

Officer Report

Case Reference: NOT/2026/0330
Location: Rochdale Cricket, Lacrosse and Squash Club , Redbrook , Rochdale , OL11 5BX
Proposal: Prior notification of the installation of a new 25m monopole, mounted on 5.8m x 5.8m concrete foundation and associated ancillary works
Recommendation: Prior Approval Not Required
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application relates to a small section of the car park at Rochdale Cricket, Lacrosse and Squash Club, a multi-sports complex in the Spotland Bridge area of Rochdale, approximately 1km west of Rochdale Town Centre. The ownership boundary of the club spans approximately 5.5ha, covering two football pitches, a cricket pitch, clubhouse and ancillary facilities and car parking and access via Bridgefold Road to the north.

This application relates to a small area of land at the south-eastern end of the car park, adjacent to the footpath connecting Bridgefold Road in the North and Bury Road in the south.

PROPOSAL

Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) allows 'Development by or on behalf of an electronic communications code operator for the purpose of the operator's electronic communications network in, on, over or under land controlled by that operator or in accordance with the electronic communications code, consisting of-

- a. the installation, alteration or replacement of any electronic communications apparatus;
- b. the use of land in an emergency for a period not exceeding 6 months to station and operate moveable electronic communications apparatus required for the replacement of unserviceable electronic communications apparatus, including the provision of moveable structures on the land for the purposes of that use, or
- c. development ancillary to radio equipment housing.

Before beginning the development described in paragraph A.2(3) of the above Order, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development.

Paragraph 8 of A.3 (Prior Approval) states that the development must not begin before the occurrence of one of the following –

a) the receipt by the applicant from the local planning authority of a written notice of their determination that prior approval is not required;

b) where the local planning authority gives the applicant written notice that prior approval is required -

i. the giving of that approval to the applicant, in writing, within a period of 56 days beginning with the date on which the local planning authority received the application in accordance with sub-paragraph (5);

ii. the expiry of a period of 56 days beginning with the date on which the local planning authority received the application in accordance with sub-paragraph (5) without the local planning authority notifying the applicant, in writing, that such approval is given or refused; or

iii. the expiry of a period of 56 days beginning with the date on which the local planning authority received the application in accordance with sub-paragraph (5) without the local planning authority notifying the applicant, in writing, of their determination as to whether such prior approval is required.

The submitted application seeks prior approval for the installation of a 25m high monopole accommodating 6 no. antenna together with 2 no. equipment cabinets at the base and ancillary development thereto.

The applicant's supporting statement states that the location has been identified as being necessary for business development, meeting specific technical and operational requirements.

RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

21/01592/TELE: Prior notification for the installation of a 25m monopole supporting 6no. apertures and 4 no. dish antennae including associated ancillary development. **Prior Approval Not Required** (December 2021)

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Legislation

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

Places for Everyone (PfE):

JP-S1 Sustainable Development

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-C2 Digital Connectivity

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

P3 Improving design of new development

DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: 17.05.2026

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: 13.03.2026

ASSESSMENT

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) 25 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or

(ii) 20 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 mast, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced—

(i) exceed the greater of the height of the existing mast or a height of—

(aa) 25 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or

(bb) 20 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or

(ii) together with any antenna support structures on the mast, exceed the width of the existing mast and any antenna support structures on it by more than one third, at any given height.

The erection of a pole up to 25m in height away from 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 Design

Paragraph 120 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.

The adopted Rochdale Core Strategy does not contain any policies specific to telecommunications application given that the NPPF contains a clear expression of Government policy that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and in this respect there is encouragement to local planning authorities to support the expansion of electronic communication networks, including telecommunications. However, Policy DM1 states that proposals should be compatible with surrounding land uses and not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

While Policy JP-C2 of Places for Everyone emphasises the ambition for Greater Manchester to become a digitally connected city region, it is also clear that this ambition should not come at the expense of townscape quality.

In addition, Policy P1 of the Core Strategy requires high quality design in all new developments and Policy P3 requires new development to enhance the boroughs identity and sense of place by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general. The contents of these policies aligns with the contents of Paragraph 135 of the NPPF which states that planning decision should ensure that new development is visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

The application site is a small section of land within the corner of the car park of Rochdale Cricket, Lacrosse and Squash Club. The club is accessed along a 140m long access road from the end of Bridgefold Road, which itself supports no through traffic. The site includes a generous playing field area and vegetation buffer. The nearest public vantage points along Mellor Street are at least 130m from the siting of the proposed mast. Whilst the mast would

about an allotment site to the east, the quantity of users relative to those which would use the surrounding highway network would be few, and the majority of the mast would be obscured by black poplar trees which are of a comparable tall, slender form and overall height.

As such, opportunities to view the mast would typically be limited to those using the sports club, and in this context, would form a relatively minor addition that would not detract from the character of the site.

Whilst the overall scale of the mast and the obtrusiveness of the uncovered headframe cannot be understated, such development can be considered appropriate at this particular location, as the cricket club generally is characterised by long-range, open views through the site, which would be retained due to the siting of the mast at the perimeter of the site. Furthermore, as the mast would be sited away from the residential dwellings and lower forms of development which may serve to highlight the scale of the development, it is not considered that it would appear conspicuously out of scale.

Whilst the concerns of the Highways Authority are duly noted, it is acknowledged that the proposed development would occupy a similar location as the mast and associated development approved under application ref: 21/01592/TELE. The proposals would result in a negligible loss of car parking, and it was observed during a site visit that the area of the car park to be lost does not serve a particularly important operational function. Drivers would still be able to access the remaining spaces and there would appear to be adequate space for manoeuvring.

Lastly, the mast would not be unduly overbearing or unacceptably overshadow any surrounding land users.

Overall, the mast is considered to be appropriate within this context and would not be unduly harmful to the character or appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal would not be unduly harmful to the amenity of surrounding occupiers and would not be detrimental to public and highway safety. The siting of the proposed mast would therefore accord with the requirements of the Core Strategy, Places for Everyone and the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION: PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Env. Health – No comments received at time of writing.

Highways - *This prior notification does not seem to demonstrate how the proposed structure is intended to interact with the existing Car Park.*

This is a mixed use sports facility which will soon have the addition of a Padel facility also.

Whilst the structure will result in the loss a relatively small level of parking it also results in the loss of operational space within the Car Park. The applicant needs to demonstrate how the Car

park will continue to operate upon completion of the structure and all committed developments with all existing facilities remaining and all types of vehicles considered.

Until this information is provided, we cannot support these proposals.

Recommendation: Prior Approval Not Required

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

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- 002-A-Site Location Plan
- 002-B-Site Location Plan
- 150 Existing Elevation A
- 151 Existing Elevation B
- 215 Max Configuration Site Plan
- 265 Max Configuration Elevation A
- 266 Max Configuration Elevation B