

The proposal is for the installation of a 20m high monopole, with three shrouded antennas and two dishes, associated equipment and retaining wall at land off Lowfield Drive.

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 3 June 2021 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. It is not considered that the proposed pole and associated equipment 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 20m high monopole, 3 no. shrouded antennas, 2 no. 0.3m dishes, 3 no. ground-based equipment cabinets and a retaining wall at land off Lowfield Drive. The purpose of this site is to provide improved mobile phone coverage for individuals utilising the rail services along this section of the West Coast Main Line, local residents, and the emergency services.

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 comprises a simple, functional slim-line monopole, coloured fir green. The application states that to be fit for purpose, the antennas must have a clear line of sight, so the site has been designed with the headframe peaking just over the canopy of the trees. The site is on land off Lowfield Drive which has an industrial setting between the railway line and the A500. There is an embankment immediately to the west of the site which slopes up approximately 8 metres to the A500. There are lamp posts within the streetscene and there are existing trees on the embankment which provide a good level of screening from the road and the retail park further to the west. Given the industrial context, it is not considered that the proposal would appear as an incongruous feature in the streetscene.

In line with the requirements of NPPF, there are no existing telecommunications installations for the operator to share, that would provide the necessary coverage to the target coverage area of railway line. Similarly, there are no buildings which are suitable and available that the operator could utilise to operate and host their equipment.

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

None

Views of Consultees

The **Highway Authority** has no objections to this proposal.

**Highways England** states that the proposal will require both Technical and Construction Approval to be confirmed before commencement. The pole may be within the fall-distance of the southbound A500 on-slip road and, although currently screened by trees and vegetation, could potentially reach the live carriageway in the event of a failure and fall in that direction. The site is at, or near to, the point at which the Etruria Valley Link Road (EVLRL) works (widened footway) tie-into the existing Lowfield Drive and the applicant should be advised to liaise with Stoke on Trent City Council's appointed scheme Designer/Contractor and Staffordshire County Council in terms of the proposed site construction plus any future access restrictions or traffic management.

Representations

None

Applicant/agent's submission

The applicant has submitted a Design, Access and Supporting Statement and 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/21/00377/TDET>

Background Papers

Planning File referred to

Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

11 May 2021