



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Planning Committee
23 September 2021

Application Reference:	P1824.20
Location:	Land North End of Imperial Trading Estate
Ward:	Rainham & Wennington
Description:	Upgrade of existing base station consisting of replacement of 15m monopole supporting 3 no. antennas with 20m monopole supporting 6 no. antennas and other ancillary development.
Case Officer:	Cole Hodder
Reason for Report to Committee:	A Councillor call-in has been received.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The application has been called in by Councillor David Durant.

2 SUMMARY OF KEY REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The site is in commercial use and the proposed development comprises of the replacement of and upgrade to an existing telecommunications base station. The additional visual impacts over that of the existing situation are not regarded as being unacceptable and the proposals would not result in any harm to surrounding residential amenity. Accordingly there are not considered to be any grounds with which to withhold permission.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Committee resolve to GRANT planning permission subject to conditions to secure the following matters:

Conditions

1. Time Limit 3 years - Development must be commenced no later than three years from the date of this permission.

2. Accordance with plans - The development must not deviate from the approved plans.
3. Hours of construction - 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, and between 8.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays/Public Holidays.

4 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

4.1 Proposal

4.2 Permission is sought for works to upgrade an existing telecommunications base station to facilitate improved 4G coverage whilst making provision also for 5G coverage.

4.3 The works proposed consist of a replacement monopole to support 6no. antennas within the shroud at 20m overall height. The proposed monopole is to replace the existing 15m monopole (17.6m overall height to top of antennas) in situ currently which features 3no. antennas.

4.4 Aside from the proposed replacement mast, the other ancillary development would relate to the existing equipment at ground level which is within an existing cabinet and formal enclosure on a concrete base.

4.5 Site and Surroundings

4.6 The application site comprises of an existing telecommunications base station. Located at the north western corner of the trading estate there is an existing monopole, equipment cabinet and enclosure. The Imperial Trading Estate features a number of commercial units and is accordingly industrial in character and entirely hard-landscaped.

4.7 The north western corner of the site where the equipment is located borders Warwick Road which was redeveloped in 2012. The site is bordered almost exclusively by residential properties to the North, East and West through the redevelopment of those sites. To the immediate South on the opposing side of Lambs Lane North the land is designated Metropolitan Green Belt.

4.8 The application site itself is not within any area of specific designation.

5.0 Planning History

The following planning decisions are relevant to the application:

5.1 P1699.04 - Replacement of 15m telecommunication column with new 17.6m lattice tower & relocation of existing O2 equipment plus installation of three no.

3 antennas, no.3 dish, no.1 cabinets and an electric cabinet complete with ancillary feeder's and an extended fence and reinforced concrete base. – **REFUSED**

The proposal, by reason of the height and location of the proposed telecommunications tower, would result in a visually intrusive form of development, which is materially harmful to the visual amenity of the locality and contrary to Policies ENV1 and ENV12 of the Havering Unitary Development Plan.

6 LOCAL REPRESENTATION

6.1 A total of fifty-two neighbouring properties were notified about the application and invited to comment. In addition the application was advertised in the local press and a site notice was displayed adjacent to the site

6.2 No letters of representation have been received.

The following Councillors made representations:

Councillor David Durant

- Overdevelopment and close proximity to housing

6.3 The impacts of the development on local character and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers will be considered in the following sections of this report which will address the material planning considerations.

6.4 Environmental Health – No objection. Team reviewed the documentation submitted as part of the application and did not raise concerns over noise associated with the proposal. From experience, the risk of telecommunications equipment creating unacceptable levels of noise is considered very low, it was therefore not considered that any additional work from the applicant was required. In the event of a complaint in the future it would be processed under statutory nuisance legislation.

7 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the committee must consider are:

- Principle of development
- Design and appearance
- Impact on neighbouring amenity and;
- Implications for highways, pedestrian access and parking

7.2 Principle of development

Whilst it is accepted that the site has been the subject of an earlier application which was refused in 2004 due to the visual impacts at that time, the timing of this decision is such that it cannot be afforded significant weight in decision

making. In the intervening period from the decision being taken by the Council to refuse permission the policy landscape has changed significantly. The earlier decision made at the site was made well before the implementation of any current guidance.

- 7.3 With regards to current guidance at both local and national level the growth of telecommunications infrastructure is supported. It is recognised that the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. In addition to economic growth, advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is regarded as essential for social well-being. The National Planning Policy Framework requires fundamentally that 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.
- 7.4 Guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that Local Planning Authorities should aim to keep the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. Policy encourages that existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need for a new site has been justified. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.
- 7.5 In this instance, the proposed site is an existing telecommunications base station with an existing enclosure and monopole. The principle of telecommunications equipment is therefore established. Furthermore the reuse of the site and replacement of existing equipment is regarded as being compliant with the objectives of the NPPF. The NPPF states that applications for telecommunications development (including for prior approval under Part 16 of the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include:
- ** The outcome of consultations with organisations with an interest in the proposed development, in particular with the relevant body where a mast is to be installed near a school or college or within a statutory safeguarding zone surrounding an aerodrome or technical site; and
 - ** For an addition to an existing mast or base station, a statement that self certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission on non-ionising radiation protection guidelines
- 7.6 Officers are satisfied that the applicant has addressed the above including that appropriate consultations have been carried out prior to submission of the application with organisations with an interest in the proposals, in line with the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England.
- 7.7 Health considerations, including perceived fear of health risks can be regarded as material planning considerations. Government guidance states that when determining an application it is for the decision maker to consider how much weight to be afforded to such considerations. In the Government's view, if the

development meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for a local planning authority in processing a planning application to further consider health aspects and concerns. The applicant has confirmed that the development when operational would not exceed the International Commission on non-ionising radiation protection guidelines and a Certificate has been provided to that end.

7.8 Government advice states that local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

7.9 Mindful that the proposed development relates to an existing base station and that an ICNIRP certificate has been provided, the proposals are not considered to be objectionable in principle. The visual impacts and other amenity impacts remain to be considered.

7.10 **Design and appearance**

The use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) is encouraged by planning policy. 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. Policy DC64 of the Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document relates solely to telecommunications development and states that permission will only be granted where it does not result in an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This is reinforced by Policy DC61 which relates to urban design.

7.11 The site comprises of an established telecommunications base station that has been in situ for a number of years. It is sited within a commercial environment and whilst bordered by residential dwellings to the North, East and West can be regarded as forming an accepted part of the street-scape. The enclosure at ground level and associated monopole and shroud has for the most part preceded the redevelopment of the surrounding environment. In this instance, the operator has sought to replicate closely the visual appearance of the existing mast.

7.12 Whilst the development description indicates that the mast in situ presently is 15.0m in height the current overall height the top of the shroud/antennas is approximately 17.2m. The overall height of the replacement monopole at its highest point would be 20.0m as indicated on submitted drawings. Whilst it is noted that the width of the headframe and support pole would be increased by slightly over one third of the existing width and that this would likely be perceptible, on balance officers do not consider that this would translate to material harm. The overall height increase and increased width would be negligible in the opinion of officers.

- 7.13 Policies D4 (Good Design) and also Policy SI 6 (Digital Connectivity and Infrastructure) of the Mayor's London Plan 2021 are of relevance. Having regard to Policy SI 6 there are no specific design principles with regards to telecommunications infrastructure, only an objective to support the effective use of the public realm to accommodate well designed and suitably located mobile digital infrastructure. This along with Policy D4 are considered to be consistent with the Council's LDF as well as the NPPF.
- 7.14 Whilst it could be reasoned that the replacement monopole would in terms of its proportions, represent an increase over the existing, the overall visual impression is regarded as comparable. It is hard to reason that the siting of equipment in this location of the form shown would give rise to unacceptable harm to local character, particularly were this to be challenged through the appeals process. That the site is an existing base-station weighs heavily in favour of the proposed development.
- 7.15 As such the development is regarded as being compliant with policies DC61 and DC64 of the Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document. These policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development including telecommunications development does not have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development would also align with the aims and objectives of the Framework as outlined in the preceding section of this report and the London Plan 2021.
- 7.16 **Impact on amenity of surrounding residential properties**
It is not considered that the proposed development would harm neighbouring amenity. Whilst taller than the existing equipment and noted to be more pronounced in appearance it would be difficult to reason that there would be material loss of outlook or unacceptable harm to visual amenity for surrounding occupiers. There furthermore be no unacceptable loss of light, or level of overshadowing, mindful of the existing arrangement.
- 7.17 Consultation with the Council's Environmental Health team did not recommend any suggested conditions on noise grounds. The team concluded that the risk of telecommunications equipment creating unacceptable levels of noise was very low and no additional work from the applicant was required, or considered reasonable. In the event that a noise complaint was received in the future it would be considered against statutory nuisance legislation.
- 7.18 In respect of health issues a Certificate has been submitted with the application which confirms that the proposal complies with ICNIRP guidelines. Government guidance within the NPPF states that local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds and that they should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

7.19 The requirement for applications of this type is for the operator to provide a statement that self certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission on non-ionising radiation protection guidelines. In this case, an ICNIRP Certificate has been submitted. It is not therefore considered that there are any justifiable grounds to refuse the proposal on health grounds.

7.20 **Implications for highways, pedestrian access and parking**

There are no implications for highway safety. The proposals relate to an existing enclosure and there is no encroachment into other areas of the site beyond the existing defined base station.

8 Conclusion

8.1 The principle of telecommunications equipment in this location has been established through the presence of the existing base station and associated. National and local policy supports the reuse of existing sites

8.2 All other relevant policies and considerations have been taken into account. Planning permission should be granted for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION.