

The proposal is for the installation of a new 15 metre high monopole supporting 6 no. antennas with a wraparound equipment cabinet at the base of the column, the installation of 3 no. new equipment cabinets, and ancillary development on Clayton Road to the front of the shops opposite the junction with Abbots Way. The new column would enable the provision of 5G coverage in the area.

The application site lies within the Urban Area of Newcastle as defined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

Unless a decision on this application is communicated to the developer by the 4th August 2020 the development will be able to proceed as proposed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) That prior approval is required, and

(b) That such prior approval is GRANTED

Reason for Recommendation

Given the amount of equipment proposed which would be clearly visible within the street scene, prior approval is required. Whilst the proposed monopole would be taller than the existing structure, it is not considered that the additional height of 2.5m would have a significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area. 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, prior approval should be granted.

KEY ISSUES

The application is for a determination as to whether prior approval is required for the installation of a new 15 metre high monopole supporting 6 no. antennas with a wraparound equipment cabinet at the base of the column, the installation of 3 no. new equipment cabinets, and ancillary development on Clayton Road to the front of the shops opposite the junction with Abbots Way. The new column would enable the provision of 5G coverage in the area.

The application site lies within the Urban Area of Newcastle as defined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The Council must initially decide whether prior approval is or is not required to the siting and appearance of the development and if prior approval is required go on to consider whether it 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 proposal comprises a new mast and a substantial amount of new equipment that would be clearly visible within the street scene. It is considered that prior approval is therefore required.

Should prior approval be granted?

Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions

should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.

Paragraph 113 states that the number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

Saved 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 proposal is for a 15m high monopole with a cabinet around its base and three other smaller cabinets. There is an existing 12.5m high monopole and ancillary equipment approximately 16m to the north of the proposed site. The intention is to eventually remove the existing mast but it would need to be retained for a short period to ensure that the most effective support for the network is provided. Mobile operators are currently experiencing an unprecedented demand on the mobile network due to homeworking during COVID 19 'lockdown' and more particularly the demand has shifted from city centres and places of work to residential and suburban areas. The change in usage has meant that a great many more connections are being made but also there has been a variation in the time of day that demand is required. The networks were originally designed to support the increased capacity and demand involved in a normal working day; that being commuting traffic, city centres and main transport routes, but this has fundamentally changed over recent months and it is considered that this change may well extend for a considerable period of time.

Consequently, the intention is to retain the existing monopole for a short period so that there is no break in network provision. The timescales involved are dependent upon available teams to complete the works, the integration of the new site and the operational requirement to maintain the network to its fullest capacity during this unprecedented period. It is not anticipated that it will be a long period of time but the priority is providing connectivity to all users without any chance of a loss in coverage. To do so will require the existing monopole to be retained for a short period. It is stated that to provide a specific timescale at present is not practical due to the current COVID-19 situation and the need to support communities, the emergency services, and individuals by operating an effective mobile service.

The proposed monopole would be taller than the existing structure but it is not considered that the additional height of 2.5m would have such a significantly greater impact on the visual amenity of the area to warrant a refusal. Although the retention of both monopoles for the long-term would be unacceptable on the grounds of impact on the character and appearance of the area, given the unprecedented circumstances, it is accepted that the retention of both structures for a temporary period until the new monopole is fully operational and operating on all parts of the spectrum, is acceptable.

It is not possible to impose conditions on the grant of prior approval but the General Permitted Development Order 2015 requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted application details. The applicant has therefore been asked to set out on the submitted plans and within the supporting documents that the existing monopole would be removed when the new monopole is fully operational and operating on all parts of the spectrum and therefore your Officer is satisfied that the necessary controls are in place as to retain the existing monopole would not be in accordance with the approved development.

In conclusion, it is considered that the siting and design of the proposed monopole and associated equipment is acceptable and that the proposal would meet the guidance and requirements of the NPPF.

APPENDIX

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

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy \(CSS\) 2006-2026](#)

Policy CSP1: Design Quality

[Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy T19: Telecommunications Development – General Concerns

Policy T20: Telecommunications Development – Required Information

Other Material Considerations include:

National Planning Policy

[National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2019)

[Planning Practice Guidance](#) (2014 as updated)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document](#) (2010)

Relevant Planning History

05/00334/TDET 12m high telecommunications monopole, antennae and associated equipment cabinets – Refused and allowed at appeal

15/00191/TDET Replacement of existing 12 metre high telecommunications monopole with 12.5 m high telecommunications monopole, antennae and associated equipment cabinets – Approved

Views of Consultees

The **Environmental Health Division** has no objections to this development on noise or health grounds.

Representations

One letter of representation has been received raising concerns regarding the height and visual impact of the mast and noise from some of the existing equipment.

Applicant/agent's submission

The applicant 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.

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

All of the application documents can be viewed on the Council's website using the following link: <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/20/00428/TDET>

Background Papers

Planning File referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

3rd July 2020