SITE SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

1. Site Details

Site Name:	Wilbraham Road SW	Site Address:	WILBRAHAM ROAD SW, WILBRAHAM ROAD, WELLINGTON ROAD, FALLOWFIELD, MANCHESTER, M14 6FG
NGR:	E: 385307, N: 394029		
Site Ref Number:	JET 376	Site Type: Macro	SW – Macro

2. Pre-Application Check List

Site Selection

Was an LPA mast register used to check for suitable sites by the operator or the LPA?	**Yes**	
If no explain why: N/A		
Was the industry site database checked for suitable sites by the operator:	**Yes**	
If no explain why: N/A		

Pre-application consultation with LPA

Written offer of pre-application consultation:	**Yes**	
Was there pre-application contact:		**No**
Date of pre-application contact:	**N/A**	
Name of contact:	**N/A**	
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised: N/A		

Ten Commitments Consultation

Rating of Site under Traffic Light Model:		Amber		

In the first instance, all correspondence should be directed to the agent.

Consultees:-	Local Councillors; [redacted] and Local MP; [redacted] were consulted on September 29th 2026.
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised:	No response has been received.

School/College

Location of site in relation to school/college: There are none in the immediate vicinity
Outline of consultation carried out with school/college: N/A
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised: N/A

Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/Aerodrome Operator consultation (only required for an application for prior approval)

Will the structure be within 3km of an aerodrome or airfield?		**No**
Has the Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/Aerodrome Operator been notified?		**No**
Details of response: The proposal is significantly further than 3km away from an aerodrome or airfield.		

Developer's Notice

Copy of Developer's Notice enclosed?		**Yes**	
Date served:	**14th October 2026**		

3. Proposed Development

The proposed site:
This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Jet Infrastructure in support of a proposed telecommunications installation required to address a critical gap in network coverage within the Wilbraham Road area of Fallowfield, Manchester. The proposal will deliver new and improved service for VMO2 customers and forms part of a targeted network improvement programme aimed at enhancing existing 4G service and introducing 5GSA capability to meet rising consumer demand, improve coverage and deliver increased network capacity, required to resolve a signnificant local service deficiency. Currently, VM02 customers have limited coverage and capacity in this area. Network 'capacity' is an increasing challenge in densely populated urban areas where there is exponential growth in demand for data services to facilitate data hungry applications and devices. While 'coverage' may be present, the network has insufficient 'capacity' to handle the volume of user traffic and so calls are dropped and data based applications continuously buffer without being usable. This existing site cannot provide new 5G connectivity as it is structurally not capable to host the necessary 5G antennas and is directly opposite a Listed Church. The site is structurally incapable of hosting the required technologies to service the area with both 4G and 5G for both operators owing to the constraints of the existing site. Even if it were to be replaced/upgraded it could no longer host all of the equipment of the two sharing operators unless the design were changed to an open headframe 'greenfield' type design given 5G antennas are circa 3 times as heavy has 4G antennas and there would need to be two separate antenna systems – one for each operator. It is felt the necessary design to accommodate this would not be appropriate for this location and so VMO2 must find a replacement slimline streetworks site for their equipment in the locality if they are to provide the new and most up-to-date 5G standalone service expected of their Customers and required of them (as noted later in this Statement) by Government, controlled by Ofcom via licence obligations. The appended (and embedded further below) Crowdsourced network performance data map demonstrates the current issue clearly – the whole wider area clearly has very poor network service and this is shown by the red or very dark red colouring.





Therefore, to provide additional network capacity, coverage and the most up to date technology and service to the area, there is a requirement for VMO2 build a new base station in the area that can host the necessary equipment.

Site Location

Wellington Road, in the Fallowfield area of Manchester, forms part of an established urban neighbourhood characterised by a mix of residential properties, student accommodation and local amenities. The surrounding area is predominantly suburban in character, with traditional terraced housing and more modern residential developments interspersed with commercial uses along the nearby Wilbraham Road corridor. The streets are generally well connected, with established footways, street lighting and other urban infrastructure reflecting the area's built-up nature.

The street scene is varied rather than uniform, with differences in building scale, architectural style and use contributing to a typical inner-suburban character. Wilbraham Road provides an important local route through Fallowfield, supporting movement between residential areas and

nearby services. Overall, the area has a well-established urban character, with development generally arranged along existing streets and a limited sense of open countryside.

This is a challenging search area that is made up of dense built-form with low-rise residential property. This is all compounded further by a proliferation of underground services that we cannot site on top of. There is also a children's playpark nearby.

This means there are limited siting options in the area.

Efforts have been made to minimise both the impact on visual/residential amenity and the heritage assets (Listed Buildings) in the wider area. We feel that the proposal put forward certainly minimises harm and is the best and least impactful viable option in that challenging search area.

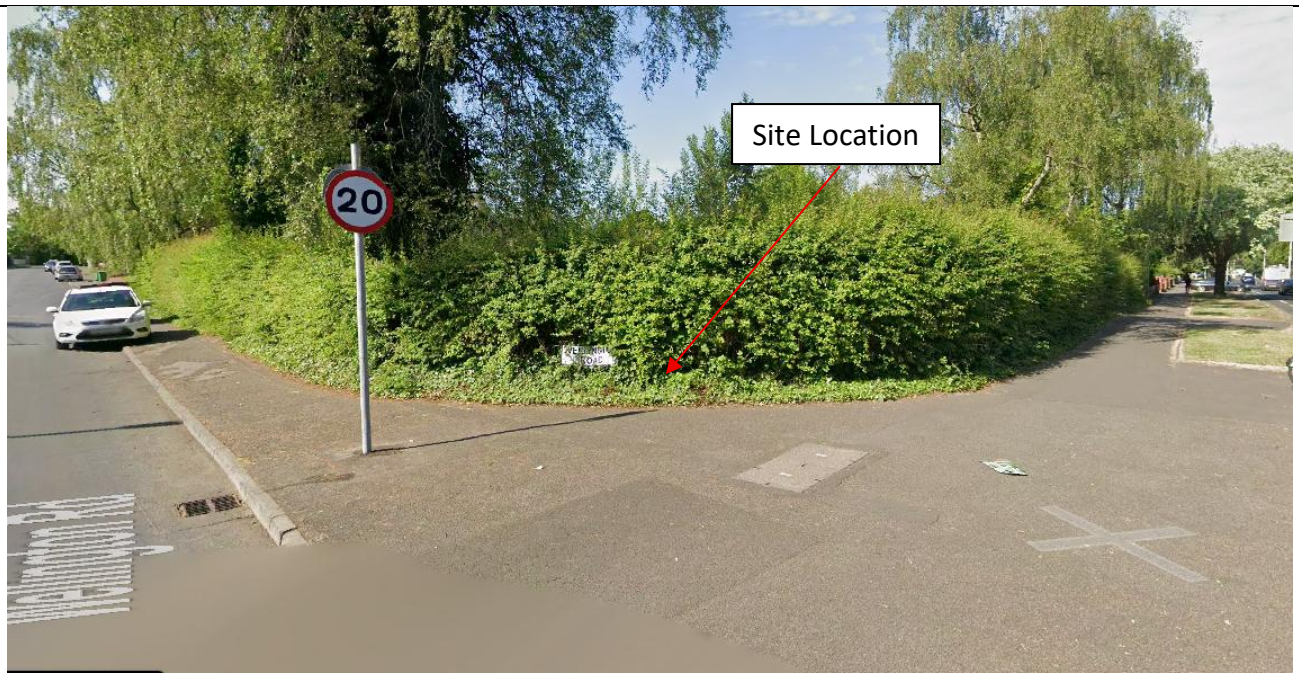
The proposal causes negligible harm to residential amenity, streetscene or the listed buildings in the wider locale – that is a very successful outcome.

Great consideration has been given to ensure the proposal is well sited to minimise impact upon streetscene, residential amenity, visual amenity, heritage assets and pedestrian movement. Great care has been given to set the proposal set back on the footpath of Wellington Road and Wilbraham Road junction. The site was selected as it has very minimal overlooking windows from residential property. Where there is overlooking it is a small number of residences and that view is over a busy road with all associated vertical infrastructure. At this distance and in this context this will ensure impact upon residential amenity is minimised. This location is the only location in the search area that minimises overlooking in this way.

This proposal should be considered in the context of greater material benefit than previous. It is worth noting that Part 16 of the GPDO is also in consultation to reduce restriction on this type of development and NPPF policy is also in consultation to add even more weight on material benefits for development like this and other development that contribute to a prosperous economy,

The site is also placed back on the pavement – this ensures that there is no impact on pedestrian flow beyond existing.

Great care has been taken to minimise impact and to ensure that screening and backdrop is maximised to reduce prominence. This is demonstrated by the image below:-



Photomontages have also been submitted to demonstrate the fact that the site is far enough away from the Listed Buildings to minimise the impact:



Image 1b
Proposed view from Wilbraham Road (A6010) looking East.



Image 2b
Proposed view from Wilbraham Road (A6010) looking West.



Image 3b
Proposed iew from Wellington Road looking North.

The proposal is set against the backdrop of mature tree cover and an area of open space to have less impact than in the surrounding residential areas, with some commercial buildings also in the vicinity.

As seen above, the proposed new pole assimilates into the streetscene along with other vertical structures such as streetlamps, mature trees, and commercial premises.

Design

The height of the monopole at 20 metres is the minimum height required to provide high-quality 4G and 5G coverage to the intended target area. If the mast height were any lower, it would not be able to provide sufficient coverage to the target coverage area due to radio propagation constraints and signals being blocked by surrounding 'clutter' in the form of tall buildings and trees.

Modern 5GSA service is provided via higher frequency radio spectrum. This is helpful in that it can deliver low latency, high speed and high capacity data transfer required to service modern applications, sensors and devices. However, this spectrum does not propagate as far nor propagate through materials (like trees or buildings) as well as lower frequency spectrum utilised by previous generations. This directly impacts and advises the necessary height, design and siting to overcome that constraint.

As a result, 5G requires taller structures to achieve the same level of coverage footprint. Additionally, this location is nearby to tall mature trees, some commercial buildings, and other vertical street structures such as lampposts and telecoms poles. These are incredibly helpful from the perspective of minimising visual impact by creating a highly developed, vertical, urban context that the pole will assimilate into rather than appear out of scale with whilst ensuring that there is sufficient height to make the proposal viable technically.

It is felt that this pole type design is the most sensitive that could be used. It is necessary to have this type of design that would be structurally capable of hosting the antennas at the necessary height while also being the most slimline pole possible.

The use of this pole, capable of supporting antennas at this height to maximise radio propagation and, subsequently the coverage footprint, reduces the need for additional masts in the surrounding area that may have been required if the antennas were at a lower height. The height also ensures ICNIRP compliance and so this 20m height is the lowest height that is viable.

The mast is proposed light grey (RAL 7035) colour – this was intentional to minimise contrast against the dense urban backdrop it is sited against while it will also blend at height with what is typically a grey sky backdrop.

The antennas have been placed in a very narrow aperture in a stacked format (5G antennas at the top and 4G antennas below) to negate bulk and width to keep the width as streamlined and slimline as possible. GRP shrouding of antennas cannot be used on modern deployments as it

obstructs 5G frequency propagation and also acts as a sail, with the greater surface area catching the wind, putting significantly more structural pressure on the pole from wind loading. Below the antennas are remote radio units required to maintain high quality service – these must be adjacent to the antennas as increased feeder length causes signal degradation. Between the antenna and remote radio apertures there is banding to merge the apertures and keep it appearing streamlined, unfussy and uncluttered.

There are cabinets/equipment housing at the base – these share a foundation and are tightly packed beside each other – this is done to minimise impact by negating a sprawl of cabinets in the streetscene. The are also very narrow to minimise streetscene impact. The cabinets are of fir green (RAL 6009) colour as it helps assimilate with existing and this typically blends with soft landscaping in the area.

It was felt that a pole would be suitable in this urban setting given tall pole lighting columns and existing street furniture are a common feature and so this setting would be suited to a pole.

These efforts to minimise contrast at the various heights is advocated at Paras 28 & 40 of the Government Code of Practice...

"Mitigating visual impacts: when possible, operators should look to use sympathetic designs, materials and colour (including camouflage where appropriate) to ***minimise the contrast between infrastructure and the area****."*

"Colouring and camouflage: where appropriate, ***masts should be coloured to match their backdrop to minimise contrast*** *in an urban or rural setting."*

The use of this pole, capable of supporting antennas at this height to maximise radio propagation and, subsequently the coverage footprint, reduces the need for additional masts in the surrounding area that may have been required if the antennas were at a lower height.

For all these reasons, the streetworks pole design is the most suitable design in this particular circumstance.

Significantly, through careful siting, this is the only technically viable location in the search area that can ensure such minimal levels of impact upon visual, residential amenity, and streetscene.

The improved digital connectivity also aligns with the Government's Wireless infrastructure Strategy, Planning and Infrastructure Bill, 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy and the NPPF, all of which promote digital connectivity infrastructure given the significant social and economic benefits it delivers locally, regionally and nationally.

The principal aim of the development is to enhance VMO2's mobile broadband network coverage and capacity. Businesses, commuters, workers, visitors and residents all depend upon high quality network service to facilitate use of data-hungry applications on their phones and other devices, especially in urban centers and transport hubs. These applications carry significant socio-economic benefit, all underpinned by the connectivity provided by infrastructure such as the proposal.

Enclose map showing the cell centre and adjoining cells:

VMO2's ongoing network improvement programme in line with Government aspirations.

This area requires additional capacity to handle the volume of data traffic accessing the network via devices and phones.

Currently, VM02 customers have limited coverage and capacity in this area. Network 'capacity' is an increasing challenge in densely populated urban areas where there is exponential growth in demand for data services to facilitate data hungry applications and devices. While 'coverage' may be present, the network has insufficient 'capacity' to handle the volume of user traffic and so calls are dropped and data based applications continuously buffer without being usable.

This is demonstrated by the crowdsourced network performance data shown below. Red demarks poor capacity and network performance while green is quality performance.

This is clear that there is a sizeable area with poor coverage in the local area, with only sporadic patches of good coverage, indicating that there is currently poor network performance and insufficient network capacity in the area.





Type of Structure	
Description: The proposed development comprises the installation of a new 20m high Orion streetpole hosting 6 no. antennas, 3 no. RRUs, and equipment housing and other ancillary development. The installation has been designed to support both 4G and 5G technologies. For full technical specifications and layout, please refer to the enclosed drawing package.	
Overall Height:	+20m AGL
Height of existing building	N/A
Equipment Housing:	
Length:	See drawings
Width:	See drawings
Height:	See drawings
Materials	
Tower/mast etc – type of material and external colour:	Pole painted Light Grey (RAL 7035) with grey antennas.
Equipment housing – type of material and external colour:	Steel equipment cabinets painted fir green (RAL 6009).

Reasons for choice of design:
This is discussed at length in the previous section of this document – to negate unnecessary duplication this will not be repeated but please reference the detail discussed previously. The NPPF and Code of Practice encourages site sharing and the efficient use of existing telecommunications infrastructure. However, within the defined search area, there are no existing base stations that are capable of being shared to provide this new service. Policy also advocates the use of buildings where possible. None of the rooftops in this search area were suitable and this is addressed in the sequential test and discounted options below. The latest 5G service is delivered via higher frequency radio. This higher frequency is fantastic in that it can deliver high speed data services required for modern applications, however, it has the negative in that higher frequency does not propagate as far as lower frequencies used in previous generations, nor do the radio waves propagate through 'clutter' as well meaning that signal is blocked easily. ICNIRP exclusion zone is also typically larger. This necessitates antennas to be hosted higher to ensure ICNIRP compliance, so the radio frequency can propagate as far as is possible to maximise coverage footprint and so that there is line of sight above 'clutter' that would block the signal propagation. All in all it is felt that that this proposed design strikes the best balance in terms of technical necessity to overcome technical constraints and minimising visual impact by keeping the height to an operational minimum, clearing surrounding clutter to assist radio propagation (which negates the need for additional sites in the area to pick up the shortfall if the antennas are low, which would be contrary to NPPF policy in terms of keeping numbers to a minimum) while being structurally secure, providing height so antennas can be of the necessary height for ICNIRP compliance and by utilising a colour finish (Grey) that will minimise contrast when viewed against the urban backdrop while leaving antennas grey so that they also blend with what is typically a grey sky backdrop which it will be typically seen against. In summary, this proposal represents the most efficient, least visually intrusive solution for delivering critical 4G improvements and new 5G coverage. It reflects a carefully considered approach to site selection, design, and environmental integration, and responds appropriately to both national planning guidance and the Operator's legal obligations to provide robust, modern communications infrastructure. **The technical constraints that dictate and inform this siting and design are discussed at length throughout Governments 'Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England' Planning Guidance document.**

4. Technical Information

ICNIRP Declaration attached	**Yes**	

ICNIRP public compliance is determined by mathematical calculation and implemented by careful location of antennas, access restrictions and/or barriers and signage as necessary. Members of the public cannot unknowingly enter areas close to the antennas where exposure may exceed the relevant guidelines. When determining compliance the emissions from all mobile phone network operators on the site are taken into account.		

5. Technical Justification

Reason(s) why site required
In the UK, mobile network operators (MNOs) such as EE, VodafoneThree and VMO2 operate under a regulatory framework primarily controlled by Ofcom on behalf of UK Government. Their obligations arise from two main legal mechanisms: ○ Wireless Telegraphy Act spectrum licences (for use of radio frequencies). ○ General Conditions of Entitlement under the Communications Act 2003 (for provision of electronic communications networks/services). Through the Spectrum Licence Obligations (Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006) mobile operators require licences from Ofcom to use radio spectrum, which is essential for operating mobile networks. Key obligations typically include the use of allocated spectrum that must be used within specific frequency bands, power limits, emission standards and interference controls. These conditions ensure efficient spectrum use and prevent interference. These radio spectrums are governed by the laws of physics but one spectrum/frequency will have different principles to another. Each Network Operator is licenced to use different spectrum and this is why what may be suitable siting for one operator may not be suitable for another. This directly influences potential siting opportunities for masts. Perhaps most significantly, these licences are issued with coverage and network performance obligations. This will include things like roll-out or coverage requirements, minimum population coverage or geographic coverage requirements for rural areas. Obligations linked to specific technologies or generations like 5G. Operators must be provide data to Ofcom on network performance and demonstrate compliance with coverage and network performance milestones to demonstrate they have met their licence obligations. Additionally, under the General Conditions of Entitlement (Communications Regulation) any operator providing public electronic communications networks or services must comply with Ofcom's General Conditions.

This means that, amongst other things, an Operator must enable and maintain network integrity and resilience, and ensure access to emergency services.

If an Operator does not comply with these requirements then Ofcom, on behalf of UK Government, can issue substantial fines, withdraw spectrum or even cancel an Operators licence.

This is relevant to the proposal because...

1. The spectrum allocated, and the physics associated, directly impacts the siting options for the Operators.

2. The Operators must find a means of providing this service locally through the siting of a mast. While Operators will obviously want to provide the best service they can to their Customers, it goes beyond this in there is an actual legal obligation to provide this area with the most up to date 5G service with sufficient coverage and capacity to deliver quality network performance.

The NPPF then requires that operators find the least impactful means of providing that service, minimising the impact while acknowledging the technical constraints. The proposal is permitted development (albeit 'with prior approval') so the principle of the development is established in law via Part 16 of the GPDO. This is an important distinction as under permitted development a solution must be found as consideration cannot be given to the principle, only that the proposal is the most suitable option in terms of siting and appearance.

Under the terms of its licence with UK Government (controlled via Ofcom on Governments behalf), Virgin Media O2 Limited (VMO2) are required to meet strict service obligations, ensuring that the benefits of mobile connectivity are extended to all communities, including those currently underserved.

This installation is required to provide improved 4G coverage and brand new 5G coverage for VM02 on Wilbraham Road addressing existing gaps in service, additional capacity and improving overall network performance in the locality.

This area of Manchester has limited VM02 5G coverage with poor network performance and, as alluded to previously, requires an additional site to deliver improved service and extra network capacity.

Mobile base stations operate by transmitting radio signals that connect mobile devices to the wider network, allowing users to make calls, send texts, stream content, and access data services. These base stations are linked together—via fibre or wireless links—to form an interconnected network. Each base station serves a defined area known as a cell, and these cells overlap with adjacent ones to create seamless coverage. The size and shape of each cell can vary depending on local conditions, such as topography, building density, and user demand.

As low-powered radio transmitters, base stations have a limited effective range and must be located within or close to the areas they are designed to serve. Proposing this installation too far

from the intended coverage area will leave parts of the target service area without essential mobile services. For this reason, the proposed location has been carefully selected to ensure the required coverage objectives can be achieved efficiently and effectively.

6. Site Selection Process – alternative sites considered and not chosen

Discounted Options

In seeking to meet growing network demand in the Wilbraham Road area of Fallowfield, the Operator's acquisition and survey agents have made every effort to identify a site that minimises any potential impact on the character of the area. However, in order to effectively deliver improved mobile services, it is essential that the communications site is located as close as possible to the area of customer demand.

In line with the sequential site selection process outlined in best practice guidance, the following criteria were followed when identifying a suitable location:

a) *Mast and Site Sharing*
b) *Use of Existing Buildings or Structures*
c) *New Ground-Based Installation*

As required by the Operator's licence and consistent with national planning guidance, the first preference was to utilise existing telecommunications infrastructure where it represented the most environmentally sensitive solution. The Ofcom Site Finder register was consulted to identify potential mast-sharing opportunities.

As no other suitable existing telecommunications sites were identified that could accommodate the extent of equipment required for this proposal, a new installation is required. There are no existing buildings that can be used due to procedural issues.

The local urban environment presented further constraints. Underground services litter the area underground that we cannot site on top of. Others were unsuitable for installations for visual amenity reasons.

The proposal negates these potential impacts and so is the best, technically viable, option in the area. With this it complies with planning policy and guidance in terms of minimising visual impact.

A detailed list of alternative sites considered is provided below, with reasons for their exclusion in favour of the proposed site.

The search area is quite small as 5G doesn't travel far and we must be close to the existing site that the operator is leaving.



Pindrop Key: **Green** = Selected Site **Red** = Discounted Option
Redline = Search Area

Site	Address	Easting	Northing	Reason for Discounting
D1 - Streetworks	Langley Road	**385599**	**394282**	This location was discounted having regard to the recent appeal dismissal of a Cornerstone telecommunications proposal at Langley Road (Planning Ref. 144951/TEL/2026) in March 2026. In that case, Manchester City Council raised concerns that the proposed installation, by reason of its height, siting and appearance, would constitute a visually intrusive and dominant feature, with particular concerns relating to the street scene, the setting of the non-designated heritage asset at Oakley, 188 Wilmslow Road, and the amenity value of an adjacent Copper Beech tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The appeal was subsequently dismissed. Given the proximity of

				this previous decision and the similarity in terms of telecommunications infrastructure, this location was considered to present an increased planning risk in respect of visual amenity, townscape and heritage considerations. The site was therefore discounted in favour of the selected location, which provides a more appropriate context for the proposed infrastructure and reduces the potential for comparable visual and heritage impacts. The Council's decision specifically identified the installation's height, siting and appearance as contributing to its visual prominence, so I would retain those three factors in the discounting rationale rather than simply saying the site was discounted because of the previous refusal. The appeal decision itself could not be independently retrieved from the Council's portal just now, so the wording above relies on the decision reasons you provided.
D2 - Rooftop	Mosborough Road	**385562**	**393986**	This existing Unwind rooftop location was discounted due to its position directly opposite a Listed Church, which creates a particularly sensitive heritage context for any additional telecommunications apparatus. The existing installation benefits from GRP shrouding, which helps to reduce the visual prominence of the equipment; however, the introduction of the proposed new-generation 4G/5G equipment would require the antennas to remain unshrouded to ensure their effective operation. In particular, higher-frequency 5G signals can be adversely affected by GRP enclosure, while shrouding can also increase wind loading and the structural requirements of the supporting arrangement. Given the direct relationship with the Listed Church, retaining or extending the existing

				shrouded arrangement would therefore not provide a technically feasible solution, whilst an unshrouded arrangement would introduce additional visual equipment within a sensitive heritage setting. The rooftop was consequently discounted as it could not accommodate the required new equipment in a manner that appropriately balances the technical requirements of the network with the need to minimise potential impacts upon the setting and visual appreciation of the adjacent Listed Church.
D3 - Greenfield	Mosborough Road	**385443**	**393998**	This location was investigated as a potential alternative; however, the landlord/site owner subsequently declined to proceed with the proposal, meaning that the necessary agreement to utilise the site could not be secured. Access to privately owned land or buildings for telecommunications infrastructure requires the agreement of the relevant site provider, typically through an appropriate lease, wayleave or other access arrangement. As the landlord was unwilling to progress the proposal, the location could not be taken forward as a deliverable option, irrespective of its potential technical suitability. The site was therefore discounted from further consideration and the search continued for an alternative location where the necessary landowner agreement could be obtained and the required telecommunications infrastructure could be delivered. This approach is consistent with the need to identify and evidence realistic alternative sites as part of the telecommunications site-selection process.
D4 - Greenfield	Wellington Road	**385359**	**394005**	This location was investigated as a potential alternative; however, despite several attempts to contact the landlord/site owner and

				correspondence being issued on multiple occasions, no response was received. As a result, it was not possible to establish whether the landlord was willing to engage with the proposal or to secure the necessary agreement to progress the site. Given the absence of any response following repeated correspondence, the location could not be considered a deliverable option within the required timescales for the network deployment. The site was therefore discounted from further consideration and the search continued for an alternative location where a willing landowner could be identified and the necessary arrangements for the installation could be progressed.
D5 - Greenfield	Wellington Road	**385465**	**394013**	This location was investigated as a potential alternative; however, despite several attempts to contact the landlord/site owner and correspondence being issued on multiple occasions, no response was received. As a result, it was not possible to establish whether the landlord was willing to engage with the proposal or to secure the necessary agreement to progress the site. Given the absence of any response following repeated correspondence, the location could not be considered a deliverable option within the required timescales for the network deployment. The site was therefore discounted from further consideration and the search continued for an alternative location where a willing landowner could be identified and the necessary arrangements for the installation could be progressed.
D6 - Streetworks	Wellington Road	**385338**	**394033**	This location was discounted as the available pavement is already constrained by existing street furniture and other highway

				infrastructure, leaving insufficient space to accommodate a new telecommunications installation without creating additional obstruction within the public realm. The limited available footway width would make the siting of a new streetpole and associated equipment difficult to achieve while maintaining appropriate pedestrian movement and accessibility. The site was therefore discounted in favour of a location with greater available pavement capacity.
D7 - Streetworks	Wellington Road	**385257**	**394044**	The location was considered as part of the site search but was discounted due to the restricted capacity of the existing pavement. Existing highway features and street furniture already occupy a significant proportion of the available footway, meaning that the introduction of a new telecommunications streetpole and associated equipment would further reduce usable pedestrian space. A more suitable alternative was therefore sought where the required infrastructure could be accommodated without placing undue pressure on the existing footway.
D8 - Streetworks	Rodmill Court	**385113**	**394080**	This option was discounted because the pavement at this location is considered to be at or close to its practical capacity. The constrained footway, together with existing highway infrastructure and street furniture, provides limited scope for the introduction of additional telecommunications apparatus. Installing a new streetpole at this location could result in an unacceptable restriction of the pedestrian environment and would provide limited flexibility for accommodating the associated equipment. The location was consequently discounted in favour of a site offering a more appropriate highway environment.

D9 - Streetworks	Landcross Road	**385529**	**394084**	This location was discounted due to its position within a predominantly residential area, where the proposed telecommunications installation would have a greater visual relationship with surrounding residential properties. The site also benefits from less established tree cover and a shorter separation distance from nearby properties than the selected location, providing fewer opportunities for natural screening. The selected site therefore offers a more appropriate setting, with greater separation from residential properties and additional vegetation capable of helping to soften views of the proposed infrastructure.
D10 - Streetworks	Cawdor Road	**385565**	**394183**	The option was discounted as it is located within a residential setting and has comparatively limited vegetation and screening between the potential installation and surrounding properties. The reduced separation distance would increase the potential for the proposed apparatus to be visible from nearby residential receptors. In comparison, the selected site provides greater separation and a stronger degree of existing tree cover, helping to reduce the visual prominence of the installation and its relationship with neighbouring residential properties.

If no alternative site options have been investigated, please explain why:

N/A

7. Additional Relevant Information

Environmental information:

This proposal is not sited within any environmental designations.

Land use planning designations:

The site is located in the settlement limit.

There are no other relevant designations.

Additional relevant information (include planning policy and material considerations):

From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that any alteration to the landscape (regardless of its function as telecommunications infrastructure) will inevitably be noticeable to nearby residents and frequent passers-by. However, visibility alone, or the siting and appearance of a development, does not inherently equate to significant or unacceptable harm.

When assessing the suitability of telecommunications development proposals, it is essential that decision-makers prioritise telecommunications-specific planning policy where such policy exists and balances the need and socio-economic benefits against perceived, or identified, harm.

In the absence of up-to-date or locally relevant guidance, the provisions of the NPPF must take precedence. It is also important to recognise that it would be unreasonable to expect specialised infrastructure, such as telecommunications equipment, to fully conform to general planning policy criteria that are not tailored to its unique requirements.

Legislation

The proposal constitutes permitted development with prior approval.

This means that the proposal is deemed acceptable in principle via Part 16 of the GPDO. As such, the principle of the development is not in question – just an assessment on the acceptability of the proposal in terms of siting and appearance.

The Local Development plan can be given limited weight in the determination of an application for prior approval – it is certainly not a determinable factor.

The development plan does not have the statutory primacy it has for full planning applications. Relevant development plan policies can be material considerations, but they do not bind the decision maker and cannot be determinative - this proposal is actually permitted development where the principle of the development is accepted in law (even in designations such as public open space or green belt).

Local Policy

The adopted Manchester Local Development Plan Framework 2012, including the 2024 adopted Places for Everyone and supporting local planning policies, promote the delivery of modern digital and telecommunications infrastructure as an important component of sustainable economic growth, connectivity and urban regeneration. The planning framework recognises that high-quality digital infrastructure is essential to support businesses, residents, educational

institutions and emerging employment sectors, particularly within key growth corridors and areas of regeneration.

Planning policy generally supports telecommunications development where it:

- Improves digital connectivity and network coverage;
- Supports economic growth and investment;
- Is appropriately sited and designed to minimise visual impact;
- Makes use of existing urban infrastructure and developed land where possible;
- Avoids unacceptable impacts on visual amenity, heritage assets and public safety; and
- Integrates effectively within the existing character of the surrounding area.

Saved UDP Policy DC17 – Telecommunications

Policy DC17 states that telecommunications development will normally be permitted provided that there is no unacceptable impact on visual amenity, residential amenity or environmentally sensitive locations. The policy recognises the need to balance the operational requirements of telecommunications networks against potential planning impacts and seeks to ensure that installations are appropriately sited and designed.

The proposal has been specifically developed to accord with the objectives of Policy DC17. The selected site occupies one of the few locations within the search area where telecommunications infrastructure can be associated with existing commercial development, highway infrastructure and established vertical features rather than being located directly within predominantly residential streets. The proposal also benefits from substantial mature tree cover and an existing commercial backdrop which assist in reducing visual prominence and integrating the installation into the wider streetscape.

A comprehensive sequential assessment has demonstrated that alternative locations would result in greater impacts upon residential amenity, visual amenity, pedestrian movement, operational requirements or streetscape character. Accordingly, the proposal minimises planning impacts to the greatest extent practicable whilst delivering essential telecommunications infrastructure and is therefore consistent with the objectives of Policy DC17.

Manchester Core Strategy

The proposal also aligns with the wider objectives of the Manchester Core Strategy. Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles) seeks to promote sustainable development and investment in infrastructure necessary to support economic growth and communities. Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) requires development to respond positively to local character and townscape, whilst ensuring that proposals are appropriately integrated into their surroundings.

The proposed installation has been carefully sited within an established urban environment adjacent to commercial development and existing infrastructure. Through its positioning, scale and relationship with surrounding built form and mature vegetation, the proposal responds

appropriately to its context whilst delivering infrastructure necessary to support modern digital connectivity.

Places for Everyone

Policy JP-C1 'An Integrated Network of the Joint Development Plan' supports the provision of strategic infrastructure across Greater Manchester and specifically identifies the importance of digital connectivity. The policy states that Greater Manchester will support measures including:

"Enabling the provision of high quality digital infrastructure."

The supporting text recognises the increasingly important role digital infrastructure plays in modern society, stating:

"Digital connections are increasingly important to every aspect of our lives, from socialising and shopping to learning, business and accessing essential services."

It further recognises that:

"Any truly global city will need to have widespread, affordable, reliable, secure and future-proofed digital infrastructure that provides a competitive edge for businesses and supports high-levels of social inclusion."

The supporting text concludes that:
"Improving digital infrastructure and ensuring that new development is connected to it is therefore a high priority."

Policy JP-C2 'Digital Connectivity' develops this objective further and states:
"We support the provision of affordable, high quality, digital infrastructure."

The policy specifically supports:
"Enabling the roll-out of latest generation mobile technology and full fibre to the premises connectivity, in a way that maximises coverage whilst protecting townscape quality and ensuring an ability to respond to updated/changing technology."

The proposal directly supports the objectives of Policies JP-C1 and JP-C2 through the provision of enhanced telecommunications infrastructure that will improve network coverage and capacity within South Manchester. The proposal will facilitate the continued evolution of digital communications technology and contribute towards the provision of modern, resilient and future-proofed digital infrastructure.

Importantly, the proposal has been directed towards one of the few locations within the search area where it can be associated with existing commercial development, highway infrastructure and established urban features rather than residential frontages. The site benefits from existing mature tree cover and surrounding street furniture which assist in integrating the proposal into the wider townscape and reducing visual prominence.

The submitted sequential assessment demonstrates that alternative locations would result in greater impacts upon residential amenity, visual amenity, pedestrian movement, operational requirements or streetscape character. Accordingly, the proposal accords with the objectives of Policies JP-C1 and JP-C2 by maximising digital connectivity whilst protecting townscape quality and minimising planning impacts to the greatest extent practicable.

The proposed streetworks pole on Wilbraham Road accords with the objectives of the adopted planning framework due to its location within a well-established mixed-use area characterised by significant existing infrastructure, transport activity and urban development within a well screened locale, both adjacent to and against the backdrop of mature tree cover. Wilbraham Road forms part of a carriageway containing a variety of trees and street furniture, lighting columns, signage, commercial premises and modern development, creating a visually active streetscape capable of accommodating telecommunications infrastructure without appearing incongruous.

The mixed character of the backdrop of the site provides a more robust townscape context than a predominantly residential environment, reducing the sensitivity of the location to additional infrastructure. The proposal would be viewed alongside existing highway, commercial and utility features and would therefore integrate with the established streetscene whilst supporting enhanced digital connectivity in the area.

Furthermore, the proposal would contribute towards the continued improvement of telecommunications coverage and network capacity in accordance with local and strategic objectives to strengthen Manchester's digital infrastructure and support economic activity. Given the developed commercial context of the proposals surrounding area, the absence of significant harm to the character of the area, and the operational need for enhanced connectivity, the proposed streetworks pole is considered to align with the aims of the adopted planning policy framework relating to telecommunications and digital infrastructure.

With all this considered the proposal supports the relevant local planning policy.

On review it is clear that the proposal meets all local policy requirements and this siting and design is well justified against policy and is certainly the most appropriate, least impactful, viable proposal.

Regional Policy and Strategy – Greater Manchester Combined Authority

World class Digital connectivity is a major strategic aim the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the GMCA have numerous strategic documents that add significant evidential weight to the material socio-economic benefits of mobile connectivity and the necessary infrastructure to provide it.

One of the 7 ‘Connected Workstreams’ of the **‘Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-35’** is Digitally Connected Places and People’.

This states:-

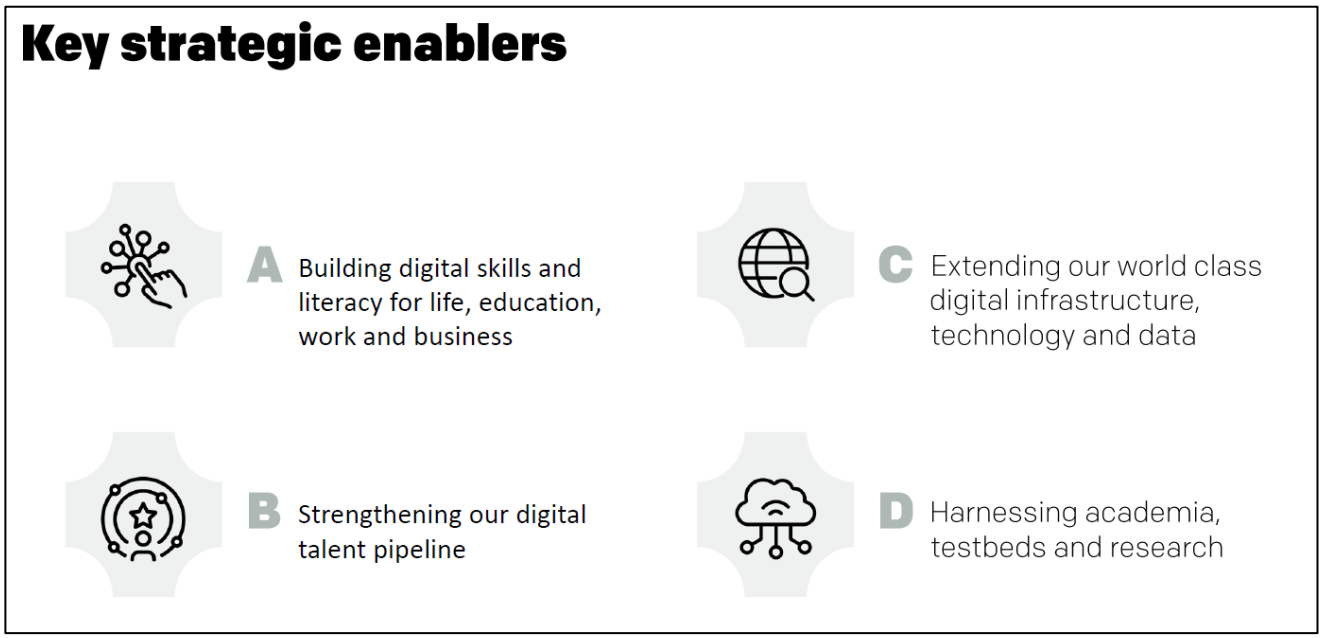
*"It's **essential** that everyone in our city region can thrive in the digital age – a new industrial revolution powered by artificial intelligence."*

The need for digital connectivity, provided by infrastructure like the proposal, is discussed consistently throughout this document as something that underpins all strategic aspirations of the city region.

Additionally, the **'Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint 2023-26'** adds further weight and context....

*"Ensure we have **world class digital infrastructure that stimulates economic growth** and enables the development of our growth zones, across sectors and localities."*

Extending the digital infrastructure such as the proposal is also noted as a 'Key Strategic Enabler':-



Finally, the '**Greater Manchester Industrial Strategy, June 2019'** adds additional support and context for the need for 5G enabling digital infrastructure as something that underpins the city regions wider economic aspirations. This aspiration is noted:-

"A top five city-region for the digital economy in Europe, with full fibre broadband and **5G coverage**, and with internationally-significant media and cyber-security clusters."
"The city-region now aims **to upgrade, integrate and future-proof its infrastructure, to create a 21st century city-region with extreme digital connectivity**, clean and inclusive growth and – through work with others – improved access to national and global markets."

*"Continue **transforming the digital connectivity of the city region to drive economic growth** and innovation, working with government to meet national targets of nationwide full fibre coverage by 2033 and **full roll-out of 5G technologies for most people by 2027**."*

There is clearly extensive weight of support for infrastruture like the proposal. This proposal is part of a network that wholly underpins these wider strategic and economic aspirations of both Manchester City Council and Greater Manchester.

Without infrastructure like the proposal those aspirations cannot be met and it is significant that no specific area is depreived of this while the rest of the city region benefits, creating a digital divide that will impact the locality.

This is particularly relevant to the proposal given it will provide network capacity to the nearby commercial and residential areas. This situation, in the context of those strategic documents and regional aspirations, weigh heavily in favour of the proposal.

National Digital Strategy, Planning Policy and Guidance:-

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England
In March 2022 UK Government published their 'Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England' Planning Guidance document.

The document notes that...

*"The aim of the Code of Practice is to **support the government's objective of delivering high quality wireless infrastructure** whilst balancing these needs with environmental considerations. It also has an important role in making sure that appropriate engagement takes place with local communities and other interested parties"*

This guidance document is clear that...

*"Digital connectivity is **vital to enable people to stay connected and businesses to grow. Fast, reliable digital connectivity can deliver economic, social and well-being benefits** for the whole of the UK.*

*As the demand for mobile data in the United Kingdom is increasing rapidly, it is important that **everyone has access to dependable and consistent mobile coverage** where they live, work and travel."*

The document clearly establishes the material socio-economic benefits of digital connectivity. However, from a really practical perspective, is also really useful in outlining the technical constraints associated with mobile infrastructure that dictate siting and design.

This application has gone into detail on the siting and design rationale of this proposal and this wholly aligns with the principles established within the Government guidance document. These technical constraints, and the solutions necessary to overcome them, are material considerations that should be given weight in favour of the proposal in any determination.

Paras 28 and 40 discuss how proposals should minimise impact through good design and utilise colours that minimise and reduce contrast – this is wholly the case here with the colouring of the mast – grey pole as it will be viewed against a streetscape and mostly grey skies and grey

antennas as they must clear buildings for radio propagation and will be seen against a typically grey sky.

All of these matters wholly align with the proposal. As such, the proposal wholly aligns with the Planning guidance for England provided by UK Government.

NPPF

First published in 2012 but updated as recently as August 2026 with a Government consultation just concluded, the NPPF is the central planning policy document for England. It sets out the government's expectations for how planning decisions should be made and how development should be delivered.

The golden thread of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in August 2026, establishes a supportive national policy framework for the delivery and improvement of electronic communications infrastructure across England. The Framework recognises the importance of reliable, high-quality digital connectivity in supporting economic growth, social inclusion and the efficient functioning of modern communities. For the proposed telecommunications streetpole on Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, the relevant considerations include Chapter 9, Supporting High Quality Communications, alongside Chapter 7, which addresses the role of sustainable transport and transport infrastructure in planning for well-connected and accessible places.

Policy CO1 – Proposals for Telecommunications Infrastructure

Policy CO1 establishes the principal decision-making framework for telecommunications development. It directs decision-makers to give substantial weight to the benefits of maintaining or improving network coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience. This is particularly relevant where new infrastructure is required to address deficiencies in existing mobile network provision or to accommodate growing demand for mobile data services.

The policy also establishes a preference for the use, upgrading or replacement of existing telecommunications masts, buildings and other structures, where reasonable opportunities exist. Where these options cannot adequately meet the technical requirements of the network, a new streetpole may provide a necessary alternative. Proposals must also minimise visual impact so far as practicable, having regard to operational requirements, and satisfy the relevant safeguards concerning ICNIRP compliance and interference with protected equipment and services.

The proposed streetpole would provide infrastructure to support improved mobile connectivity within the established urban area of Fallowfield. Reliable mobile coverage is important to residents, students, businesses and other users of the area, supporting everyday communications and access to digital services. Where the accompanying technical evidence demonstrates the need for additional capacity or improved coverage, these benefits should be afforded substantial weight under Policy CO1. The choice of a streetpole also provides an opportunity to integrate the equipment into the existing highway environment, rather than

introducing a larger freestanding telecommunications structure, subject to the final design and siting.

Policy CO2 – Supporting Information for Telecommunications Infrastructure Proposals
Policy CO2 sets out the supporting information expected for telecommunications proposals, including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order. Where a new site is proposed, the applicant should demonstrate that the number of new sites has been kept to a minimum and that the possibility of using existing buildings, masts or other structures has been explored. The policy also requires relevant pre-submission consultation information and evidence of compliance with ICNIRP guidelines and the applicable interference safeguards.

The planning submission should demonstrate that alternative locations and existing infrastructure have been investigated, explaining why these would not adequately meet the network's operational requirements. Any relevant consultation responses should be recorded, and the required ICNIRP self-certification provided. This would demonstrate that the proposed streetpole has been developed in accordance with the supporting information requirements of Policy CO2.

Chapter 7 – Building a Strong, Effective Economy
Chapter 7 of the August 2026 NPPF recognises the importance of enabling businesses to invest, expand and adapt, supporting long-term economic growth at both local and national levels. Policy E1 seeks to establish the conditions for sustainable economic growth and identifies inadequate infrastructure and services as potential barriers to investment. Although telecommunications infrastructure is addressed specifically by Chapter 9, Chapter 7 provides a wider economic context for understanding the importance of reliable digital connectivity to modern communities and businesses.

The proposed streetpole would contribute towards the provision of the digital infrastructure required to support economic activity in Fallowfield and the wider Manchester area. Reliable mobile connectivity assists local businesses with day-to-day operations, enables customers and employees to access digital services, and supports the increasingly connected nature of modern commercial and residential environments. By facilitating improved mobile network coverage and capacity, the proposal would help support the digital infrastructure on which contemporary economic activity depends. It is therefore consistent with the wider economic objectives of Chapter 7, particularly Policy E1, insofar as it helps address the need for effective supporting infrastructure.

Overall Planning Balance

The proposed streetpole on Wilbraham Road should be assessed principally against the telecommunications-specific requirements of Policies CO1 and CO2, with the wider economic benefits recognised under Chapter 7, particularly Policy E1.

The established urban character of Fallowfield provides an opportunity to integrate a suitably designed streetpole within the existing highway environment. Subject to evidence demonstrating the need for additional network infrastructure, the consideration of alternative sites, appropriate visual mitigation and compliance with the relevant technical safeguards, the proposal would

support the NPPF's objectives of expanding reliable telecommunications networks and enabling sustainable economic activity.

Taken together, Chapters 7 and 9 provide a clear policy context for the proposal: Chapter 9 establishes the specific requirements for telecommunications infrastructure, while Chapter 7 recognises the wider importance of effective infrastructure in supporting economic growth.

Other National Strategy and Policy

It is felt that it is unnecessary to quote all the relevant documents but it is appropriate to reference them as they clearly show the intent, rationale and of the Government in relation to development like the proposal...

- Wireless Infrastructure Strategy
- Planning and Infrastructure Bill
- 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy

It is also significant to note that, under commitments made within the 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy a consultation on a review of Part 16 of the GPDO has just been concluded – this is with a view to reduce restrictions on digital connectivity infrastructure to promote its delivery. An NPPF consultation which has also recently concluded is also expected to add even more policy support for digital communications.

Ministerial Statements

Written Ministerial Statement UIN HCWS867: Boosting growth by removing barriers to digital infrastructure deployment, made by the then Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms, Sir Chris Bryant (attached to this application) states:-

*"Digital infrastructure **underpins growth right across the economy**, and is also a powerful contributor to the economy in its own right, with the sector worth an estimated £50 billion to the UK. **It supports the adoption of new and emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence** and enables citizens to participate in modern life. In an increasingly online world, growth in data consumption and increased **demands on the UK's digital infrastructure mean there is an urgent need to support the sector in delivering greater connectivity for local communities and businesses.***

*We are committed to the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband and 5G networks, with the ultimate goal of enabling businesses, residents, and institutions to access seamless and reliable connectivity. **These efforts are essential to building a more competitive, equitable, and digitally connected nation**."*

This clearly articulates Government's commitment to removing planning barriers, accelerating deployment and recognising digital communications infrastructure as critical to economic growth.

Similarly, Statement UIN HCWS1325 by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for AI and Online Safety Kanishka Narayan makes clear that:

"Digital connectivity is at the foundation of our economy and society and underpins almost every part of daily life. The strength, security, and resilience of our digital infrastructure matters deeply to people, business and the economy in the UK."

Other Material Considerations – Appeals
It is wholly acknowledged that every proposal must be considered on its own merits and there is no such thing as precedent in Planning.

However, appeal decisions can be material considerations to decisions with similar characteristics and main matters. They are certainly material considerations that can be given significant weight in cases where procedural and principle matters are established.

A dominant procedural and principled feature in appeal decisions is that there is a need for balance and identifying the least impactful option. In many cases harm can be identified but that harm must be balanced against the material benefits, the technical constraints and the lack of a better viable option. When that appropriate Planning Balance occurs, especially in the context of prior approval where the principle of the development is established in law, then proposals are often deemed acceptable, on balance.

While harm associated with this proposal is minimal, significantly, it is clear that great effort and consideration has gone into identifying the technically viable siting and design with the least impact.

In that context some recent, procedural and principle establishing, appeal decisions in the Manchester City Council area have been referenced below. These procedural and 'in principle' matters are wholly relevant to the proposal:-

APP/P4605/W/25/3359736

"In conclusion, the siting and appearance of the proposed development would appear overly prominent and visually intrusive within the street scape. It would ***therefore result in harm to the character and appearance of the area due to its height and siting****. Additionally, it is for the same reasons that it would result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents regarding outlook."*

"The ***Framework recognises that high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being****. Consequently, it supports the expansion of electronic communications networks, including 5G.*

The appeal scheme would provide coverage in an area which has no effective coverage. The lack of coverage would likely lead to a lack of/or very poor call set up, dropped calls and no capacity leading to no service.

The ***appellant has provided a sequential approach to site selection*** *in which approximately 32 sites were assessed. Many of the sites have been discounted due to, amongst other things, inadequate pavement widths, the presence of underground services and/or overhead lines,*

closer proximity to dwellings and/or education facilities, greater visibility due to both a lack of natural screening and/or requirements of a taller mast due to lower typography, proximity to access points, reduction in parking provision and /or visibility splays, as well as practical requirements to ensure no competition between the proposed 5G coverage and existing 3G and 4G cell areas and to achieve International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) certification. ***Various buildings and structures were also considered as part of the sequential approach however these were likewise discounted for practical reasons.***

Given all of the above, in my judgement, it has ***been adequately demonstrated that there are likely to be no other appropriate sites****, including buildings and existing masts, than the appeal site. I therefore* ***attach significant weight in favour of the appeal as a consequence****.*

In conclusion, I consider the moderate ***harm*** *the installation would cause to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and living conditions of neighbouring residents regarding outlook would be* ***outweighed by the benefits*** *of a high-quality communications network facilitated by the proposed development and* ***the lack of any more suitable alternative sites to provide this benefit****."*

APP/P4605/W/24/3349032

"I have found that the proposed development, through its siting and appearance, ***would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area*** *for the reasons given above. The other options that might be available are therefore an important consideration.*

The ***Framework supports the development of a high-quality reliable communications infrastructure as this is deemed to be essential for economic growth and social well-being****. Nonetheless, it requires sites to be kept to a minimum and encourages the reuse and adaptation of existing base stations. Paragraph 122 of the Framework expects evidence to be submitted to justify all applications. For a new mast or base station this includes evidence that the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure has been explored.*

The proposal is required to provide 5G coverage. It has been demonstrated that ***the site is within an area with demonstrable need for an additional installation in the vicinity to achieve a full and appropriate level of coverage****. The coverage map has informed the appellant's search area for the new equipment and a sequential approach has been taken. In support of the application and now appeal, the* ***appellant has undertaken an assessment of 42 alternative sites within the defined search area required to provide coverage for the target area****. This included an assessment of several alternative sites that were identified by the Council.*

The appellant has supplied a number of reasons as to why these sites should be discounted from the search *including: concerns with upgrading the existing mast nearby, interference between masts, issues with the structural suitability and wind loading requirements of buildings in the search area and the impact the surrounding buildings and topography of the area would have upon signal transmissions. Certain sites were also discounted due to concerns with highway safety and the nearby railway line and underground services. Some sites were situated within residential areas or within parks close to trees that were covered by a Tree Preservation*

Order as well as concerns over the effect of the mast upon the character and appearance of the area which provided reasons to discount them.

Several of the alternative sites were located in the 'most' and 'more' sensitive locations as per the Guide. ***While the site is in a 'more sensitive location', the proposed equipment is required to be sited within the search area and the principal of such equipment is not in dispute****. Taking into* ***consideration the significant constraints identified for the alternative sites****; existing buildings, masts, and other structures have been explored and reasonably discounted. Furthermore, comprehensive, and reliable evidence has been given for discounting other possible ground-based mast sites.*

I conclude that the siting and appearance of the proposed installation ***would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. However, based on the evidence before me, it is unlikely that there is a more suitable site within the search area that may reasonably be available. Therefore, any identified harm is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed, taking into account the suitable alternatives****."*

APP/P4605/W/24/3357531

"As I have found that the ***proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that evidence of alternative sites is provided to justify the proposed development****. Where this is in relation to a new mast or base station, this evidence should include that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure.*

I have no reason to doubt that the cell ***search area is extremely contained****. On the basis of the evidence before me, I am* ***satisfied that the appellant has demonstrated that there is an identified need for the proposal to be located somewhere in the search area****.*

*The Council suggests that there are more suitable locations nearby. However****, the appellant has provided details of a number of alternative sites which were considered and discounted as part of the site selection process****, including detailed supporting information to fully corroborate that an exhaustive search of all possible sites was undertaken. These sites were discounted for a number of reasons including proximity to residential properties and other buildings, impact on visibility splays and proximity to underground services****. I am satisfied that there are no realistic opportunities to erect antennas on existing buildings, masts or other structures****. I consider that* ***the site selection process was robust and potential alternatives discounted on reasonable grounds and that the appellant has demonstrated that there are no clear alternatives which would be preferable. This carries significant weight in favour of the proposal.***

The ***proposal would support high-quality infrastructure, an approach which is supported by Chapter 10 of the Framework****. When* ***balancing this benefit against the harm identified in relation to the first main issue, I consider that the benefits of the proposal would outweigh the identified harm*** *to the character and appearance of the area."*

APP/P4605/W/25/3359873

"The southwest boundary of the Edgbaston ***Conservation Area (ECA) is located in close proximity to the appeal site and generally runs along Pritchatt's Road. Furthermore, the Grade II* Chamberlain Tower is located to the southwest of the appeal site*** *within the grounds of a Birmingham University campus. The proposed mast would be located within the setting of both, which I note is not in dispute. I have also had regard to the appellant's HIA which establishes the significance of both designated heritage assets and the potential impacts of the proposal."*

"The appeal site would be clearly visible in the setting of the ECA, most notably from the junction of Pritchatt's Road and Farquhar Road. I have already concluded that ***the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area****. The modern, utilitarian appearance of the most would be compounded by its height and appear incongruous in the area as a result.* ***This would harm the setting and thereby the contribution this makes to the significance of the ECA****. Moreover, section A.2(1)(c)(i) of part 16, class A of the GPDO states that permitted development of this type is subject to the condition that the siting and appearance of any development which is visible from a site which is article 2(3) land, as in this case, must ensure that the visual impact of the development on the site is minimised so far as practicable, taking into account the nature and purposes of the site. It is unclear as to what steps have been taken to minimise the impacts of the mast and its ancillary equipment in this instance."*

"Taken together, ***the proposal would cause harm withing the setting and thereby harm the significance of both the ECA and the listed tower****. I have therefore had regard to the provisions of paragraph 212 of the Framework which advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is of particular importance given the Grade II* listed status of the tower."*

"Insofar as they are material considerations, the proposal would be contrary to policies DM16 of the DPD, PG3 of the BDP and advice in the SPD. These seek to ensure telecommunications equipment would not have unacceptable harm on heritage assets and their setting, among other things."

"Heritage Balance
The GPDO is clear that the only considerations should be the siting and appearance of the proposal. In granting permission under Article 3(1) those benefits have effectively been acknowledged already. However, as per paragraph 215 of the Framework, ***the harm I have identified should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal****. I agree that the* ***harm would be less than substantial****, but worthy of great weight against the proposal."*

"The mast and its equipment would evidently improve 5G coverage in a small geographical area is part of a wider network, where the network may be undermined by gaps in coverage. Whilst only users of that particular operator would be using the service, ***these aspects are recognised as public benefits****."*

"The proposed development's ***public benefits, through enhanced digital communications networks, attract significant weight in favour of the scheme****. In recognising the great weight attached to the harm caused to designated heritage assets,* ***the Government places considerable importance on the benefits of economic growth and social well-being from the expansion of the nation's electronic communications network. On this occasion, I consider that the benefits would outweigh harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and its setting.****"*

"On the basis of the evidence before me, I see no reason to disagree with the appellant's site selection process and while the Council was frustrated at not having this information at application stage, it has had the opportunity to comment at appeal. Nothing substantive was forwarded on this matter in their appeal statement of case. I understand that the site is close to identified sensitive locations such as heritage assets and educational institutions. I have considered these matters. However, the evidence on balance shows that ***the lack of alternative options to deliver improved coverage and capacity within the required area is a consideration which weighs strongly in favour of the appeal****."*

"The siting and appearance of the proposal would ***result in some limited harm to the character and appearance of the area and to the setting of the ECA and a Grade II* listed building****. These attract significant weight against granting prior approval. However, in* ***the absence of a more suitable alternative site within the required area and the need for the installation, that harm would be outweighed by the benefits provided by the improved telecommunications coverage and capacity****. The proposal would therefore comply with the Framework when read as a whole with due regard to supporting high quality communications. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed, and that prior approval is granted."*

It is clear that the proposal, subject of this application, has significantly less heritage impact than the appeal example provided.

It is clear that this proposal complies with…

- Manchester Local Plan
- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 to 2039
- Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-35
- National Planning Policy (NPPF)
- National Planning Guidance (Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development)
- Wider national economic and digital aspirations and strategies
- Meets appropriate balance tests applied in appeal decisions

Planning Assessment

In accordance with Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order, this development is to be assessed primarily in terms of its siting and appearance.

While the provisions of the local development plan are not determinative, they remain material considerations where relevant to matters of design and visual impact. The key issues arising from this prior approval application are whether the proposed structure would appear visually intrusive or out of keeping with the character of the area, and whether any such impact would be outweighed by the substantial social and economic benefits associated with the deployment of 5G and the enhancement of next-generation digital infrastructure in the context of the technical constraints and lack of less impactful siting options.

Siting

As previously detailed, there is an urgent requirement to enhance mobile network coverage in the Wilbraham Road area. The siting of the installation has been carefully selected within a defined search area**,** ensuring the structure delivers the necessary coverage and capacity while avoiding duplication of infrastructure, in line with the NPPF policy and guidance on minimising mast proliferation**.**

It is important to acknowledge that it is rarely possible to introduce new telecommunications infrastructure into an area without some degree of visual impact. However, through sensitive siting and design**,** that impact has been minimised as far as practicable in this case.

The proposed location, set back on the pavement away from any throughflow will comfortably accommodate the proposal within this context would not create any unacceptable additional harm beyond what is there already. In fact, the nearby commercial premises, vertical street structures and lampposts provide screening and backdrop, which is directly advocated in local and national Planning Policy and Guidance.

Crucially however, the proposed development lies outside the direct line of sight of the nearest residential properties and utilising existing treelines, extensive vertical infrastructure and highly urbanised environment to assimilate to preserve amenity impacts.

Due to the careful siting, and surrounding land use, the proposal does not result in any unacceptable visual dominance or overlooking of sensitive receptors. Where visible it will create minimal material harm given the nature of the backdrop from any oblique views, the surrounding mature tree lines along approaching streets, of the siting adjacent to existing street furniture, vertical infrastructure and non-sensitive land use such as commercial buildings etc.

An extensive sequential site search was carried out and it has been robustly demonstrated that this is the only viable location in the search that will cause no significant impact to streetscene, residential amenity, and visual amenity. There are other technically viable locations, however, they would be significantly more impactful on the local area than the proposal.

Visual appearance & Design

The height of the pole is the minimum height required to provide high-quality 4G and 5G coverage to the intended target area while addressing the technical constraints alluded, and the need for ICNIRP compliance given the larger exclusion zones associated with 5G equipment.

This will be fleeting glimpses as people pass by. This minimal view, in the context of existing vertical infrastructure and extensive other street furniture, ensures there is no significant harm.

The design of the pole is done to minimise impact – a pole is the most suitable design for this particular area as a lattice or open headframe tower would appear incongruous.

The grey colouring will assimilate with the streetscape backdrop it will be set against. This will minimise contrast as advocated in local and national planning policy and guidance. The antennas will remain grey as they need to 'see over' the nearby buildings so grey will ensure they do not contrast from the typically grey sky it will be viewed against. The height is the lowest possible that will work and the cabinets will be painted fir green to blend with street level vegetation, maintaining a tidy and consolidated area. The proposal is set back as close to the verge so will cause no impact on pedestrian flow.

Regarding antenna design, it is technically essential that the latest 4G and 5G antennas remain unshrouded**.** Higher-frequency signals required for fast data transmission are unable to effectively propagate through materials such as Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP), which would be used in any shrouded enclosure. This limitation applies particularly to 5G but also affects advanced 4G antennas. Shrouding the antennas would compromise their performance, necessitating additional infrastructure elsewhere, again leading to a proliferation of masts. Shrouding would also act as a wind sail and add significantly greater windloading, necessitating a significantly more bulky structure than what is currently proposed. As an alternative to shrouding, banding is added between the antenna apertures to make the pole appear less cluttered and more streamlined.

In summary, the proposed design is the least visually intrusive whilst achieving the required level of continued coverage, providing brand new 5G coverage and capacity to the area (as well as improving the existing 4G coverage). As such the proposal development is sited and design to minimise the impact on the visual amenity, character and appearance of the surrounding areas. The structure makes the most of the existing setting and is the minimum possible height to be ICNIRP compliant, clear the urban clutter and for the antenna signal to reach the target coverage area.

As a result, the proposed development fully accords local and NPPF policy by striking a balance between visual and amenity concerns with the operators technical requirements.

Residential Amenity

Views from the nearest residential properties will be in the context of the mature tree cover, open space and commercial premises which form the proposal's backdrop, other utilitarian infrastructure and the significant treeline of approaching streets, all of which act to soften views or partially or completely screen them. With this in mind there will be minimal impact upon residential or visual amenity from the proposal.

The development will not result in any loss of privacy, nor will it emit any noise, odour, artificial light, or vibration that could impact residents. The cooling fans within the equipment cabinets only operate under high temperatures and are not audible beyond a few metres. Site visits for

maintenance are minimal and infrequent, generally once or twice per year with handheld tools only.

Given these considerations, the proposed installation would have absolute minimal impact on residential amenity, with no material harm to outlook, privacy, or noise conditions. The proposal therefore complies with both national and local planning objectives for protecting amenity.

Sequential Test and Lack of Alternative Options

This is a very defined search area. This is due to the limitations of 5G discussed throughout this document and the fact that the replacement site must be in reasonably close proximity to the site it is replacing to fit within the wider cell network – simply put, the higher frequency cannot travel far or through material as well and so sites must be directly where the demand is.

Great effort was made to identify a location that could deliver the necessary service while minimising impact.

There were 10 specifically located alternative options discounted in this very small and defined search area, and generalisations made about further alternatives across several surrounding streets. These were discounted due to impacts on visual amenity, pedestrian obstruction, impacts on residential amenity, ICNIRP challenges, underground services and/or the unsuitability of rooftop sites.

The proposal is the least impactful, technically viable, location in the area – it is sited in a highly commercialised and urbanised setting with significant existing street furniture with which it will assimilate.

The robust sequential test with numerous discounts, and through design consideration, confirm proposal is certainly the least impactful, viable, siting and design capable to delivering the necessary service uplift. With that in mind it the proposal meets the NPPF policy test related to 'minimising harm (while taking account of the technical considerations)'. This principle also aligns with the appeal decisions referenced above.

The proposal is permitted development (albeit 'with prior approval') so the principle of the development is established in law via Part 16 of the GPDO. This is an important distinction as under permitted development a solution must be found as consideration cannot be given to the principle, only that the proposal is the most suitable option in terms of siting and appearance.

This is significant in an area as constrained as this, especially when such careful consideration has been given to siting and design to minimise impact while remaining functional and addressing the technical constraints.

Given the robust sequential test applied, and the relevant principles, this proposal is acceptable in planning terms.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

To conclude, there is a well-documented gap in mobile phone coverage and capacity within the Wilbraham Road area of Manchester. The proposed development addresses this critical gap by delivering improved 4G coverage and brand-new 5G capability to the area.

The selected site borders a commercial area, and it avoids direct proximity to front facing residential properties and sensitive uses, while making optimal use of vertical street structures to minimise visual impact – as directly advocated in national and local planning policy and guidance.

A comprehensive site search and assessment of discounted alternatives has demonstrated that this is the most suitable and sustainable location available within the defined search area. All other considered options were ruled out due to visual sensitivity, impact upon residential amenity, impact upon streetscene or lack of structural capability. The site selected, set back as close to a grass verge away from any throughflow, is advocated and preferred.

The design is the lowest height it can be to attach the antennas at the necessary height to meet technical requirements of 5G. It is the most slimline it can be while being structurally capable while hosting antennas at height for radio propagation and ICNIRP compliance. It uses suitable colouring to minimise harm. All of these technical constraints align with principles noted and established in the UK Govt Planning Guidance – 'Code of Practice'.

The proposed development would not cause harm to heritage assets in the locality given the existing urbanised context of the site meaning the site will be congruous and additional harm will be minimised. This accords fully with the requirements of both local planning policy and the NPPF, particularly in relation to digital infrastructure provision and sustainable development. It meets the NPPF policy test to minimise harm (minimise, not invisibility) **while taking account of the technical constraints**, as noted in the Code of Practice.

The robust sequential test with numerous discounts, and through design consideration, confirm proposal is certainly the least impactful, viable, siting and design capable to delivering the necessary service uplift. With that in mind it wholly meets the necessary tests for an application for 'prior approval', where the principle of development is established in law via Part 16 of the GPDO.

In terms of Planning balance - any visual impact is considered minimal and localised. When that minimal and localised harm is weighed against the technical constraints, lack of favorable alternatives and public benefits of improved 4G and new 5G mobile connectivity, would not significantly or demonstrably outweigh the scheme's material socio-economic benefits and contribution to national, regional and local digital and economic objectives, as set out in the NPPF and other documents referenced. This ensures this is a wholly acceptable proposal in Planning terms.

For these reasons, the proposed telecommunications installation is considered wholly appropriate in planning terms and is respectfully submitted for the local planning authority's approval under the prior approval process.

Contact Details

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In the first instance, all correspondence should be directed to the agent.