

The proposal is for the installation of a 20m street pole, with three shrouded antennas and two dishes, ground-based equipment cabinets and ancillary development at land at Chemical Lane, Stoke-on-Trent.

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. Whilst the proposed 'Phase 5' street pole would 20m tall, it is not considered that it 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 'Phase 5' street pole, 3 no. shrouded antennas, 2 no. 0.3m dishes, 3 no. ground-based equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto at land at Chemical Lane, Stoke-on-Trent. The purpose of this site is to provide improved mobile phone coverage for individuals utilising rail services along this section of the West Coast Main Line track as it passes through the north of Longbridge Hayes, Stoke-on-Trent towards Kidsgrove Railway Station and passes beneath Reginald Mitchell Way. It will also provide improved services for the surrounding area 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 proposed site location has been chosen in order to, as much as possible, 'overlook' any vegetation that lines the railway. There are existing tall trees situated in close proximity to the north of the site that would provide a degree of natural backdrop against which the proposal would be viewed against. This ensures that the proposed development would not be viewed as being visually incongruous within the streetscape setting to any significant degree.

The size and design has been chosen in order to minimise the visual impact of the proposal. The height of the mast has been calculated as the lowest capable of providing the required coverage.

In terms of siting, existing trees provide a good level of screening from the surrounding area. The lamp post lighting, railway line and nearby industrial setting do provide a strong industrial context against which the proposal would be viewed within. As a result, the proposed installation has been sited nearby to existing vertical elements of street furniture that have similar lines and will therefore not appear as an incongruent feature in this setting. The materials and colouring have been specified to merge with the local street scene and the site has been selected in a position where it would be viewed within the context of the infrastructure to which it would serve.

The proposed equipment cabinets and meter cabinet do not require planning permission, as they can be installed under the operators permitted development rights. The operator's equipment cabinets are similar to those of other statutory undertakers which are common place in urban areas including BT Openreach. Their limited height and scale will ensure that these cabinets will not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area and will be finished in fir green.

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.

The design of the monopole has been carefully considered. It is a simple, functional slim-line monopole, with the main column being split in to two sections. The lower section is wider than the upper section in order to safely support the antennas at the top of the column. The mast will be coloured fir green, which has been well established as the best colour for minimising impact upon urban streetscapes where there is surrounding vegetation against which the pole could be viewed against.

It is accepted that the height of the proposed installation is taller than other pieces of surrounding linear structures, but this in itself is not a valid reason to conclude that it is not appropriate at a specific location. Indeed, Inspectors at appeal have noted that by their very nature to be effective masts are required to be taller than surrounding structures.

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 Relevant.

[Views of Consultees](#)

The **Highway Authority** has no objections to this proposal subject to the imposition of a condition relating to development being sited in accordance with the proposed plans.

The **Environmental Health Division** has no objections to this proposal.

Network Rail have not provided comments at the time of writing the report, however the consultation period runs up until 25.05.2021. If comments are received after the report is published these will be noted within a supplementary report.

[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/21/00379/TDET>

[Background Papers](#)

Planning File referred to

Planning Documents referred to

[Date report prepared](#) - 11 May 2021