

APPLICATION NUMBER: 25/00607/TELE

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO	CASE OFFICER	DATE
25/00607/TELE	Nick Brookman	28 th August 2025

DETERMINATION DATE

5th September 2025

Address: North Manchester Golf Club, Manchester Old Road, Middleton, M24 4PE

Proposal: Proposed installation of 30m high lattice tower, 6no antennas, 4no dishes, 1no equipment cabinet, 1no shared meter cabinet and ancillary development throughout.

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

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

RECOMMENDATION	Prior Approval Required and Granted
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: AC

DATE: 02.09.25

SITE

The application site is within the far north east corner of North Manchester Golf Club within a wooded area. Whilst the application site is located on the golf club, the site is located in the furthest north east corner of the site so much so the surrounding area to the north and east is residential comprising of dwellings off Fairfield Road, Wood Street, Littlehills Close, Harold Street and Hyde Square. The application site is within the defined urban area and a greenspace corridor. There are no heritage impacts or tree preservation orders affecting the application site

PROPOSAL

Proposed installation of 30m high lattice tower, 6no antennas, 4no dishes, 1no equipment cabinet, 1no shared meter cabinets and ancillary development throughout.

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

JP-P2 Heritage

JP-G7 Trees and Woodland

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

G6 Enhancing green infrastructure

G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

DM1 General Development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

PREAPP/00034/25 - The proposed development consists of a new 30m high lattice tower, 6no antennas, 4no dishes, 1no equipment cabinet, 1no shared meter cabinets and ancillary development throughout.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways and Engineering

No objection.

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No objection.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)

The GMEU commented that development will have direct impacts on a small area of woodland and will require the removal of several trees. However, the woodland is not considered to be a high value example of a broadleaved woodland and as such removal of a small parcel to facilitate construction of the telecoms tower would only be considered to have impacts at a small, site level scale only. None of the trees to be removed merit special protection. Notwithstanding the relatively small scale of impacts, compensation should nevertheless be provided for tree and woodland losses. This information should be required.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification letters delivered to residential dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site and a two site notices were displayed in close proximity to the site. One notice was posted on Fairfield Road and another posted on Harold Street.

A number of representations have been made raising the following concerns:

1. The application site is an unsuitable location.
2. The development would create noise problems.
3. The development would de-value properties.
4. Untested frequencies from the development will be dangerous to children at the school which is 150m away.
5. The development would significantly impact on local wildlife and their habitats.
6. Health risk to residents.
7. Amenity of residents would be diminished.
8. The development would be an eyesore

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 30m 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.

Procedural Point

The provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (GDPO 2015), under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A Paragraph A.3 (4) require the LPA to assess the proposed development solely on the basis of its siting and appearance, taking into account any representations received. The provisions of Schedule 2 above do not require regard to be had to the development plan, however regard has been made to those policies in the development plan and related guidance and the NPPF only in so far as they are material considerations relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

The main issues are:

- ☐ The effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation on the character and appearance of the area, and
- ☐ If any harm would occur, whether that is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed taking into account any suitable alternatives.

Section 10 of the NPPF, sets out the Government’s general policy position supporting high quality communications infrastructure. Paragraph 119 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*”.

Furthermore, paragraph 120 states, *“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.”*

Paragraph 122 at point c) talks about evidence that justifies development proposals. For a new mast evidence that existing buildings, masts and other structures have been considered alongside the ICNIRP certification on public exposure guidelines have been met.

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.

Siting and Appearance

As set out above, when it comes to assessing applications for prior approval such as this, the LPA are purely required to assess the proposed development solely on the basis of its siting and appearance. This assessment must however also take into account any representations received. The provisions of Schedule 2 above do not require regard to be had to the development plan, but Officers must have regard to those policies in the development plan and related guidance and the NPPF only in so far as they are material considerations relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

In this instance, as well as assessing the appearance and design of the development, it is considered that matters relevant to the siting of the proposed development would comprise of ecology, highways/access and noise/impacts on residential amenity. In making this assessment, the representations submitted against this application are recognised and considered throughout this assessment.

Appearance

Policies P1, P2, P3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy are material considerations as they relate to issues of siting, appearance and landscape. The application site sits within a mature and dense woodland which would provide an exceptionally strong buffer and screen to the proposed development. There would be a separation distance of approximately 40 metres between the proposed mast and the rear elevation of the properties on Littlehills Close to the east and 25 metres from the proposed mast to the nearest block of flats in the north.

It is acknowledged that the mast would be tall at 30m in height, however the use of a lattice structure provides good visual permeability, with this design creating a structure with a more lightweight appearance especially at the levels below the antennas. The lattice tower would sit within the context of the dense woodland with trees which are approximately 25-27.5m

high, that would significantly screen the proposed lattice tower and associated infrastructure. It is acknowledged that the lattice tower will sit higher than the surrounding trees and upper sections of the mast would be seen from the nearby residential properties, although, given the context of the surrounding landscape and fact that the intervening distance is such that overall, these factors contribute to significantly mitigating against its impact and presence.

The mast cannot be hidden entirely but its position and design relative to sensitive receptors seeks to reduce its visual impact. The submitted supporting information with this application explains that its height is due to operational requirements in which trees are known to block transmission and the height of the tower at 30 metres is the minimum height required to provide high quality 4G and 5G coverage. Nevertheless, it is considered that the existing trees will provide a significant degree of screening, particularly during the summer months. The surrounding landscape of the application site is demonstrated below, and these images support the view that the closest residential properties would likely not have a direct view of the lattice tower during the summer months given the height of the dense foliage and the fact that only the very top of the tower would be visible. As a result of this and given the angle / line of sight needed to view the proposed lattice tower, it is considered that the tower could only be seen from further afield. It is not considered that the proposed lattice tower would be directly or unacceptably visible from those properties on Littlehills Close that directly back onto the golf course.

The proposed compound at the foot of the tower will have a 1.8m high fence around the base of the mast and further cabinets in a 10 x 10m compound. This would introduce a new urbanising feature but one that again, would be significantly screened and set back from the highway and residential properties.

In townscape terms the headframe which contains the bulk of the antennae and other apparatus would punctuate the skyline and be more prominent than the existing tree line and neighbouring buildings. However, views of the upper section of the lattice tower would be marginally visible depending on where the receptor is positioned in the nearby area. Arguably this would be most keenly experienced by houses on Hyde Square with rear elevations facing north, some properties on Fairfield Road and properties on Lawnbank Close and possible Littlehills Close depending on the angle and orientation of the property.

Looking from east to west over the properties on Littlehills Close



Looking north to south over Fairfield Road



Overhead image (red circle is the approximate location of the site)



As such and as demonstrated above, the introduction of the installation would not create any visual clutter. The mast would be set back from the surrounding roads and properties and this will minimise its visual intrusion in the street scene. In the wider area, the visual impact is lessened given its siting within the heavily wooded environs well away from road frontages. In that sense there would be very low visual harm within the street scene. By reason of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation in the woodland, the proposed visual harm would be low to the character and appearance of the area.

As mentioned above, Policies P1, P2, P3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy are material considerations as they relate to issues of siting, appearance and landscape and it is considered that the proposed development is designed and located to be compliant with these policies.

Those policies amongst other things, collectively seek good design and to support the roll out of mobile technology whilst ensuring that new telecommunications development is of a high quality design which minimises the impact on visual amenity, character, and appearance of the surrounding area. The lattice tower and associated infrastructure are appropriately designed for their intended purpose and the development would not be conflict with paragraph 120 of the NPPF which requires equipment to be a sympathetic design and camouflaged where appropriate.

However, notwithstanding the above design/appearance considerations, whilst the development is not considered to create visual harm as a result of its siting and appearance, other policies in the development plan and related guidance and the NPPF only in so far as they are material considerations relevant to matters of siting and appearance have been considered and these are set out below.

Trees and Ecological Considerations

Whilst Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) does not specifically require an assessment on matters of biodiversity and ecology, however it does require an assessment on the siting of the proposed development and in this instance the development is located within an existing woodland and its siting would therefore directly impact upon existing trees and biodiversity.

To that effect, PfE Policy JP-G7 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity resources through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021), the NPPF and supporting guidance documents. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications and so the proposed development should achieve net gains for biodiversity via species enhancement as guided by the NPPF (paragraphs 187d and 192b) to achieve demonstrable net gain for biodiversity.

In this instance, the application is exempt from providing statutory BNG given that the development is effectively granted planning permission by a development order under Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

However, Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity. Core Strategy Policy G6 also requires any tree loss that is unavoidable should be compensated for on a 2:1 basis.

The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Method Statement, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a Tree Survey.

This supporting information confirms that a total of 5 individual trees and 1 partial group of shrubs will require removal to facilitate the proposed development. The individual trees required for removal comprise of 2 'U' value trees and 3 'C' value trees and the groups is valued at 'C' grade. Whilst the loss of 5 trees is regrettable and their removal is contrary to Core Strategy Policies G6 and G7 and PfE Policy JP-G7, the trees to be removed are either of 'U' valued or 'C' value. In addition, the GMEU have commented that the woodland is not considered to be a high value example of a broadleaved woodland and the removal of a small parcel of trees to facilitate construction of the telecoms tower would only be considered to have impacts at a small, site level scale only. None of the trees to be removed merit special protection.

In mitigating against the loss of trees the application is accompanied by a tree placement plan providing for a 2:1 replacement which satisfies to Core Strategy Policies G6 and G7 and PfE Policy JP-G7

It is also recognised that the development has been designed to limit the effect on existing biodiversity and adequate protection measures are proposed to safeguard all the retained vegetation as demonstrated in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement.

In this regard it is also understood that the Order does not provide any specific authority for imposing additional conditions beyond the deemed conditions for development by electronic communications code operators contained within it. However, the deemed conditions pertinent to Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted

Development) (England) Order 2015 as are applicable here, specifically requires development to be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the Council is satisfied that there is statutory control and an obligation by the applicant to adhere to the deemed conditions.

Noise

Lattice towers are passive structures with no moving parts and they do not emit any audible noise. The only potential source of sound may be the operation of cooling fans during periods of warmer weather but this would only be noticeable at close proximity to the mast within approximately 7 metres of the compound. The nearest residential receptors are located at least 25m away and there is the added benefit of the adjacent wooded area consisting of mature trees which will provide natural screening and mitigate against any negligible noise.

Environmental Health were consulted on this application and they have not raised any objection.

Highways and Pedestrian Safety

The Council's highway officer has reviewed the application and not raised any objections to the proposal. Planning Officers recognise that the introduction of the new telecommunications equipment would not hinder the right of passage for pedestrians or have any direct impact upon the operation of the highway network.

Health

The submission states that the installation has been designed to be fully compliant with the public exposure guidelines established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), with the supporting statement confirming that the installation would comply with ICNIRP legislation. As such it is not considered that there would be any health issues with the proposal.

Site Selection and Alternative Sites

The Council is aware of the economic and social benefits of providing and enhancing electronic communications infrastructure and 'levelling up' digital connectivity. The technical requirements of the mobile telecommunications equipment are clearly explained and justified in the documents that were submitted in support of the pre-application, this includes the need for the lattice tower to be of the height and design proposed, in the location it has been proposed and contains reference to eight other sites identified by the applicant. All of these sites were discounted for reasons explained within the submitted supporting information accompanying the planning application.

The search for alternative sites in order to achieve the desired outcome of the proposal appears sufficient and the reasons for discounting such sites appear justified. All other alternative sites would also have a much more significant impact on visual harm to the area but none would seem to pose a potential impact on biodiversity unlike the location and application site presented here.

Nevertheless, from the submitted alternative site / sequential assessment contained within the Covering Letter, it would be rational to conclude that there are no other suitable sites reasonably available that would result in a lesser degree of visual harm or harm to the amenity of nearby occupiers than the site presented here.

Out of all the sites reviewed, the proposed application site acts as the most appropriate site to deliver the necessary infrastructure save for the development being acceptable in all necessary aspects.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

The proposal would undoubtedly introduce significant benefits in providing 5G coverage in the area where there is a need for coverage and capacity, as supported by paragraph 119 of the Framework.

Owing to the benefit of the above site assessment, it is considered that the siting and appearance of the proposed development is acceptable and the recommendation is such that prior approved is required and granted.

RECOMMENDATION

Prior Approval Required and Granted.

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following:

- ☐ Site Location Plan Drawing No 100 Rev B
- ☐ Tree Lopping Plan Drawing No 200 Rev A
- ☐ Proposed Site Plan Drawing No 202 Rev D
- ☐ Proposed Site Elevation Plan Drawing No 301 Rev D
- ☐ Proposed Site Elevation Wood Street Drawing No 303 Rev B
- ☐ Proposed Site Elevation Fairfield Road Drawing No 305 Rev B
- ☐ Proposed Site Elevation Lawnbank Close Drawing No 307 Rev B
- ☐ Proposed Planting Scheme Plan Drawing No 203 Rev B
- ☐ Proposed Planting Strategy Reference EN-8585-02.2
- ☐ Construction Phase H&S Plan
- ☐ Arboricultural Method Statement Dated 10 June 2025

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and in compliance with Policies P1, P2, P3, G7 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G9 of PfE and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Report Author Nick Brookman