

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	24/00284/TEL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Maxine Wishart
<u>WARD:</u>	Halewood North	<u>PARISH:</u>	Halewood Town Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Grass Verge At Cartbridge Lane Opp. Hever Drive, Halewood , Knowsley		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	INSTALLATION OF A 17.5M HIGH STREETWORKS COLUMN SUPPORTING 6 NO. ANTENNAS, 2NO. 0.3M DISHES AND ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT; THE INSTALLATION OF 2 NO. EQUIPMENT CABINETS AND DEVELOPMENT ANCILLARY THERETO.		

Local Plan Policies Map Allocation

Green Belt
Primarily Residential Area

Site Description

The application site is located on a grass verge which forms part of the adopted highway, located on the northern side of Cartbridge Lane opposite the junction with Hever Drive, Halewood. The site is set in front of agricultural land located to the north with residential dwellings located opposite on Hever Drive and Farnborough Close. The site lies partly within the Green Belt and within an area allocated as a Primarily Residential Area.





Proposal

The application seeks prior approval under Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the installation of a street works column (monopole) and associated equipment.

The proposal consists of a 17.5 m high streetworks column supporting 6 no. antennas; 2 no. 0.3 m dishes and ancillary equipment and 2 no equipment cabinets and ancillary development. The equipment cabinets would comprise:

York cabinet – 1.90 m (w) x 0.60 m (d) x 1.75 m (h)

Shire cabinet – 1.05 m (w) x 0.60 m (d) x 1.75 m (h)

The column and equipment cabinets would be coloured Grey (RAL 7035).

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).

Conditions at A.3(4) states that: "(4) Before beginning the development described in paragraph A.2(3), the developer must 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 development."

Consultations

Halewood Town Council - No Comments Received

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 29 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice

There have been 35 letters of objection and one letter of support received as a result of this publicity. The representations are summarised as follows:-

a) Highway Safety

- The mast is located next to an extremely busy junction / narrow bend – busier due to new residential developments.
- Cabinets / mast will obscure / limit views for drivers at busy junction.
- At edge of a junction where traffic often speeding.
- Already a hazard with cars pulling up to post box at the junction.
- Number of near misses with traffic coming from Cartbridge Lane onto Hever - development would further reduce the view which could cause road traffic collisions.
- Hever Drive already has traffic calming measures to improve safety on the road.
- Will interfere with pedestrians and motorists.
- One of the reasons the proposer states for not adapting the current site at the end of Okell Drive is because it would impact on 'highway safety'... would argue that the Cartbridge Lane junction is of far more concern given the sharp bend and speedbump near the T-junction.
- No area for construction or service vehicles to park - parking of these vehicles in location would cause a major hazard to traffic, road users and pedestrians.

b) Visual Impacts

- Negative visual impact.
- Eyesore not screened by anything.
- Proposal would be an eyesore / diminishing aesthetic value of area.
- Will spoil the countryside/ blight on the landscape.
- No trees near enough to screen mast / construction from view.
- The height is greater than mast on Okell Drive- a built up area not the village.
- Proposal doesn't fit in aesthetically in the rural residential village / farm land area.
- Located at edge of woodland rural part of area used for walking.
- Unsightly from garden and during walks / bike rides.
- Field rare beauty spot would be spoiled with ugly mast.
- Would impact on view / outlook from garden.
- Enjoy changing landscape every day on the way to school, watching the seasons change.
- Site is next to beautiful and well maintained residential properties on tiny area of grass at the end of one of the prettiest country lanes in Knowsley.
- Development will be visible and out of place in a residential area, impacting the aesthetic appeal of the neighbourhood.
- Visual impact of survey vehicle parked on the grass verge countryside would be major a couple of metres away from green belt, doesn't blend in with the environment.
- Unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the amenity of nearby residents.
- Despite reduction in height the pole will be unsightly and out of keeping with the character of the area.
- Reduction in height in this application insignificantly different to the application rejected in September 2023. Proposer's supplementary documentation indicates difference is not material ...the height has been 'slightly revised' by dropping the height by 2.5m.

- The proposer claims development will be 'well screened' by vegetation and that a 'good level' of lower screening is already present to three sides of the development. The photo and plans provided by Cornerstone clearly show this is not the case.
- Claim that locating the pole next to a lamppost, which is almost half the height of the proposed development, will assist in helping the pole blend in is, in my opinion, ludicrous...would be highly visible, intrusive and an eyesore.

c) Loss / Damage of Greenspace / Green Belt

- Greenspaces in Halewood declining with building over 1500 new homes in relatively small area / due to too much development over past few years.
- The green space contributes to the scenic beauty of Halewood, offering a much-needed respite from the urban landscape.
- Degradation of very little greenspace left in Halewood.
- Do not want to see more green space anything erected on the small amount of greenspace left.
- Loss of rural land - field is sanctuary.
- Placing structure in this spot would impact on one of the few remaining valuable green areas.
- Diminished green space: Halewood already has limited green spaces must will further reduce these valuable areas, negatively impacting the overall quality of life for residents.
- Absolute disgrace to even consider damaging another green space in our area.
- Leave greenspace alone / Don't ruin the start of the green belt and the lovely scenery in the area.
- Impacts on Green Belt.

d) Loss of Outlook and Views

- Loss of outlook from garden.
- Loss of views from houses on Hever Drive.
- Would spoil the green space where local residents live, walk and admire the views.
- Beautiful view which if passed would be a steel eyesore to the local community already had views ruined by huge influx of new houses being built.
- Would be in eyeline watching TV.
- Would ruin views green belt / green space.
- Will detract from the rural views across the farmland.

e) Residential Amenity

- Council 's Core Strategy does not to permit these sites close to residential areas.
- Can't believe somewhere more appropriate rather than in close proximity to residential properties.
- This will have an effect on residents living in the area whom I know are far from happy with this application.
- It will be far too close to the residential properties.

f) Anti-Social Behaviour

- Will attract graffiti.
- Place for youths to loiter.

- Safeguarding issue.

g) Loss of light / Overshadowing

- Loss of light to living room
- Will cast a figurative shadow over the local area, as well as a literal shadow over the local residents properties preventing right to light.
- Dishes will cause shadow.
- Would be a huge sundial which would be created across the village which will cast a shadow across it.

h) Health Risks

- Long term medical Issues unknown.
- Fear for health.
- KMC have always agreed no such constructions would be built near residential areas. There is as yet no proof that being close to houses does not harm health.
- Still ongoing research into the effect of EMF radiation and the effect on health, - proposed system being close to residential housing.

i) Existing Masts in Area

- Existing Mast in area on Okell Drive.
- Residents not notified of other mast in the area before it was erected.
- Another mast would be unacceptable.

Alternative Locations

- There is a roundabout 200 yards away why not put it there where nobody lives or put it right next to a councillors house and let them look at it.
- Plenty of spaces elsewhere to put this mast that would not impact people.
- Enough large scale impact on green belt within the constituency over the last five years proposal for this structure should have been considered for new housing currently being built.
- Residents on new housing developments have no phone signal – should be built on the new land, as the need is for them not us / why isn't the construction next to one of these?
- Close to the new housing developments - presume at least one reason for requirement of additional mobile capacity - a more suitable site rather than disturbing existing neighbourhood.
- Question why infrastructure did not form part of original planning for the approx. 2000 new homes under construction.
- Why put it there and spoil people's views , instead put it in the middle of the new housing estates where you have already damaged people's views.
- If you are happy to sell off green belt areas in Halewood to house builders then there should be room for these masts.
- Should reconsider this proposal / explore alternative locations.
- Abundance of land in the Halewood area - cannot comprehend why on Hever Drive, next to a housing estate which has been Institute for over 20 years has been chosen.
- If a mast has to be erected in the area there is already a mast on Church Road and Okell Drive and this a much larger plot is further away from properties and better all-round vision for traffic, access parking easier and communication junction boxes already in place etc.
- Option of corner of Gerrards Lane and Foxhill Lane where it can be set back so as not to obscure traffic and it is far from residents,/ planting can hide a lot

of the base, so bottom of the tower is blended into the country side.

- A third location is Lower Close with a large green area again a distance from housing and no obstruction to views on roads.
- Halewood station / associated raised banks – along Lower Road not included which would not require pole of height as proposed.

j) Wildlife Issues

- Impact on bats.
- Habitat of moles living under grass verge would be destroyed.
- Impact on habitat of birds in an area already losing vast amounts of green spaces.
- Disruption to breeding and nesting birds which leading to decline in bird population.
- Would provide perch for pigeons.
- Bird of prey appears to nest in one of the trees close to proposed site.
- Concern of impact and change to habit and environment for the wildlife.

k) Need

- Mast is not needed.
- Existing Vodafone mast across the road. Users can switch network.
- Unnecessary unsightly installation.
- Justification for the pole refers to use of the internet. Homeowners require high speed broadband reference is made to education/training programs not sort of internet use accessed through a mobile signal. Neighbours have access to 5G in the area.
- Has a survey been undertaken to identify how little 5G is available that would require a development such as that one proposed?

l) Impact on the local social and leisure environment for the public.

m) Impact on flight path

n) Similar Application

- Similar proposal as last year which was rightly rejected / should not be considered again / still object.
- Second time objected.
- Same objections stand - making something slightly shorter does not lessen the impact and safety issues to the local community and environment.
- Issues previously raised do not appear to have changed.
- Once it is rejected that should be the end of it. Please do not allow this to go ahead.

o) Site Notice missing

- Notice missing for around 2 weeks has sufficient notification been given?

p) Devaluation of property / Detrimental to house prices.

- The presence of these masts could negatively affect property values in our area as potential buyers might be deterred by its presence.
- This structure has a detrimental effect on property prices (proven) in the area. As recently reported in the Guardian, estimates of the effect on property prices vary and no academic research has been carried out. However, Mast Sanity believes anecdotal evidence from its hotline indicates a mast will knock between 15 and 25 per cent off the value of a house, depending on how close

it is and the size of the structure.

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- National Association of Estate Agents, said in some cases a mast could see a home reduce in value by between 5 and 10 per cent...growing fear of the unknown of what the health risks are, especially among those with young children....Campaigners considering legal action to seek compensation for the loss in value of their properties or to get the masts removed. Last week, seven householders in Swindon won sums of between £10,000 and £20,000 each from their local council after it mistakenly allowed a mast to be erected in the middle of their residential street, causing their properties to crash in value. Landmark judgment: it was the first time a government ombudsman had accepted masts could hurt house prices. A flood of similar claims is expected...
- Mast Action UK - several other cases are being prepared.

q) Residents will seek Compensation

- Compensation claims against some councils are being made will have to do this if this goes ahead.
- House owners will combine to seek compensation which could run into hundreds of thousands which the council doesn't have, for the sake of a different location, is it worth it?
- Equipment failure that may allow increase in power level or future studies which deem the system unsafe would potentially open issues / claims against the council / civil claims against those who have granted / approved the application.
- Strong possibility as the warning was not heeded by those responsible, and an excuse we were following guidelines would be no defence due to the current uncertainty.

r) Site Marked Out

- Proposed area appears to have already been marked out – paint spray markings on grassed area.
- Has the permission already been granted, prior to individual's voices being heard? showing total disregard to our opines.
- We as a neighbourhood will not accept our opinions to be disregarded like this.
- Space marked out appears quite extensive and takes up much of the grassed area.

s) Other Comments

- Site notice doesn't give reasons for proposal which indicates that you are not interested in residents opinions or objections.
- Halewood suffered enough with all the new houses crammed into the area.
- Resident has had no contact - will be informing all the residents around Hever Drive to object to this.
- Pay higher council tax here , will be requesting a reduction and seek legal advice if this goes ahead.
- Post code on documentation incorrect.

- The height of the post is shown as +17.5M. Does this open figure allow the proposer to add to the post without further planning permission?
- Brook runs alongside disappearing into a culvert at the junction with Hever Drive...Will the proposed development affect this water course?
- Water table in the area was very high. Pile drivers required for housing development... to secure a post of the height applied would imagine the building work would be very disruptive.

The letter of support is summarised as follows:

- Improved connectivity, which is essential these days.
- Mast will not make any significant impact on the view or environment.
- Please allow this mast to be installed so that the vast majority of residents who support these developments can take advantage of the faster and more stable connectivity.

Regarding the comment at point m) in relation to flight path, the application is supported by a copy of a notification that the applicant has provided to the Operations Manager at Liverpool John Lennon Airport before making the application giving notice of intention to submit an application. The supporting information indicates that no response was received at time of application.

In terms of the comments made in n) above in relation to the application being a similar scheme to that which was determined last year and refused and should not be considered; any application that is submitted to the Local Planning Authority must be considered and assessed on the merits of that proposal.

It should be noted that the issues raised at point p) regarding devaluation of property is not a material planning consideration.

Turning to the issues raised at point s) in regard to not being notified, planning records indicated that the writer was sent a letter notifying them of the proposal.

Relevant Planning History

APP. NO: 23/02089/TEL

PROPOSAL: INSTALLATION OF A 20 M HIGH STREETWORKS COLUMN SUPPORTING 6 NO. ANTENNAS, 2 NO. 0.3M DISHES AND ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT TOGETHER WITH THE INSTALLATION OF 2 NO. EQUIPMENT CABINETS AND DEVELOPMENT ANCILLARY THERETO.

DECISION: Prior Approval Required and Refused.

DECISION DATE: 5 September 2023

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.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles

CS5 - Green Belt

CS7 - Transport Networks

CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

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

H5 - Development within Primarily Residential Areas

DQ2 - Security in the Built Environment

ENV8 - Telecommunications Developments

ENV2 - Noise and Vibration

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. Other matters such as whether the mast is appropriate in the Green Belt are not material to the decision which must solely rest on whether the siting and appearance of the proposal is acceptable.

Background

In September 2023 a prior approval application was refused for the installation of a 20 m high streetworks column supporting 6 no. antennas, 2 no. 0.3m dishes and ancillary equipment together with the installation of 2 no. equipment cabinets and

development ancillary thereto in this location (23/02089/TEL). The reason for that refusal was worded as follows:

“The proposed development by reason of its location, height and prominence would form a highly visible and incongruous development which would be detrimental to the visual amenity and the character of the street scene. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy, adopted January 2016 and saved Policies H5 and ENV8 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006 and guidance in NPPF (July 2021).”

In terms of the application currently under consideration, the difference between that application and this current application is that it now proposes the reduction in height of the mast from 20 m to 17.5 m.

Siting & Design

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 118 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.

Paragraph 119 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 paragraph 122 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 communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

The proposal consists of the installation of a 17.5 m high streetworks column supporting 6 no. antennas, 2 no. 0.3m dishes and ancillary equipment with the installation of 2 no. equipment cabinets and ancillary development. The proposed equipment would be installed directly onto the grass verge, it is not proposed to provide any concrete hard standing or compound.

The application site and a swathe of the land immediately to the north and further beyond existing residential development to the north east is located within the Green Belt. The land to the north is characterised by open farmed agricultural land. The equipment would therefore be sited on an open verge with a rural backdrop.

Even at the reduced height of 17.5 m high the column would still be considerably higher than any other structures in the immediate vicinity of the site. The proposed column would rise significantly above the existing lighting columns which attain a height of 9 m and telegraph poles which are 8 m high. There would be clear views of the equipment when travelling in both directions along Cartbridge Lane.

It is noted that the applicant suggests that the development would be screened and the supporting information indicates that "the mature trees along the road and in the wider area will provide a good level of screening to the west and east". However, it is Officer's view that the existing planting would provide very limited screening to views of the installation. The planting would not provide a visual backdrop to the north and the siting would be highly visible to passers-by, including residents of the nearby housing development using this well used network of footpaths. The trees located to the west would be so far away (approx. 40 m) so as not to have any material impact on softening the appearance or lessening the visual impact of the proposal.

Notwithstanding the relative slimline nature of the mast, due to its height and position in an exposed area with very limited screening, the proposed development would be highly visible and it would appear as an incongruous feature given the low rise nature of its surrounding. Furthermore, the proposed equipment cabinets, given their arrangement on the grass verge, would be visually conspicuous detracting from the softer landscape features of the green corridor along this part of the northern side of Cartbridge Lane. These factors would in turn impinge on the visual amenity and open character of the Green Belt to the north, which officers consider forms part of the streetscene.

The proposed mast and associated equipment would appear as an alien feature and would not be successfully assimilated into its surroundings. It would have a jarring and incongruous presence to the detriment of visual amenity and the character of the area.

Despite the amendment in the reduction in the height of the mast, the proposed development would still fail to comply with the above mentioned planning policies and guidance due to the adverse impact on visual amenity and the character of the area, as detailed above.

Residential Amenity

Saved UDP policy ENV8 requires that proposals for new telecommunications masts and associated antennae and buildings will not be permitted unless the applicant has demonstrated that certain criteria is met. It states at Clause 1 (b) that “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.”

Saved UDP policy H5 requires that “New development within the Primarily Residential Areas ...which is for uses appropriate to a residential area will be permitted provided that the development (either by itself or in conjunction with other developments) would not:

- a) Have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers by reason of noise, disturbance, overlooking, visual intrusion, smells, fumes, on-street parking or other causes; or
- b) Adversely affect the character or street scene of the area.”

The proposed installation would be sited approximately 17.5 m from the boundary with the nearest residential dwelling on Farnborough Grove and approximately 22.5m from the nearest residential boundary on Hever Drive.

The gable elevation of the nearest residential property, 24 Farnborough Grove, faces the application site and other properties on Farnborough Drive back onto Cartbridge Lane and would therefore have limited views of the application site. No. 1 Farnborough Drive, at the junction with Hever Drive would have oblique views of the site from the front.

It is not considered that the proposal, would directly harm the amenities of local residents beyond the siting and design considerations discussed above.

Highway Safety

It has been suggested by local residents that the proposal would hamper visibility of vehicles using the adjacent highway at a busy junction and concern that the development would be a danger to users of the highway. However, given the proposed siting of the equipment which would set back from the junction of Cartbridge Lane with Hever Drive, it is not considered that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on highway or pedestrian safety.

However, if prior approval is granted the applicant should be informed that a separate consent would be required from the Council's Street works team to carry out any works to the adopted highway or across a Public Right of Way.

Health Considerations

Objection has been raised about the health implications of the proposed development. 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 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

The applicant submits that there is a specific requirement for an installation on the site to provide enhanced 4G and new 5G coverage. An additional new street works style base station is required for this 5G upgrade to VM02's service in close proximity of the existing base station.

The supporting information highlights the benefits of 5G, which are not disputed and as noted in Paragraph 118 of the NPPF, advanced telecommunications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.

The provision of 5G services and upgrade of the 2G, 3G and 4G services would together increase network capacity and provide ultra-fast and more reliable mobile connectivity. The development would be of social and economic benefit to individuals, businesses, and public services alike and these factors weigh in favour of the proposal and this should therefore weigh in favour of the development.

Alternative Sites

The applicant has considered and discounted five alternative sites in their Supplementary Information Form. The sites were provided in eastings and northings, which have been interpreted by <https://gridreferencefinder.com>. It is noted that an additional 3 sites have been considered and discounted (Nos. 6 - 8 below) since the last application was considered (23/02089/TEL).

The sites are set out below:

1. Verge adjacent to roundabout Okell Drive (existing site) – Discounted due to the structure being shared providing 2G/3G/4G no solution that can accommodate 5G antennas for both Vodafone and VMO2 without significant redevelopment that would compromise pedestrian movements and impact on highway safety. Needs vertical and horizontal separation to avoid network interference.
2. Okell Drive (streetworks) – Discounted as similar mast (20/00279/TEL) refused to west of proposed location. Proposal seeks to overcome reasons for refusal.
3. Okell Drive, next to bus stop (streetworks) – Discounted as closer to houses than the proposed located and able to better protect the character of the area.
4. St Nicholas C of E, Church, Church Road, Halewood (Rooftop) – Discounted as the Church is a listed building within a Conservation Area and located too further south from the search area.
5. Hilton Grace, Recreation Ground, Church Road (Greenfield) - Discounted due to proximity to Conservation area and located too far south from the search area. An installation at this location would not replicate and improve upon the existing coverage pattern.
6. Wastewater Treatment Plan, North End Lane, Halewood (Greenfield) – Discounted as the site is considered to be too far north to provide coverage to the target area.
7. The Avenue, Halewood – Discounted as site too far south to provide coverage to the target area and is not of a design that could be shared with VMO2.
8. Adjacent to Aldi Supermarket, Leather Lane, Halewood – Existing mast that serves VMO2 in adjoining cell area. Discounted as it is not possible to provide the required coverage to meet this separate requirement / target area as the installation is not able to cover an area this big.

It is noted that site no. 3 location is identified as being to the north of the bus stop however, the grid reference would point to it being to the south west of the bus stop on the eastern side of Okell Drive.

A sequential approach has been undertaken and several other alternative sites have been considered as detailed above, and it is acknowledged that those alternative sites would present other constraints. However, Officers are not persuaded that the investigation of other available sites in the cell area is exhaustive having regard to the open aspect of the chosen site. Officers consider that it has not been demonstrated that the need for the proposal and the public benefits that would arise could not be achieved on an alternative site that would be preferable in regard to the

siting and appearance.

Knowsley Council therefore believes that there is scope for an alternative site in the surrounding area which could deliver the same benefits as the proposed development site.

Other Matters

The 'siting' and 'appearance' of the proposal are the only factors that can be considered and no other matters can be considered. The main consideration therefore is that siting and appearance must be such that visual impact on the surrounding area is minimised.

It is noted that there are a number of matters raised by local residents which do not relate to siting and appearance and these matters cannot be taken into account.

Conclusion

There are benefits associated with the proposed development and these must weigh in favour of the proposed development. Nevertheless, it is considered that it has not been demonstrated that the need for the proposal and the benefits indicated above could not be achieved on an alternative site that would be preferable in respect of the siting and appearance and therefore, the benefits carry limited weight. Consequently, it is considered that they do not outweigh the significant harm that would be caused by the siting and appearance of the proposed development.

For the reasons outlined above, the siting and appearance of the proposed development are not acceptable and the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS2, CS19 of the Local Plan:Core Strategy and saved Policies H5 and ENV8 of the UDP together with guidance in the NPPF.

As such the proposal would conflict with the conditions set out at A.2, Part 16, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

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:-

1. The proposed development by reason of its location, height and prominence would form a highly visible and incongruous development which would be detrimental to the visual amenity and the character of the street scene. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted January 2016 and saved Policies H5 and ENV8 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006 and guidance in NPPF (2023).

Signed Case Officer¹: **M Wishart**

**Signed Authorising
Officer²:** **K Foster**

Date: **22 July 2024**

Informatives

N/A

Contd...

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

Appendix 1 – Site Photographs





