
ITEM	ANT/2007/7151	WARD Bidston and St James
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Location: South side of Beaufort Road junction of Buccleuch Street Birkenhead Wirral CH41 1HG

Proposal: Erection of a 11.7 metre high telecommunications mast with associated equipment cabinets

Applicant: T Mobile (UK) Ltd
c/o WHP Projects Ltd

Agent: WHP Projects Limited
St James Court
Wilderspool Causeway
Warrington
WA4 6QQ

Development Plan allocation and policies: Primarily Industrial Area,
PPG8 - Telecommunications:
Policy TEL1: Principles for Telecommunication
Policy TE1: Criteria for Telecommunications Development
Supplementary Planning Documents 1 - Designing for Development by Mobile Phone Operators

Planning History: None

Representations and consultations received: A site notice was displayed on a nearby lamppost near the site and one letter of notification sent to a property in the area. At the time of writing this report no objections had been received.

Director of Regeneration (Housing & Environmental Protection Division) - No objections. The applicant has provided certification that the installation complies with recognised emissions standards in the form of a 'Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines'. There are no grounds for refusal of the application on health grounds.

The Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management) comments that this proposal has no significant traffic management implications and therefore there are no objections to the application.

Directors comments: Proposal
The applicant intends to erect an 11.7 metre high telecommunications mast with associated equipment cabinets. The first cabinet would measure 1.3m (wide) x 0.6m (deep) x 1.3m (high), whilst the other measures 1.45m (wide) x 0.88m (deep) x 1.6m (high).

Principle of Development
The application is a prior approval notification of the applicant's intention to erect a mast and seeks the Local Planning Authority's approval for its siting and appearance only. The principle of the mast is permitted under Part 24 of the (General Permitted Development) Order, and as such the local planning authority cannot object to the principle of a mast.

Site and Surroundings
The site is located on Beaufort Road, near to the corner of Buccleuch Street, and is located within a Primarily Industrial Area. The surrounding area is mostly vacant land, where houses have been demolished previously. The majority of uses within the area are industrial, and the designation of the land within the area indicates that the vacant land is likely to be used for similar purposes.

There is a similar sized mast to the south east, located near to the junction of Beaufort Road and Lincoln Street. This does not have an adverse impact on the character of the area and is not particularly obtrusive on the street scene.

Policy Context
PPG8 gives national guidance on planning for telecommunications development including radio masts and towers, antennas of all kinds, radio equipment housing, public call boxes, cabinets, poles and overhead wires.

It should be noted that the Government's policy is to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The aim of telecommunications policy is to ensure that people have a choice as to who provides their telecommunications service, a wider range of services from which to choose and equitable access to the latest technologies as they become available.

TE1 (Principles for Telecommunication) TE1 (Criteria for Telecommunications Development) of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and (Supplementary Planning Document 1 (Designing for Development By Mobile Phone Operators).

The criteria outlined by the policies and associated guidance document require that proposals such as this should be assessed based on, the impact of the proposal on residential amenity through siting and external appearance, that it has been demonstrated the apparatus cannot be located on an existing building or that an existing mast cannot be shared.

Health Issues

The Government recognises that health considerations and public concern can, in principle, be material considerations when determining applications for planning permission or prior approval. National planning policy in PPG8, however, indicates that if base stations meet ICNIRP guidelines it should not be necessary for the Local Planning Authority to consider further the health aspects or concerns about them. The Local Planning Authority expects all applications for mobile telephone equipment to be accompanied by a certificate confirming that all proposed apparatus would be compliant with ICNIRP guidelines. The applicant has confirmed by the necessary certification that the emission levels from the proposed antennae will be in full compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. Consequently a refusal on these grounds could not be reasonably and robustly sustained.

Site Selection

Having regard to the coverage maps submitted with the application the mast is proposed in this location to most effectively provide for the built up areas of Bidston and Birkenhead and the surrounding area, where the operator has identified a clear deficiency in its present coverage.

The operator has demonstrated that they have considered other sites in the local area. Fourteen alternative sites were considered by the operator and these are listed below.

1. Beaufort Road (Site Share): The existing tower is not suitable for sharing and a taller, bulkier structure would be required, which would be detrimental to the area.
2. Cavendish MOT Centre (Site Share): The existing mast would have to be extended by 5 metres to share, which would be detrimental to the area, and there is a primary school nearby.
3. Stanley Road (Site Share): A housing development is now around the site, and the owners have also indicated that they will not allow further equipment.
4. Vauxhall Iron Works: Would be difficult to attach a rooftop scheme, although the site owners are unwilling to enter into discussions anyway.
5. New Dock Hotel: Yet to receive a reply from the owners, and is also close to a childrens play area.
6. Arriva Bus Depot: The site owners do not enter into discussions over masts, and the building is also too low.
7. River Street Sports & Social Club: The building is too low and unsuitable.
8. Gayda Industrial Park: The site owner is not interested in further masts due to potential redevelopment.
9. Iceland & Kwik Save: Neither chain enters into negotiations with telecommunication

operators

10. The Avenue Pub: This site is on the southern fringe of the search area and is unlikely to provide sufficient coverage.

11. Birkenhead Park RUFC: At the extremity of the search area and would need a 20m high mast to clear trees. Also, it is within a Conservation Area.

12. Cavendish MOT Centre: The anticipated coverage would not be reached, and it is also adjacent to a primary school.

13. United Utilities Depot: The presence of underground cabling meant that there were no suitable locations for the proposed equipment.

14. Birkenhead Dock West Float: This site is too far away from the main built-up area of Bidston.

Appearance and Amenity Issues

The design of the mast is fairly standard with a shroud on top of the monopole mast. The size and design of the mast is similar to numerous throughout the Wirral and it is not considered that this will have an adverse impact on the limited street scene within the area.

Although the mast will not be set against a backdrop of any kind, it is considered that the size and design of the mast will ensure that it does not appear as an obtrusive feature, nor will it add to street clutter in the area.

Highway Implications

The Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management) comments that this proposal has no significant traffic management implications and therefore there are no objections to the application.

Conclusion

In conclusion, having regard to the applicants operation requirements, together with all relevant national, regional and local planning policies and all other material planning considerations, the local planning authority considers that the siting of the proposed mast represents the least obtrusive option in the locality and having regard to its overall design and appearance, would have the least impact on the streetscene. It is therefore considered that the proposal satisfies the criteria set out in policies TEL1 and TE1 and SPD1 - Designing for Development by Mobile Phone Operators. It is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: **Approval to be granted on 23/11/2007 subject to no representations raising new matters being received after the date of the Committee**

Condition(s):

- 1 Prior Approval: standard commencement date.

Reason for conditions

- 1 Standard

Last Comments By: **22 November 2007**

56 Day Expires On: **13 December 2007**

Case Officer: **Mr N Williams**