

TRANSMISSION STATION, CAMP HILL, BALDWINS GATE
TELEFONICA & VODAFONE LTD

14/00507/TDET

The application is for a determination as to whether prior approval is required for the siting and appearance of an upgrade of existing telecommunications equipment involving the removal of 3 existing antennae and the installation of 6 new transmission antennae (measuring 1800mm in height), 2 transmission dishes (300mm in diameter) and ground equipment cabinet (measuring 800mm by 1200mm) to be installed within an existing cabin structure on the site. The overall height of the transmission station will remain unaltered (at just under 29 metres).

The proposal site lies within the open countryside and an Area of Landscape Maintenance (N19) as defined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

Unless a decision on this application is communicated to the developer by the 25th August 2014 the development will be able to proceed as proposed.

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) **Prior approval is not required, however**
(b) **Should the decision on (a) be that prior approval is required the recommendation is to PERMIT.**

Reason for Recommendation

The appearance and siting of the development would not have a significant impact upon the visual appearance of the surrounding landscape due to intervening woodland, land topography and also the scale of development involved. Therefore it is not considered prior approval for the development is required. Even if it were to be determined that the proposal does require the benefit of prior approval the development should proceed in the absence of any visual harm and also taking into account the weight given to proposals related to the expansion of the telecommunications network. The proposal accords with the requirements of the NPPF, policy T19 of the Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan as well as policy CSP1 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026.

Policies and Proposals in the approved development plan relevant to this decision:-

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026 (adopted 2009) (CSS)

CSP1: Design Quality

Newcastle Under Lyme Local Plan 2011(NLP)

Policy T19: Telecommunications Development – General Concerns
Policy T20: Telecommunications Development – Required Information
Policy N17: Landscape character – general considerations
Policy N19: Area of Landscape Maintenance

Other Material Considerations include:

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)
National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014)

Relevant Planning History

03/00902/FUL	Installation of 3 antennae and 1 dish on existing telecommunications tower together with ground level radio equipment	Permitted	2003
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00/00190/TDET	housing and ancillary development Installation of 1 x 0.6m microwave dish on existing mast	Permitted	2000
99/00253/TDET	Determination on whether telecommunications apparatus requires prior approval	Permitted	1999
99/00335/TDET	Erection of two 1.2m dishes on existing radio mast	Permitted	1999
99/00405/TDET	Determination on whether telecommunications apparatus requires prior approval	Permitted	1999
94/00838/TDET	Installation of telecommunications apparatus	Permitted	1994

Views of Consultees

Environmental Protection has no objections.

Maer and Aston Parish Council have until the 28 July to make comment. If no comments are received by that date it can be assumed the Parish Council has no objections to the development.

Representations

No letters of representation have been received.

Applicant/agent's submission

The agent has submitted a supporting statement in relation to the above proposal which is required in order to enable the expansion of the existing network capacity within the ST5 area.

The applicant has declared that the proposal conforms to International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Public Exposure Guidelines.

The full documents are available for inspection at the Guildhall and on the Council's website www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning/1400507TDET

KEY ISSUES

The application is for a determination as to whether prior approval is required for the siting and appearance of an upgrade of existing telecommunications equipment involving the removal of 3 existing antennae and the installation of 6 new transmission antennae (measuring 1800mm in height) 2 transmission dishes (300mm in diameter) and ground equipment cabinet (measuring 800mm by 1200mm) to be installed within an existing cabin structure on the site. The overall height of the transmission station will remain unaltered (at just under 29 metres). The site is located within an area of landscape maintenance (Policy N19).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 42 details that "*advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.*"

At paragraph 43 it goes on to state that LPAs should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband.

As such there is national policy support in principle for telecommunications development and this must be taken into consideration when reaching an initial decision on whether prior approval is required, and if so into the consideration as to whether prior approval should be granted.

Is prior approval is required?

Prior approval is only required where local planning authorities judge that a specific proposal is likely to have a *significant* impact on its surroundings.

The application is for the upgrade of existing telecommunications transmission station which is around 29 metres in height. The overall height of the structure will remain unaltered. The transmission station is located in the middle of dense woodland containing tall trees and is obscured from wider public vantage points outside of the woodland. Due to the surrounding woodland and topography restricting views of the transmission station there is no significant wider landscape impact involved here. Therefore the prior approval for the siting and appearance of the development is not deemed to be required. However, acknowledging that the decision of the Planning Committee may be that prior approval is required, this report will also address whether prior approval should be given.

Should prior approval be granted?

Policy T19 of the Local Plan supports proposals for telecommunications development that do not unacceptably harm the visual quality and character of sensitive areas and locations such as the countryside and do not adversely affect the amenity of nearby properties. Such development is also supported provided that there are no other alternative suitable sites available.

The main issue for consideration in the determination as to whether prior approval should be granted is the impact on the visual amenity of the area. The design of the development is functional and involves the best environmental solution available making use of an existing lattice structure which is well hidden. The harm to the landscape and visual amenity of the area is minimal. There is no conflict with any Development Plan or national policies therefore prior approval should be granted.

Background Papers

Planning File referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

24th July 2014