

Knowsley Council
Regeneration and Economic Development Directorate.
Delegated Planning Report

APPLICATION NO:	23/01976/TEL	CASE OFFICER:	Andrew Hunt
WARD:	Northwood	PARISH:	N/A
LOCATION:	Pavement Between Gillmoss Place & Roughwood Drive, Northwood, Kirkby, Knowsley, L32 1BY		
PROPOSAL:	THE INSTALLATION OF 20M HIGH SLIM-LINE MONOPOLE, SUPPORTING 6 NO. ANTENNAS, 2 NO. EQUIPMENT CABINETS, 1 NO. ELECTRIC METER CABINET AND ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT THERETO		

Site Description

The application site is a narrow strip of pavement, a fence and grassed area between Roughwood Drive and Gilmore Place. Roughwood Drive is a local distributor road used to connect the various housing estates off the road. It is an irregular semi circle shape when viewed from the south with a pronounced curve in the stretch of road around the application site. Gilmore Place is a minor residential cul de sac road with very limited traffic only serving a small number of properties on a recently constructed housing estate.

Proposal

The proposal is for the installation of 20m high slim-line monopole, supporting 6 no antennas, 2 no equipment cabinets, 1 no electric meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto.

Consultations

Highways – No objection

Representations

The application has been publicised by a site notice and letters sent to 44 neighbours. 1 Objection has been received from Councillor Eddie Connor with the following main concerns.

There are too many phone masts being located in the Northwood area of Kirkby. The area is disproportionately affected by the masts.

No representations have been received from the general public.

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that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear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

ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT:

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the installation of 20m high slim-line monopole, supporting 6 no antennas, 2 no equipment cabinets, 1 no electric meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

This application is not an application for planning permission but an application for 'prior approval' under national planning regulations (the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended)) for the siting and

appearance of proposed telecommunications equipment. Therefore, only siting and appearance - can be considered when deciding the application.

SITING AND APPEARANCE

Policy CS19 requires that developments respond to and integrate positive characteristics of their immediate surroundings and complement and enhance existing landscape, topography and green infrastructure.

The proposal would be located in a prominent area of pavement next to a grass verge on Roughwood Drive. The mast would be located to the north east of the speed bumps and to the south west of the bus stop (where the road indents slightly). The mast would be roughly equidistant between both points.

The road curves at this location forming an irregular semi-circle. This highlights and draws visual attention towards the area and gives the area prominence within the street scene.

The scale of the mast would be out of keeping with the buildings and structures nearby. The mast would visually dominate the nearest buildings (3 and 4 Gilmoor Place) being over twice as high (20 metres compared to 9 metres in height). The other neighbouring dwellings to the south and east are also of similar height and the mast would be similarly dominant. The mast would also be 5 times the height of the nearby tree (4 metres high). The mast would be an incongruous and over dominant feature of the area and harmful to the character of the area. There would be no screening when viewed from Roughwood Drive or Gilmoor Place and no feature to soften the visual appearance of the mast. Therefore, the mast would be highly visible from the surrounding area, this combined with the large height of the mast (20 metres) would result in significant harm to the streetscene.

The applicant has failed to demonstrate through a robust, comprehensive and detailed assessment that there are no alternative sites where the proposal could be accommodated without the significant harm of the proposed location. The level of detail provided in relation to alternative sites is cursory.

Overall, the mast would be a looming, dominant and disproportionate addition to the area. It would create a perception of visual clutter and would be significantly harmful to the streetscene. This harm outweighs any economic benefits from the scheme. The development is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS2 and CS19 and UDP policy ENV8 and NPPF para 115.

AMENITY

Core Strategy Policy CS19 requires that development to avoid unacceptable impacts on existing residents, business occupiers, and future occupiers.

The mast would be the following distances to nearby properties:

- 3 Gilmoor Place – 13.51 metres
- 4 Gilmoor Place – 16.49 metres

- 115 Roughwood Drive – 26.29 metres
- 117 Roughwood Drive – 27.25 metres
- 127 Roughwood Drive – 34.29 metres

It is considered that the development will cause significant harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties by adversely affecting the outlook of properties.

3 Gilmoor Place

The mast is in very close proximity to residents at 3 Gilmoor Place being less than 14 metres away from the property. Number 3 also directly faces towards the mast with no screening of street furniture obscuring the view. The mast would be readily visible from all of the front facing windows at the property. Due to the open nature of the area, there would be no screening between the mast and the residential building to the north. Overall, the mast would cause severe harm to amenity and would loom over number 3 Gilmoor Place.

4 Gilmoor Place

4 Gilmoor Place would also be significantly affected by the mast, whilst it would be slightly adjacent to the mast, it would still be just 16 metres away with no screening. There would still be significant views of the mast from all front facing windows of the dwelling to the significant detriment of residential amenity. Due to the open nature of the area, there would be no screening between the mast and the residential building to the north

115 and 117 Roughwood Drive

The mast would also be in close proximity to 115 and 117 Roughwood Drive, being 26/27 metres away from the respective properties. Both properties directly face onto the location of the proposed mast. The mast would therefore be directly visible from all front facing windows at the property to the significant detriment of residential amenity. Due to the open nature of the area, there would be no screening between the mast and the residential building to the north

127 Roughwood Drive

127 Roughwood Drive would be located around 34 metres away from the mast. Whilst it would be further away than other properties, it directly faces the proposed mast. The mast would be directly visible from all the front windows of the dwelling. Due to the open nature of the area, there would be no screening between the mast and the residential building to the north

Other Properties.

The mast would also have an impact on the amenity of other properties including 2 and 7 Gilmoor Place. Although as these properties do not directly face the mast, the impact on amenity is not considered to be significantly harmful.

General Impact on Amenity

The mast would be highly visible from the habitable rooms of several neighbouring properties and would be a dominant visual presence. It would constitute a constant visual reminder of the proximity of the mast and would cause a severely harmful impact on the outlook from the properties.

It would introduce an alien and discordant feature into an area with an existing residential use. The outlook that would result from the mast would not be consistent with a good standard of residential amenity. The development is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS2 and CS19, UDP policy ENV8 and NPPF para 115.

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 development will not cause harm to highway safety. The proposal would be located within an area with a wide pavement and would not compromise the ability of pedestrians to access the area. It would not involve development that would affect the road or pavement network. It is considered that the position of the mast will not create highway visibility issues. This is supported by the views on the Council's highways department who have no objection. Overall, the application complies with Core Strategy Policy CS7.

OTHER MATTERS

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.

PHE 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. 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 proposal

The applicant states that there is a specific requirement for an installation on the application site to ensure that the latest high quality 3G and 4G service provision is provided in this area of Knowsley. The proposed column will also ensure that new 5G coverage can be provided at this location. This ensures that coverage and capacity requirements are maintained and enhanced. A site in this location will fill the gap in service provision and provide high quality, reliable, advanced 3G, 4G and 5G to this urban area of Knowsley.

The applicant's Supplementary Information Form sets out the benefits of 5G, which are not disputed and as noted in Paragraph 112 of the NPPF, advanced telecommunications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being and this should therefore weigh in favour of the development.

CONCLUSION

The proposal is acceptable in principle under the 2015 GPDO, however the developments siting would cause significant harm to the streetscene and to residential amenity which is not outweighed by the benefits of the proposed development. The development is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS2 and CS19, UDP policy ENV8 and NPPF para 115.

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 refused for the following reason(s):-

- 1) The proposed development would be detrimental to the character of the area and to the streetscene. In particular, it would result in an incongruous and over dominant structure within the area, resulting in significant harm to the street scene in a prominent location. The proposed development would also be detrimental to the

amenity of neighbouring properties. In particular, it would result in significant harm to the outlook of existing properties. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016, saved Policies H5 and ENV8 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006 and NPPF para 115.

Signed Case Officer¹: **Andrew Hunt**

**Signed Authorising
Officer²:** **Alan Kilroe**

Date: **11 September 2023**

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