOPOLE INCLUDING SIX ANTENNAS A WRAPROUND CABINET AT BASE AND THREE FURTHER EQUIPMENT CABINETS.

LOCATION OF SITE: Pavement Opposite Entrance to River Alt Resource Centre on Woolfall Heath Avenue, Huyton, Knowsley, L36 3YE

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION –

Primary Residential Development - Primary Residential Development

RELEVANT POLICIES

Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, 2016:

- CS2 - Development Principles
- CS7 - Transport Networks
- CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, 2006

- H5 - Development within Primarily Residential Areas
- ENV8 - Telecommunications Developments

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS:

Highway Authority - No objections

ESS Parks and Green Spaces - No comments received.

NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION:

This application was publicised by letters sent to 34 neighbours and the display of a Site Notice close to the site.

A petition, signed by 85 residents objecting to the proposal, has been received. The petition lists the following matters as the grounds for objection:

- The mast is too close to houses
- There are already two masts in the Page Moss neighbourhood and one on Liverpool Road. Another one is not wanted.
- Fear of microwave radiation and its impacts on health.
- Knowsley Council have a duty of care to its residents not to cause them shock, alarm fear or distress or do anything that might prevent the individual from living in the peaceful surroundings of their own home.
- Moving the mast to Seth Powell Way would still be too close to homes.
- The company should be advised to look for another site well beyond the local neighbourhood area of Page Moss.

ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT:

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for a 15m high pole (reduced from the original submission of 20m high), six antennas, a wraparound cabinet at the base of the pole and three further equipment cabinets. The pole would have a galvanised finish and the equipment cabinets would be finished in grey.

The proposed site is on the adopted highway, opposite to the entrance to the River Alt Resource Centre and adjacent to Woolfall Heath Meadows.

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 proposed telecom equipment. Therefore, only these matters can be considered when deciding this application.

Visual and Residential Amenity

The mast would be a relatively slim pole commonly referred to as a streetworks installation, which are often located on or near the public highway. The application initially proposed a 20m high mast, but following negotiation by officers, the applicant agreed to reduce the mast's height to 15m, which is the lowest structure that (according to the applicant) will achieve the necessary required coverage.

There is a line of semi mature trees, which are around 8m high, along the boundary to the adjacent park. The proposed mast would be located in a gap between two groups of trees. Along with the trees there are other vertical structures near where the mast is proposed, including 8.3m high streetlights and a CCTV camera on a pole and the River Alt Resource Centre. The mast would be visible in views along Woolfall Heath Avenue, but given its height, siting, and the other vertical elements it is considered that it would not appear as an incongruous feature that causes significant harm to visual amenity.

There are no residential dwellings immediately adjacent or directly opposite to the site. The closest dwellings are located approximately 38m away to the north west (Gleeson Homes' new development), 74m away in Endmoor Road and 76m away in Woolfall Heath Avenue.

Given these separation distances and the reduction in the height of the mast originally proposed, it is not considered that there would be any significant adverse impacts on the visual amenity of the closest residential occupiers.

Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to comply with Local Plan policy CS19 and Saved UDP policy ENV8.

Highway Safety

The proposal would have no adverse impacts on highway safety and the highways team have raised no objections to the proposal.

Alternative Sites

Notwithstanding the development's compliance with the above policies, to assess whether there was a less conspicuous alternative location, the applicant was requested to consider moving the mast onto Seth Powell Way or further east along Woolfall Heath Avenue, where it would be out of the line of sight from nearby dwellings.

Seth Powell Way was considered preferable due to it being a tree lined distributor road, with no dwellings immediately adjacent. Failing that further east along Woolfall Heath Avenue was considered as preferable to the current site, given that it would have been further from the houses in Endmoor Road and not within the line of sight from the dwellings due the partial screening provided by the River Alt Centre.

In response to the above, the applicant has confirmed that the proposed mast has 2 purposes

- i) to offload an existing mast on Liverpool Road (Page Moss), which currently has a congested antenna, and;
- ii) to provide coverage to areas to the east of the proposed site that have poor or zero phone coverage.

The applicant has further stated that this application would minimise the number of masts needed in the area.

The applicant contends that moving the mast any further east along Woolfall Heath Avenue or onto Seth Powell Way would increase the distance between the site and the existing congested antenna, which would result in their inability to move users onto the new mast. Consequently, they further contend that such a move would not meet their needs and its purpose would be partly redundant in this location, such that another mast would be required to provide the necessary coverage. Additionally, they have stated that the existing tree coverage along Seth Powell Way would interfere with a mast's operation if located close to them.

Furthermore, the applicant has considered and discounted several other alternative sites in the surrounding area. The following sites were discounted for the reasons set out below.

- Altmoor Road – Discounted due to proximity to residential properties.
- Endmoor Road - Discounted due to proximity to residential properties.
- Fairclough Road - Discounted due to proximity to residential properties.
- East on Woolfall Heath Avenue - Discounted due to proximity to residential properties.
- West on Woolfall Heath Avenue – Discounted from a radio perspective.
- West on Liverpool Road – Discounted from a radio perspective.
- Hillside Road – Discounted due to proximity to sensitive locations.
- Primrose Drive - Discounted due to proximity to residential properties.

That left a shortlist of 4 sites (including the application site):

- 1 – Application site
- 2 – Liverpool Road/Twig Lane – Discounted due to overlooking residential dwellings.
- 3 – Liverpool Road (by TA Centre) – Discounted from a radio perspective.
- 4 – Adjacent Tower Block Liverpool Rd (opposite TA centre) - Discounted from a radio perspective.

The applicant's list of alternative sites and justification as to why the mast cannot be re-located on Seth Powell Way are helpful although the evidence provided is not entirely compelling, as it would appear that even at 15m high, the proposed antenna would clear any trees and buildings on Seth Powell Way, which would allegedly be in the line of the mast.

In terms of the distance away (of a new mast) from the congested mast, in Page Moss, whilst the applicant has indicated that Seth Powell Way or further east along Woolfall Heath Ave would be too far away, they have not submitted any evidence to substantiate this in terms of maximum distances etc.

Nonetheless, given that the siting of the mast is in any event considered acceptable, the existence of another similarly acceptable site, with a potentially lesser visual impact, is not a reason to refuse this 'prior approval' application.

Benefits of the Proposal

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 must carry some weight in favour of the development.

Health Impacts

The applicant has submitted an *ICNIRP Certificate*, which confirms that the proposed installation will be 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, in accordance with National Planning Policy¹, consider health impacts any further. The application is also for the Council's '*Prior Approval*' (of siting and appearance) and not a planning application.

Nevertheless, in terms of providing reassurance to the petitioners, Public Health England, who provide advice to the Government on public health issues, 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.

The international 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. Mobile network operators have committed to follow these ICNIRP guidelines.

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

Public Health England's recently updated (2020), guidance can be read [here](#) . The Briefing Paper further confirms that the internationally accepted guidelines will continue to apply to the 5G network rollout across the UK.

Further guidance from government (from 2019) on '*5G technologies: radio waves and health*' is available [here](#)

A plain language guide from the European Commission (entitled '*Does electromagnetic field exposure endanger health*') is also available [here](#).

The Mobile network operators have also published a '*Toolkit*' [here](#) , which explains the science and technology associated with 5G.

CONCLUSION AND REASON FOR DECISION.

Whilst the reasons for not siting the pole on Seth Powell Way are not compelling, the proposed pole and equipment cabinets would not cause significant harm to the amenity of the surrounding area and would be acceptable in terms of their siting and appearance. In addition, any minor harm caused by the proposal would be outweighed by the benefits of the installation (providing 5G coverage and improving the signals for existing users in the area), in accordance with the advice set out in Section 10 of the NPPF.

The proposal 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.

SCHEDULE 1

¹ National Planning Policy Framework 2021 para 118

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
06/07/2021	KSY16486-M002	B	SITE LOCATION PLAN
06/07/2021	KSY16486-M002	B	PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
06/07/2021	KSY16486-M002	B	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
06/07/2021	KSY16486-M002	B	ANTENNA CONFIGURATION
06/07/2021	KSY16486-M002	B	EQUIPMENT SCHEDULE

Informatives

None

Mark Quinn

21 July 2021

Alan Kilroe
28 July 2021