

The application is for a determination as to whether prior approval is required for the siting and appearance of a replacement of the existing 15m high monopole with a new 17.5 metre monopole accommodating antennas, transmission dishes and ancillary equipment.

The site lies within the rural area, the green belt and an area of landscape restoration as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

**Unless a decision on this application is communicated to the developer by the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014 the development will be able to proceed as proposed.**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**(a) Prior approval is required, and**

**(b) Should the decision on (a) be that prior approval is required the recommendation is to PERMIT.**

**Reason for Recommendation**

It is considered that the development in this instance requires the benefit of prior approval and in assessing its siting and design it is considered that the replacement structure would not harm the visual amenity of the area due to its acceptable height, design and location within the street scene. The proposal would also avoid the need for an additional structure of a similar size and design within the area to meet the network requirements and support the expansion of the communications network in this area. The proposal would therefore meet the guidance and requirements of the NPPF and it would also comply with 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 (adopted 2009) (CSS).

**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)

Policy CSP1: Design Quality

Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan 2011

Policy T19: Telecommunications Development – General Concerns  
Policy T20: Telecommunications Development – Required Information  
Policy S3: Development in the Green Belt  
Policy N17: Landscape character – general considerations  
Policy N21: Area of Landscape Restoration

**Other Material Considerations include:**

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014)

### Relevant Planning History

96/00711/TDET Permitted 1.11.1996 Determination on whether telecommunications apparatus requires prior approval within 28 days

02/00873/TDET Refused 13.12.2002 Replacement of existing telecommunications monopole with a 15m monopole, 3 additional antennae and equipment cabin and associated development

03/00839/TDET Permitted 14.10.2003 Replacement telecommunications pole, 6 antennae, 2 transmission dishes and ancillary development

### Representations

None received. Public consultation expires on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014, therefore any representations that are received will be reported to Planning Committee via a supplementary report.

### Views of consultees

**Audley Parish Council** has no objections and supports the application

The **Environmental Health Division** has not commented on the application.

### Applicant/agent's submission

The agent has submitted a supporting statement in relation to the proposal. A summary of the key points are as follows;

- The existing 15m high monopole will be removed and replaced with proposed 17.5m high monopole, and the existing 3 No. antennas will be removed and replaced with 6 No. antennas. The existing transmission dish is proposed to be relocated onto a new dish bracket along with 3 No. new 300mm transmission dishes.
- The existing Vodafone equipment cabin on concrete base measuring 2510 by 2895mm is to house the proposed equipment.
- The site is for Vodafone only, however the upgraded mast will fit into the wider 02/ VF site sharing network and thus this facility adheres to the site sharing policies of the Local Planning Authority and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The site is located within the open countryside and within the Green Belt
- The diameter of the shroud will be increased, however it is a minor increase which would not detract from the character of the area. The alternative would be the addition of a separate ground based column elsewhere in close proximity to the existing structure, which would have a greater visual impact.
- The site is required to provide enhanced coverage and capacity for Vodafone, which will improve coverage and capacity in the ST7 area of Audley.

The key points of The Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development (July 2013) has been summarised along with the key points of the NPPF, in particular section 5.

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

The full document is available for full inspection at the Guildhall and on the Council's website at [www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning/1400583TDET](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning/1400583TDET)

### **KEY ISSUES**

The application is for a determination as to whether prior approval is required for the siting and appearance of a 17.5 metre monopole to replace an existing 15 metre high monopole, and the installation of ancillary equipment.

The recently published 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 also in the consideration as to whether prior approval should be granted.

### **Is prior approval 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 replacement of an existing telecommunications monopole located in the rural area at Bignall End Cricket Club, with residential properties located nearby on Boon Hill.

Due to the location in the transition between the urban area and the open countryside and the proposed increase in height it is considered that that, in this case, prior approval is required for the siting and design of the proposal.

### **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 design of the proposals and the impact on the visual amenity of the area.

The existing structure is located at Bignall End Cricket Club, approximately 100 metres from Boon Hill Road.

The replacement mast would be 2.5 metres higher than the existing mast (overall height of 17.5m metres to the top). It would not involve mast sharing, however the applicant states that the mast would fit within the wider 02/ Vodafone site sharing network. The monopole would be slightly wider than it currently is, however this is considered a minor increase in width of the monopole which would not have a significant impact upon the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

The increase height of the replacement structure would result in it being marginally more prominent in the locality. The design is considered the optimum solution that would have the least amount of impact on the visual amenity of the area due to it being a mast share, it having a simple, slim design.

Proposed equipment will be housed inside the existing equipment cabin.

The proposal, whilst it is 2.5 metres higher than the existing, is not considered to result in a significant and harmful impact to the visual amenity of the area. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with local and national telecommunications policies and that prior approval should be granted.

### **Background Papers**

Planning File referred to  
Planning Documents referred to

### **Date report prepared**

26.8.14