

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	25/00588/TEL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Lee Osborne
<u>WARD:</u>	Page Moss	<u>PARISH:</u>	
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Land Adj. To Swan Hotel Car Park , Kingsway, Huyton		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	PRIOR APPROVAL DETERMINATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS 20M STREETWORKS POLE INCLUDING 2NO. DISHES (EACH 300MM DIAMETER) PLUS 4NO. EQUIPMENT CABINETS AND 0.6M HIGH ARMCO BARRIER.		

Site Description

The site is a small, grassed area with small wooden posts around adjoining the public footpath of Kingsway adjacent The Swan Hotel car park to the west. The site is also immediately adjacent a bus lay-by and close to the junction of Kingsway and Crosswood Crescent. To the north on Kingsway and on the opposite side of Crosswood Crescent is a terrace of shops with flats above. On the opposite side of Kingsway facing the site is housing. The area is predominantly residential in character. The nearest school building of Huyton with Roby C of E Primary School is approximately 270m away as the crow flies, and the nearest park is almost twice that distance approximately.

Proposal

The proposal is to site a 20m high street works telecommunications column of 0.5m diameter on which would be located 2 microwave dishes of 300mm diameter in addition to the signal apertures

This application is not an application for planning permission but an application for 'prior approval' as the proposal represents development permitted by Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Prior approval is required in regard to the 'siting' and 'appearance' only. Therefore, only these matters can be considered when deciding this application.

The application is accompanied by an International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) declaration which confirms the installation complies with the relevant public exposure guidelines for radio transmitters.

Consultations

Highway Authority – No objections

Environmental Health – No objections.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 24 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice

There has been 1 letter of objection. The representations are as follows: -

Visual Impact & Out-of-Character Development

A 20 m monopole is significantly taller than surrounding lampposts and street furniture and would be visually intrusive in a low-rise residential neighbourhood. The additional cabinets and Armco barrier would create further street clutter. This development would be out of scale and out of character with nearby housing and green space, harming the visual amenity of the area.

Proximity to Residential Properties

The siting is extremely close to existing homes. At this scale, the structure would appear overbearing and visually dominant from nearby properties and gardens, reducing residents' general living conditions.

Highway Safety Concerns - High-Traffic Junction & Bus Route

The proposed site is situated close to a busy junction frequently used by cars, buses, and pedestrians, including schoolchildren. The monopole, cabinets, and Armco barrier may obstruct visibility, distract drivers, create risks for buses, and narrow pedestrian routes. Given existing traffic volume, this proposal would exacerbate road safety risks.

Impact on Pedestrians - Restricted Movement

The cabinets and barrier will reduce usable pavement space in an area heavily used by residents, bus passengers, and schoolchildren. This introduces street clutter that impedes accessibility and compromises pedestrian safety.

Inadequate Consideration of Alternative Sites

The applicant has not demonstrated that alternative sites with less residential, visual, and traffic impact have been thoroughly assessed, including existing infrastructure or non-residential locations.

Impact on Nearby School and Park

The proposal is within walking distance of a school and public park. These are sensitive community spaces, and the visual prominence of the monopole and cabinets would negatively affect their setting and the wider neighbourhood.

Noise Impact from Equipment Cabinets

Equipment cabinets may generate continuous low-level noise, which is inappropriate in a quiet residential environment, especially during evenings.

Harm to Local Character & Community Environment

This part of Knowsley includes long-established residential streets and valued

community spaces. A 20 m industrial-scale structure would undermine the suburban character and harm the overall sense of place.

Relevant Planning History

02/00108/TEL - INSTALLATION OF 1NO. 10M HIGH THALES TELECOMMUNICATIONS STREET COLUMN WITH TRI-SECTOR ANTENNA. TOGETHER WITH 2NO. ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT CABINS. Granted: 14.03.2002.

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

CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

H5 - Development within Primarily Residential Areas

ENV8 - Telecommunications Developments

Assessment

Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A.3 (4) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) requires that before commencing development, the developer should apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the proposed development.

This application is therefore to assess whether a prior approval of the local planning authority will be required for the siting and appearance of the development which will be discussed below.

Siting and Design

The main issues are whether the siting and appearance of the proposed development is acceptable with regards to its effect on the character or appearance of the area.

Policy CS2 requires that “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 ENV8 in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan requires that “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. “

Section 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance in relation to “Supporting high quality communications.” The NPPF states in paragraph 114 that 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.

Para. 115 further advises that the number of masts should be kept to a minimum consistent with the need of consumers and efficient operation of the network and use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. It goes further to state that “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 NPPF states at para. 118 that 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 communication system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission

guidelines for public exposure.

The proposal consists of the installation of a 20m high street works column supporting antennas and 2x microwave dishes, and installation of 3 no. equipment cabinets and a wraparound cabinet around the column together with Armco barrier along the east boundary of the site and paving flags in front of the cabinets. The proposed equipment would be installed within a grassed area adjoining the pavement along Kingsway adjacent and to the east of The Swan Hotel car park, close to the junction with Crosswood Crescent. The site is adjacent to a bus lay-by on Kingsway.

The proposed mast would be taller than other street furniture in the vicinity of the site and it would be a prominent feature in the street scene along the southern part of Kingsway close to the junction with Rupert Road. The size and scale of the mast relative to its surroundings and its functional appearance would cause some harm to the character and appearance of its surroundings and this should weigh against the proposal.

Residential Amenity

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 proposed mast would be opposite 4 residential properties that are located on the opposite side of Kingsway, it would be visible from those properties but given the height of the proposed mast relative to those dwellings and the separation distance, it would mainly be the column that would be visible and this would not have an unacceptable impact on outlook.

A three storey building lies to the north of the site which has windows at first and second floor that serve residential flats. The windows appear to be secondary windows to main windows on the front/rear elevations and given their nature the impact on outlook would be acceptable.

The proposed mast would also be visible from the gardens of properties on Crosswood Crescent, the proposed mast would appear as a large structure which is unattractive but it would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the residents of those dwellings given the relationship between the properties and the proposed mast and the separation distance between them.

Highway Considerations

The site is close to the junction of Kingsway with Crosswood Crescent, and adjacent a bus lay-by on Kingsway. The Highways team have reviewed the application and consider that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. They have advised that the works are positioned away from the adopted highway and will not affect visibility for vehicles entering or exiting the adjacent site during or after construction. The Highways team have advised that the proposal is acceptable in its submitted form and is not expected to have any adverse impact on the safety or operation of the highway network.

Health Considerations

In response to health concerns, 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. 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 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

The applicant submits that there is a specific requirement for an installation in the locality. The site is required to provide new 5G coverage for EE Ltd in order to improve coverage in the Huyton area of Merseyside. They note that cell search areas for 5G are constrained with a typical cell radius of approximately 250m meaning that it would not be feasible to site the column outside of this locale.

The applicant notes that the proposal is to replace an existing installation and is not a new additional installation, required as they have been served with an NTQ (Notice to Quit) on their existing site and thus this proposed mast is required to maintain coverage. They note that the existing site is the Municipal Buildings and the building on which their equipment is located forms part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme in Huyton and is earmarked for demolition as part of this scheme. Later in the statement the applicant notes that although some coverage may be in place in the Kingsway area, the applicant has identified a requirement for upgraded replacement infrastructure to meet the increasing capacity, and resiliency demands

of modern networks.

The supporting information highlights the benefits of 5G, which are not disputed and as noted in Paragraph 114 of the NPPF, advanced telecommunications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being and this should therefore carry significant weight in favour of the development.

Several alternative potential sites have been listed but have been discounted. The sites have been discounted for a variety of reasons including:

- being within the Huyton Town Centre masterplan area;
- The proximity of listed building(s)
- Being too exposed for a lattice mast
- The topography of the site relative to its surroundings
- Proximity to a primary school
- Being directly opposite residential properties.
- Being too close to a railway line

The consideration given to alternative sites by the applicant is reasonable and shows that there are no obvious sites which would cause less harm than the proposed development.

Conclusion

The proposal is acceptable in principle under the 2015 GPDO, the siting of the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of its surroundings due to size and scale of the mast relative to its surroundings and its functional appearance which should carry weight against the proposed development. However, in this instance the benefits of providing advanced telecommunications infrastructure should carry significant weight in favour of the development – particularly given the lack of any obvious sites where less harm would be caused. On balance the benefits outweigh the harm caused and prior approval should be granted.

Recommendation

The Council has determined that pursuant to Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, the applicant be informed that prior approval is required and granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans
 - Proposed site Plan (ref KSY125_39793_L2147_M001_LPA 4 (Rev A))
 - Proposed Site Elevations (ref KSY125_39793_L2147_M001_LPA 6 (Rev A))

Signed Case Officer¹: **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

**Signed Authorising
Officer²:**

Tony Clark



Date:

5 March 2026

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