

APPLICATION NUMBER: 24/01035/TELE

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

24/01035/TELE

CASE OFFICER

Aimee Bovaird

DETERMINATION DATE 08.12.2024 EXT OF TIME

Address: Middleton Cricket Club Towncroft Avenue Middleton M24 5DA

Proposal: Prior notification of the Installation of new 25m high lattice mast on new root foundation to accommodate 6 no. antennas and ancillary radio equipment and 2 no 0.3m dishes along with 6 no. equipment cabinets in a new fenced compound along with ancillary development thereto.

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	N/A

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N/A	Contrary to national policy?	N/A
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N/A	Contrary to previous decision?	N/A
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N/A	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N/A

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	Y

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N
-----	--	---

CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

SITE

The application site sits within Middleton Cricket Club, this site consists of the cricket pitch, car park, tennis courts and the sports pavilion. Trees and some vegetation are situated around the boundary of the site. The site is accessed off Hollin Lane.

This site is located within Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, this is a designated heritage asset. South east of the site is two grade II listed buildings nos 51 and 53 Rochdale Road. South of the site is Arkholme House by Edgar Wood, this is a grade II listed building. Also south of the site lies two grade II listed buildings nos 37 and 39 Rochdale Road

The site is located in a predominantly residential area.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks prior approval for the installation of new 25m high lattice mast on new root foundation to accommodate 6 no. antennas and ancillary radio equipment and 2 no 0.3m dishes along with 6 no. equipment cabinets in a new fenced compound along with ancillary development thereto.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended).

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone

JP-S1 Sustainable Development
JP-C2 Digital Connectivity

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place
P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3 Improving design of new development
DM1 General Development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

N/A

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

No objections

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date

Conservation And Design

No comments received to date

“The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets, through inappropriate development within its setting. This should be balanced against any public benefits arising from the proposal.”

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification and a site notice was displayed in the vicinity.

Twelve objections have been received and raised the following concerns:

- The mast will be an eyesore and does not fit in with the surrounding area
- Negative impact on wildlife
- Increase risk of accidents
- The mast will devalue properties in the area
- Health concerns

ANALYSIS

Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) states that development consisting of the installation, alteration or replacement of electronic communications apparatus (other than on a building) is not permitted by Class A(a) if –

- (a) in the case of the installation of electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast), the apparatus, excluding any antenna, would exceed a height of 15 metres above ground level;
- (b) in the case of the alteration or replacement of electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast) that is already installed, the apparatus, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the height of the existing apparatus or a height of 15 metres above ground level, whichever is the greater;
- (c) in the case of the installation of a mast, the mast, excluding any antenna, would exceed a height of—
 - (i) 30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or
 - (ii) 25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or

- (d) in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast, the height of the mast, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the greater of the height of the existing mast or a height of—
 - (i) 30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or
 - (ii) 25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or
- (e) in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast—
 - (i) the mast is on any land which is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest; and
 - (ii) the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by more than one third.

The erection of a pole up to 25m in height on the highway to support electronic communications transmission apparatus with associated street cabinet would be development permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A.

The application is therefore for a determination whether the prior approval of the Council will be required as to the siting and appearance of the installation, as required under paragraph A.3 of the Order.

Siting and appearance

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF requires installations to be kept to a minimum and encourages the reuse of existing electronic communications infrastructure such as existing masts, buildings and other structures. Where new sites are required such as for new 5G networks, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

Policies P1, P2, P3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy are material considerations as they relate to issues of siting, appearance and heritage. In addition, Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the recently adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) are relevant given their aspirations to achieve high quality places and to conserve, sustain and enhance heritage assets and their settings. PfE Policy JP-C2 emphasises the ambition for Greater Manchester to become a digitally connected city region, however does explicitly set out that this should not come at the expense of townscape quality. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is also a material consideration, and this includes a section on supporting high quality communications. Paragraph 139 of the Framework is explicit in that development which is not well-designed should be refused.

The application site sits within Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. The proposed mast will be 25m high and is considered a substantial structure within the conservation area. The proposed development will tower over the immediate street furniture and rise above the existing buildings. The trees are 16m high and therefore will not mitigate the prominence and scale of the proposed development, the mast will be higher than the existing houses and sports pavilion. The headframe will be 2.2m wide, it is noted this is wider than the base of the mast however and will appear intrusive within the skyline as it is taller than its surroundings.

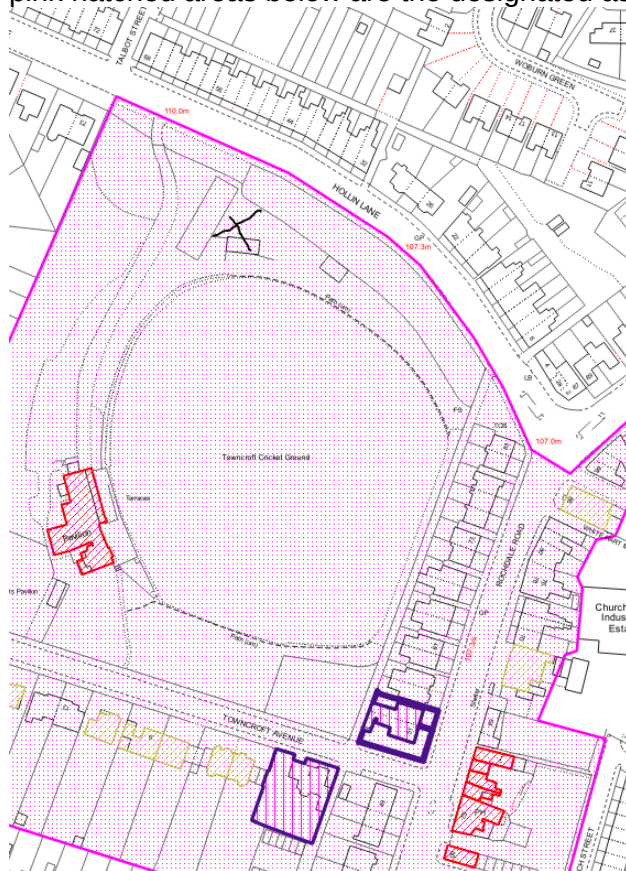
The proposed compound will have a 1.8m high galvanised fence around the base of the mast and further cabinets. This would introduce a hostile and uninviting feature which would harm the character and appearance of the area. Albeit, this harm is limited to localised areas around the base of the monopole, in this case it is the corner of the cricket club however this is used by the public and will be visible.

When considering the visual impact the proposed development will be highly visible from both directions on Hollin Lane. Hollin lane is highly residential and dwellings will have a view of the mast. The mast will also be highly visible from the designated listed buildings and it will be viewed in the context of the conservation area. In particular the proposed mast will be seen from grade II listed buidings, nos 51 and 53 Rochdale Road and Arkholme House. The proposed mast will also be seen fom dwellings either side of the cricket pitch.

Heritage

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

Grade II listed buildings nos 51 and 53 Rochdale Road are situated approx. 177m from the site and grade II listed building Arkholme House is approx. 190m from the proposed site. These buildings are by Edgar Wood are finished in red brick, the proposed mast will be visible from these designated asset. Figure 1 below shows the proximity of the site to the designated assets. The proposed site is marked X, the pink hatched areas below are the designated assets.



Slightly further south lies no 37-39 Rochdale Road, semi detached dwellings designated as grade II listed buildings. Due to the height and scale of the proposed

development there will be clear views from this designated asset of the proposed development.

The applicant has failed to consider the impact of the proposal on the setting and significance of the designated heritage asset. Such harm to heritage assets is not considered to be outweighed by the public benefit arising from the proposal.

The impact of the proposed development is a material consideration. Overall the proposed development comprises a wholly inappropriate form of development in a prominent location between heritage assets which will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets setting and the visual competition within the townscape which it would create contrary to Policy P2 of the adopted Core Strategy, PfE Policy JP-P2 and the NPPF. In accordance with paragraph 206 of the framework, any harm to the setting of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

Public Benefits

It is acknowledged the proposed development will result in some public benefits. Information submitted within the application sets out the public benefits will be access to a reliable mobile network.

As mentioned above the public benefit does not outweigh the harm to the heritage assets or negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Site Selection

The application sets out the need for an expansion of infrastructure as necessary for business development and meeting specific technical and operational requirements. No information has been provided on the extent of the coverage of the current network. An understanding of the broader network context is helpful to properly appreciate how a proposed mast fits into the network and to then be able to assess what alternatives have been investigated.

The application includes a Site Specific Supplementary Information, which details the site selection process providing details of alternative sites considered for development. No details have been provided in respect of the cell search area, or of the cell centre and other existing sites in the surrounding area, which would be useful in demonstrating the suitability of the site. A total of 8 alternative sites have been considered within this assessment, and have been discounted due to planning or physical constraints which discount the sites for development.

Concerns are also raised in respect of the robustness of the assessment of the chosen alternative sites as the supporting information for each supporting site is very limited; D1 is discounted due to it not being possible to utilise the existing structure. Sites D2 to D4 are discounted due to being surrounded by residential properties. Site D5 is discounted as there is an application under consideration for residential development. Sites D6 to D8 are discounted due to residential dwellings being in close proximity and limited screening.

It cannot conclusively be determined that the degree of harm arising from the installation of a monopole at these locations would give rise to additional harm over the proposals currently under consideration.

The LPA questions the target search area shown in section 5 of the Site Specific Supplementary Information, the chosen search area is highly constrained and wholly covering a dense blanket of residential housing leaving the chosen site within Middleton Cricket club as the "best option", being on the periphery. However the LPA are not satisfied that further alternative sites in this area have been fully explored, which, without prejudice to the outcome of a potential subsequent application, may have a lesser impact on the nearby residential housing. The search area could be realigned to find other alternative sites. In the view of the LPA, aside from within Middleton Cricket club which is still in a highly residential area and will be highly visible.

The effect of the siting and appearance of the proposal in the context of this location would be incongruous and visually intrusive feature, harmful to the character and appearance of the local area.

Conclusion

Within the context of paragraph 208 of the Framework, whilst it is acknowledged that the proposals would result in social and economic benefits through the improvements to local communications networks, it is not considered that the application suitably demonstrates that it would not be possible to achieve the desired coverage at a site which would be less harmful to the significance of designated heritage assets, and taken as a whole, would fail to comply with the requirements of paragraphs 119 to 121 of the NPPF. Prior approval for the siting and appearance is therefore required and the application is refused.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reason:

1. The site is located within Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area and in close proximity to a number of Heritage Assets. The proposed 25m high monopole by reason of its significant scale, siting and appearance, would fail to sit sympathetically with, and respond positively to, the Conservation Area and surrounding heritage assets. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to its significance. By reason of its siting and scale, the proposed monopole would also give rise to an unacceptable impact to the character and appearance of the area and would comprise a wholly inappropriate addition to the townscape. In addition, the proposals would set a dominant and incongruous feature in a prominent location. In the absence of a comprehensive assessment of alternative sites for the proposed development it is not possible to definitively conclude that there are no more suitable sites reasonably available that would result in a lesser degree of visual harm, and the public benefits of the proposal are not considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm identified. On this basis the application is contrary to Policies P1, P2, P3, and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-S4, JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-C2 of the

adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Notes for Applicant:

For the avoidance of doubt, this decision relates to the following plans:

Site Location Maps 100 Rev A
Proposed Site Plan 201 Rev C
Proposed Elevation 301 Rev C

Report Author Aimee Bovaird