
APPLICATION NO: 24/00249/TEL **CASE OFFICER:** Mark Quinn

WARD: Roby **PARISH:**

LOCATION: Roby Road / Archway Road Roundabout And Adjacent To The Crofters Public House, Roby, Knowsley

PROPOSAL: THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW 20M STREETPOLE ALONG WITH 6NO. ANTENNAS, 1NO. 300MM DISH AND 3NO. GROUND-BASED CABINETS; PLUS ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT THERETO.

Site Description

The application site comprises a grassed highway verge adjacent to Roby Road and the Crofters public house, Huyton. The site is to the west of and in close proximity to the Roby Road/ Tarbock Road/ Twickenham Drive roundabout junction. To the south lies the Crofters Public House, to the northern side of Roby Road and to the west and east is existing residential development.

Proposal

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

The proposal comprises a 20m high streetpole incorporating 6 antennas, a 300mm dish and three ground based cabinets. The streetpole would be galvanised steel finished in light grey (RAL 7035) and the equipment cabinets would be finished in light grey (RAL7035).

The cabinets would have a maximum height of 1.75m.

Consultations

Highway Authority - No objections

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 70 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice

There have been 6 letters of objection. (including one from Cllr Graham Golding). The representations are summarised as follows:-

- The mast would be taller and more prominent than nearby buildings which would exacerbate its prominence in the street scene. This seems unacceptable and the mast should be located more appropriately.
- It is incongruous with the street scene to install a large mast and associated boxes within an area designed to be an attractive gateway to Huyton Village centre and would be detrimental to the efforts that KMBC are trying to do in the masterplan for redevelopment there.
- The proposed site has been subject to at least 3 significant accidents in the last 7-10 years. This is a major risk due to the prospect of a 20m pole falling across Roby Road following an RTA.
- The positioning of the pole and associated cabinets would create a blind spot in the field of vision of vehicles exiting Waterside Park, in addition creating a focal point with the potential loss of concentration for drivers approaching and leaving the roundabout. The position of the pole is likely to create accident risks not factored into the planning assessment.
- There would be negative effects on public health and it would be a visual eyesore on the main road into Liverpool.
- The installation would increase the danger of traffic speeding through the roundabout.

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

H5 - Development within Primarily Residential Areas

National Planning Policy Framework

Assessment

Policy CS2 states 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. "

Saved Policy ENV 8 in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan states:

"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 "

Visual Impact

The application site is a prominent location close to a busy roundabout controlled junction which is characterised by two storey buildings and has a suburban appearance. The proposed mast would be significantly taller than the buildings and streetlights in the vicinity of the site and it would cause some harm to the character of the area. A planning condition will require the mast to be coloured green to make it less prominent when the mast is viewed in the context of mature trees in the vicinity of the site which are the tallest features in the surrounding area.

The pole would be viewed against the backdrop of the public house interspersed with mature trees to the site boundaries of the public house. From certain viewpoints when approaching the roundabout (in particular from Archway Road) mature trees on the roundabout and central reservation area would provide some partial screening to the mast and equipment cabinets. Mature trees on the opposite side of Roby Road would also provide some partial screening for some of the residential dwellings located opposite.

The pole would be higher than the surrounding buildings/structures however it is a slimline pole which would minimise the visual impact. On balance it is considered that whilst the location is

prominent and would cause some harm to the visual amenity of the area, the need for the installation (to replace existing telecommunication equipment on the roof of the municipal buildings in Archway Road) the economic benefits and the lack of any more suitable locations would outweigh the impacts on visual amenity and would accord with the above Local Plan and Saved UDP policies.

It is not considered that the proposal would be detrimental to the re-development in Huyton Town Centre in any event good communications including 5G connectivity would be essential for any new businesses locating in the town centre.

Residential Amenity

Saved UDP policy ENV8 states “ 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.”

The closest residential properties to the site are over 32m to the north (St Helenas) , 36m to the west (1 Waterside Park) and 60m to the east (Roby Court). Due to the presence of existing buildings and mature trees the views of the pole would vary however no residential dwelling is that close to the mast to have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity.

The slimline design of the pole and the requirement to ensure that it is coloured green would also minimise the impacts on residential amenity.

On balance the impacts on residential amenity would be minimal and the proposal would be in compliance with Saved UDP policy ENV8.

Highway Safety

The Highways team have no objections and do not believe that it would adversely affect highway safety. The accident record over the last 5 years has been examine, and it shows that no recorded accidents have occurred in the immediate vicinity of the site. The nearest accidents to the site have occurred on the northern part of the circulatory carriageway, approximately 45m from the site and this mast would not increase the likelihood of accidents. Furthermore the location of the mast means that it would not interfere with the visibility of cars exiting Waterside Park.

The likelihood of traffic leaving the carriageway at this location is considered slight, and therefore the risk of a vehicle colliding with the equipment is considered similar to that of colliding with a street lighting column. There is no evidence which points to a risk from such equipment leading to a loss of concentration by drivers. The equipment is commonplace across the UK and drivers would not be likely to be startled by its presence.

The proposal would be in compliance with Local Plan policy CS7.

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.

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 Development

Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states that 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.

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF states 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 proposed development will provide enhanced mobile network coverage to the surrounding area; providing improved connectivity, capacity and coverage for local residents and businesses and ensuring the next step in technological progression (i.e. 5G network coverage) is available within Huyton.

As this site will be deployed with 5G capability, this application is not simply to ensure that the local area will be serviced with the same level of network coverage as much of the Local Authority area (i.e. 3G and 4G), but will actually surpass the current level of 'standard' coverage and connectivity with the provision of 5G coverage.

These benefits weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development, nevertheless given the harm caused to local character the applicant has been asked to explore whether there are any other sites which could deliver the same benefits with a lower degree of harm being caused.

The alternative sites considered by the applicant were located on Archway Road, Tarbock Road (Former Flavios Restaurant), Archway Road/ Roby Road roundabout, Twickenham Drive and Roby Road (adj Waterside Park). Officers believe that this is a reasonable area of search given the residential character of the local area. The sites were discounted for the following reasons : the close proximity of residential development, site did not provide the same level of coverage, site sits lower and therefore a taller mast would be required, existing overhead lines and close proximity to school. The reasons provided were considered to be reasonable and the current application site was therefore considered to be the optimal site in terms of mast coverage and impacts on the street scene and residential amenity.

Conclusion

The proposed monopole (and its associated equipment) is located in a prominent position in the street scene and would cause harm to the character of the local area. However, the economic benefits of a site serving Huyton Village Town Centre are significant and the applicant has been able to demonstrate that there are no other suitable sites where less harm would be caused. On this basis the proposed development is acceptable.

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 mast the developer must agree an appropriate shade of green for the mast's finish. The mast shall be finished in the agreed colour and retained as such thereafter.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
14/05/2024	301	A	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
14/05/2024	201	A	PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
14/05/2024	100	A	LOCATION PLAN

Signed Case Officer¹:

Mark Quinn

**Signed Authorising
Officer²:**

Alan Kilroe

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

Date:

18 July 2024

Informatives

NOTE FOR APPLICANT: The applicant's attention is drawn to the following comments:

1. Local Highway Authority

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 separate consent which must be obtained from the Streetworks team. Please email NRSWA.TeamDRES@knowsley.gov.uk for further information.