

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 137345/TEL/2023

Date registered valid: 19 June 2023

Proposal: Prior Approval for a 22.5 metre-high telecommunication monopole with associated equipment cabinets to replace existing installation

Address: North Manchester General Hospital, Land at North Manchester General Hospital, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, M8 5RB

Ward(s): Crumpsall Ward

Applicant: Cornerstone Telecommunications, Infrastructure Limited

Agent (if any): Mr Michal Laskowski, Clarke Telecom

Case officer: Steven McCoombe
Tel: 0161 234 4607
Email: steven.mccoombe@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: No objection

Date of recommendation: 11 July 2023

Application details

Type of application: Telecommunication Application

Development type: Notifications

Date of site visit: 30 June 2023

Standard consultations:

Printed: 20 June 2023 Expired: 11 July 2023

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 20 June 2023 Expired: 11 July 2023

Site notice

No site notice has been produced

Press advert

No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building and surroundings

The application site relates to an existing radio base station which comprises a 22 metre high monopole supporting 6 antennas, 1 equipment cabinet, and ancillary works, including 6 Remote Radio Units (RRUs).

The existing installation is situated to the perimeter of a car park area at North Manchester General Hospital, adjacent to its north-eastern boundary.



Existing installation

To the north of the site the car park continues. To the west of the site is a grassed area with associated hospital buildings. To the south is an access road towards further parking. To the east of the site are semi-mature trees and mature trees with an industrial estate and Salford Van hire depot beyond.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: No

Tree Preservation Order: No

Description of development

Prior Approval is sought for the installation of a 22.5 metre high telecommunication monopole, supporting 12 antennas on a new open headframe, 2 transmission dishes, 2 equipment cabinets, 1 electric meter cabinet and ancillary development, including RRUs, Ericsson Radio Systems (ERSs) and 2 GPS modules.

The proposed works would follow the removal of the existing 20 metre high mast and associated works.

Due to technology advances (including 5G service provision) and additional demands on the operator's mobile network system in the area, the replacement mast and additional antennas proposed are required to allow all the data that is required to be carried for mobile superfast broadband. This technology and the design of the antennas required for 5G means that the existing tower is not able to physically support this new technology and therefore a slightly bigger tower is required.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local Residents/Occupiers – No representations received.

Highways Services – No objection.

Policy

The following policy and guidance is considered relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Saved policy DC17.1 of the UDP;
- Policies DM1 and SP1 of the Core Strategy;
- Sections 10 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Relevant Planning History

101889/FO/2013/N1

Erection of replacement 22 metre high telecommunications monopole, with 6 antennae and 4 microwave dishes (in total) and ancillary equipment. *Approved 3 May 2013.*

049805/FO/NORTH1/96

Erection of prefabricated equipment cabin, erection of a 24m high lattice mast with 2no. directional antennae and 2no. 300mm microwave dish antennae. *Approved 6 June 1996.*

050375/FO/NORTH1/96

Installation of 30m high lattice mast and associated telecommunications equipment in a 15x10m compound for Vodafone Limited. *Approved 2 September 1996.*

Issues

Principle

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 confers 'permitted development rights' for certain types of telecommunications development. This now includes the erection of telecommunications masts which do not exceed a height of 30m above ground level on unprotected land. These permitted development rights remove the need to submit a full planning application, but rather require a 'prior approval' application to be made.

This means that the Local Planning Authority can only control the details of the siting, design and external appearance of a telecommunication development, as the acceptability of the principle of the development is already established. The Local Planning Authority has 56 days in which to let the applicant know of its decision on whether prior approval is required for siting and appearance and to let the operator know of its decision to allow or refuse approval.

Given background Government planning guidance, a principal theme running through the National Planning Policy Framework is the commitment to ensuring sustainable economic growth. This includes the advancement of infrastructure and the use of smarter technologies.

Paragraph 114 at Section 10 of the NPPF states that "Advanced, high-quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and social well-being".

Saved policy DC17.1 of the UDP similarly looks to support telecommunication development, subject to minimising any impact upon siting and appearance.

Within a letter issued to Local Planning Authorities from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, dated 24 May 2021, the Government is clear that digital connectivity is considered now, more than ever – vital to enable people to stay connected and businesses to grow. The demand for mobile data is increasing rapidly, and the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how important it is that we all have access to reliable, high quality mobile connectivity.

It is stated further that The National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") for England states that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology, such as 5G.

The Framework is clear that decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales. Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only and they should not seek to prevent competition between different operators or question the need for an electronic communications system.

In this case, given the prevailing policy and Government support for telecommunication installations coupled with the siting and appearance of the proposed installation in the case, the principle of the proposal is considered satisfactory. The public and social benefits of a greatly enhanced communications network for businesses and residents alike in this location, would also qualify as a considerable positive that would contribute to the wider economic output of the area, as well as social improvements.

As such, it is considered that the proposal complies with the overarching policy framework which outlines a general presumption in favour of telecommunication development. It is necessary however to further assess the appropriateness of the siting and appearance of the proposed equipment, as outlined below.

Siting and Appearance

In keeping with the National Planning Policy Framework which advocates the use of high-quality communications infrastructure, the proposed design has been selected to minimise visual impact upon the street scene by integrating with the existing industrial backdrop.

The introduction of a tall structure will always to some degree be noticeable, particularly to passers-by and nearby occupiers. This does not necessarily mean any harm will result or that there will be an overwhelming, undue impact.

In this instance, it is considered that the applicant has minimised the impact by practicable and appropriate siting and design, balancing the siting and appearance of the installation against technical requirements and material planning policy and guidance which advocates a presumption in favour of such equipment.

The proposal has undergone a sequential site selection, with the current proposal representing the best fit when balancing siting against coverage requirements. The proposed installation will facilitate advanced coverage in the area to aid the social well-being and business needs of the occupants of the nearby properties and local businesses.

In terms of appearance, the design reflects the appearance of the existing mast, albeit slightly larger and with increased antennas resulting in a bulkier headframe.

As the existing mast has become an established part of the local context and given the prevailing backdrop of the hospital, coupled with context of the immediate area which is largely commercial in character and screening offered by the existing tree cover, it is believed that the proposed installation can be satisfactorily assimilated without any significant undue impact to visual amenity and would not appear out of place with its surroundings.

Whilst the mast is likely to be visible further afield, it is believed that given the foreground of the existing industrial estates and the hospital behind, the visual impact can be sustained, with only the top of the mast likely to be visible, which is presently the case.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposed mast and associated equipment would form overly intrusive features, nor would there be any significantly harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area.

In light of the above, it is felt that taking into account the technical constraints of the operator, available sites and immediate environmental context of the area, the siting and appearance of the proposal can be satisfactorily accommodated without significant, undue impact to visual amenity.

Access

Due to the location of the mast adjacent to a surface car park, there will have no impact upon existing access arrangements.

Impact on Health and Safety

The role of the planning system however is not to duplicate existing controls under other legislation and is not the place to determine health safeguards. It is the Governments' view that if a proposed development conforms to International Compliance for Public Exposure Guidelines for Public Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields established by the International

Commission on Non Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), further consideration of this issue should not be necessary by the Local Planning Authority.

It should also be noted that within the recent letter issued to Local Planning Authorities from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Support, dated 24 May 2021, it is stated that the Government's independent advisers on matters of public health, are clear that there is no credible evidence of a negative impact of mobile technology, including 5G on people's health. Central to PHE's advice are the guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which is formally recognised by the World Health Organisation.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: No objection

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The City Council is satisfied with the siting and appearance of the proposed telecommunication installation, in accordance with policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, saved policy DC17.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The consent hereby provided shall ensure the installation be carried out only in accordance with drawings referenced 100/A, 201/C and 301/C and accompanying documents received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 19 June 2023.

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to saved policy DC17.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services

Limbert Home, North Manchester General Hospital, Delaunays Road, Manchester, M8 5RB
Manchester Great And New Synagogue, Crescent Road, Manchester, M8 5UJ
7 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
5 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
8 Brightside Road, Manchester, M8 5XJ
4 Brightside Road, Manchester, M8 5XJ
6 Brightside Road, Manchester, M8 5XJ
14 Longshaw Close, Manchester, M8 5XL
12 Longshaw Close, Manchester, M8 5XL
10 Longshaw Close, Manchester, M8 5XL
15 Longshaw Close, Manchester, M8 5XL
11 Longshaw Close, Manchester, M8 5XL
9 Longshaw Close, Manchester, M8 5XL
23 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
8 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
10 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
25 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
18 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
Flat 2, Ainsleigh Gardens, Slack Road, Manchester, M9 8AW
Flat 4, Ainsleigh Gardens, Slack Road, Manchester, M9 8AW
2 Brightside Road, Manchester, M8 5XJ
8 Wallbrook Drive, Manchester, M9 8PX
6 Wallbrook Drive, Manchester, M9 8PX
5 Wallbrook Drive, Manchester, M9 8PX
4 Wallbrook Drive, Manchester, M9 8PX
3 Wallbrook Drive, Manchester, M9 8PX
32 Newcroft Drive, Manchester, M9 8PU
30 Newcroft Drive, Manchester, M9 8PU
28 Newcroft Drive, Manchester, M9 8PU
26 Newcroft Drive, Manchester, M9 8PU
Bert Hibbert Ltd, Slack Road, Manchester, M9 3AW
2 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
21 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
19 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
17 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
15 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
11 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
9 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
3 Hawkins Close, Manchester, M9 8QL
Flat 3, Ainsleigh Gardens, Slack Road, Manchester, M9 8AW
Flat 1, Ainsleigh Gardens, Slack Road, Manchester, M9 8AW
Flat 6, Ainsleigh Gardens, Slack Road, Manchester, M9 8AW
Flat 5, Ainsleigh Gardens, Slack Road, Manchester, M9 8AW
22 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
20 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
16 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
14 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
12 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
10 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
8 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU

6 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
4 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU
2 Moss House Terrace, Manchester, M9 8GU

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding - Not Affected
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Area Team Boundary - Name: NORTH AREA