



Policy Context

Local Plan

The site is located in the Urban Fabric.

Policy D1 Design

NPPE

The paragraphs below are extracted from Chapter 10 'Supporting High Quality Communications' of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021):

114. 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. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).

115. 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.

116. Local planning authorities should not impose a ban on new electronic communications development in certain areas, impose blanket Article 4 directions over a wide area or a wide range of electronic communications development, or insist on minimum distances between new electronic communications development and existing development. They should ensure that:

a) they have evidence to demonstrate that electronic communications infrastructure is not expected to cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest; and

b) they have considered the possibility of the construction of new buildings or other structures interfering with broadcast and electronic communications services.

117. Applications for electronic communications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include:

a) 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, technical site or military explosives storage area; and

b) 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 guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection; or

c) for a new mast or base station, evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure and a statement that self-certifies that, when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met.

118. Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

Consultations

Highways – The proposed telecommunications equipment is intended to be positioned within the

footway along the eastern side of Neville Avenue. The footway is wide, having a general width of some 2.6m, and the equipment is proposed to be set back far enough so as not to impede any vehicular or pedestrian sight lines/visibility. It is noted that there is to effectively be a reduction in footway width as a result of installing the proposed monopole and cabinets/equipment. The 2.6m wide footway is to be reduced in width to 1.575m for a distance of 5.5m. However, this is above the 1.5m minimum width typically accepted under most circumstances to ensure a wheelchair user and a walking pedestrian can pass as per DfT's inclusive mobility document. As such, there are no objections from a highways point of view, the applicant should be aware however that any works would be subject to the relevant section 50 licences and contact should be made with the authorities Network Management team on streetworks@barnsley.gov.uk, to discuss this. Alternatively, further details are available on the BMBC website at www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/roads-travel-and-parking/road-licences

Ward Councillors – No comments

Representations

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour notifications; two comments were received raising the following points:

1. The site is located in an area which there are 3 parks located 0.2m from where the application has been submitted. It is questioned why these alternative sites cannot be used instead of installing the development in a housing area which would impact domestic surroundings.
2. The area is subject to anti-social behaviour with bus stops continuously being vandalised and smashed, cars damaged etc. There are concerns that placing the monopole would give groups more to target which would impact the enjoyment of neighbouring homes and gardens.
3. The monopole would be unsightly and would forever detrimentally impact the visual amenity of what is a residential area.
4. Concerns regarding the noise which the mast would emit.
5. Concerns regarding the distribution that the construction of the mast would cause in the local area.

Assessment

Principle of development:

Schedule 2, Part 16 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 sets out the permitted development rights for electronic communications code operator with regards to development for the purpose of the operators electronic communications network.

Under Class A.1 (c) (ii) allows for the installation of a mast up to 20m in height (excluding any antenna) on land which is on a highway.

Under Class A.7 the installation of electronic communications apparatus is permitted if the structure does not exceed 1.5m²

Under Class A.9 the installation of radio equipment housing is permitted where the development is ancillary to other electronic communications apparatus and the cubic volume does not exceed 90m³. No fencing is proposed around the cabinets which are all vandal proof.

This application is for prior notification and this assessment relates to whether or not the Council would seek a prior approval application for the proposed works. The proposed complies with these restrictions as set out in Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO (amended 2015) and is therefore permitted development, subject to adequate siting and appearance.

Principle of development:

In respect of NPPF paragraph 115 (c), this sub-paragraph requires development proposals for new masts (including those for prior approval) to have considered whether antennas could have alternatively

been installed on other nearby buildings or structures. This exercise has been completed in the submitted Site Specific Supplementary Information (SSSI) which outlines 8 alternative sites which were discounted for the following reasons:

Site ref	Site name and address	NGR	Reason for not choosing site
D1	Pavement o/s 49 Gerald Road, Barnsley S70 3BL	E: 436402, N: 405452	The site is located at the nominal location but is considered to be more prominent in terms of its proximity to the residential properties and as such was assessed as having a significant impact on the amenity of the area that the benefits of the proposal would not outweigh.
D2	Pavement opp 44 Gerald Road, Barnsley S70 3BJ	E: 436398, N: 405423	The site is considered to be more prominent in terms of its proximity to the residential properties and as such was assessed as having a significant impact on the amenity of the area that the benefits of the proposal would not outweigh.
D3	Pavement opp 5 Gerald Road, Barnsley S70 3BN	E: 436527, N: 405572	The location is to the north of the coverage area and would not provide the necessary coverage south, leaving a significant coverage hole that would not justify the selection of the site compared to the proposed position. The site was also considered to be more prominent in terms of its proximity to the residential properties and as such was assessed as having a significant impact on the amenity of the area.
D4	Pavement opp 92 Gerald Road, Barnsley S70 3BH	E: 436484, N: 405224	The location is outside of the coverage area and would not provide the necessary coverage to the north, leaving a significant coverage hole that would not justify the selection of the site compared to the proposed position. The site was also considered to be more prominent in terms of its proximity to the residential properties due to a lack of screening and as such was assessed as having a significant impact on the amenity of the area.
D5	Pavement o/s 24 Birk Crescent, Barnsley S70 3AS	E: 436393, N: 405264	The location is outside of the coverage area and would not provide the necessary coverage to the north, leaving a significant coverage hole that would not justify the selection of the site compared to the proposed position. The site was also considered to be more prominent in terms of its proximity to the residential properties due to a lack of screening and as such was assessed as having a significant impact on the amenity of the area.
D6	Pavement o/s 6 Birk Avenue, Barnsley S70 3BF	E: 436194, N: 405306	The location is outside of the coverage area and would not provide the necessary coverage to the north, leaving a significant coverage hole that would not justify the selection of the site compared to the proposed position. The site was also considered to be more prominent in terms of its proximity to the residential properties due to a lack of screening and as such was assessed as having a significant impact on the amenity of the area.
D7	Pavement opp 2 Calder Crescent, Barnsley S70 3JF	E: 436643, N: 405229	The location is outside of the coverage area and would not provide the necessary coverage to the north, leaving a significant coverage hole that would not justify the selection of the site compared to the proposed position. The site was also considered to be more prominent in terms of its proximity to the residential properties due to a lack of screening and as such was assessed as having a significant impact on the amenity of the area.
D8	Pavement opp 105 Neville Avenue, Barnsley S70 3HS	E: 436554, N: 405267	The site is considered to be more prominent in terms of its proximity to the residential properties and as such was assessed as having a significant impact on the amenity of the area that the benefits of the proposal would not outweigh.

Having visited and assessed all of these sites, the Council agrees with the reasoning for discounting the above sites in comparison to the proposed site. It is appreciated that the proposed siting of the mast is in a residential area and is in fairly close proximity to neighbouring residential properties. However, there is some separation distance maintained to the closest dwellings – 22m to 34 Neville Avenue and

23.5m to 32 Neville Avenue (both to the North). The nearest dwelling to the South is 87 Neville Avenue which is at a distance of 28m from the pole. The agent has collaborated with the Council to provide amended plans which show a more discrete 'Phase 9' monopole which has a reduced circumference in comparison to the previously proposed phase 8 pole. There are two trees on the site alongside other smaller vegetation which provides an opportunity to suitably camouflage the proposed monopole. The amended plans show that all of the new equipment will be painted/finished in Fir Green which will partially camouflage the development from the North and South. This is in line with NPPF paragraph 115 which states that equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

The SSSI states that there are no buildings in the coverage area which are of a sufficient height in order to house the proposed equipment without also installing additional structures/monopoles on the roof of the respective buildings. This would have an even greater impact compared to the chosen location and has been discounted for this reason. The nearest building above two storeys nearby is Barnsley Academy (600m to the South) however this falls outside of the cell area. The Council does not disagree with the information presented in the SSSI and agrees that the chosen site is the most appropriate for the development in comparison to the alternatives.

The site is in fairly close proximity to a couple of educational facilities – Springwell Alternative Academy and The Forest Academy – which are both c.400m to the West. At an even greater distance is Hunningley Primary School which is c.490m to the East and Barnsley Academy and Worsbrough Bank End Primary School which are c.600m to the South. NPPF paragraph 117(a) states that the developer is required to pre consult both schools to inform stakeholders of the intention to submit the planning application. However, this does not give a specific distance in which schools are required to be pre-consulted and it is felt that these separation distances would mean that the proposed siting is significant enough to not warrant a formal pre-consultation as per NPPF paragraph 117(a).

Visual Amenity:

The site is located on an undeveloped grassed area which is situated between Neville Avenue and Reginald Road which is an entirely residential area. It is appreciated that the presence of a monopole in the area would introduce a new feature into the street scene, however assessment must be made as to whether the development would harm the visual amenity or character of the area. The development has been reduced slightly in scale changing from a P8 monopole into a more discrete and slender P8 monopole to be painted in Fir Green. There is little in the way of direct obstruction to the monopole however there are two trees on site, one to the North and one to the South, respectively alongside other smaller vegetation. This offers some opportunity to partially screen the pole and equipment from view to the North and South.

There are other vertical elements such as lampposts in the area, alongside other street features such as a bus stop and existing equipment cabinet. The mast is 15m in height which is the minimum height required for the telecommunications equipment to be operational and to effectively serve the residents/end consumers, and is significantly below the maximum height which could be erected under Schedule 2, part 16 of the GPDO. The 'Phase 9' pole design is the most discrete design possible and with the partial screening/camouflaging, the impact on the street scene is not considered to be significant.

The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making and is acceptable.

Residential Amenity:

The development is located in an entirely residential area with residential dwellings in all directions of the proposed monopole. The nearest of which is 32 Neville Avenue (22m) and 34 Neville Avenue (23.5m), both of which are located to the North. The nearest dwelling to the South is 87 Neville Avenue which is at a distance of 28m from the pole. The mast is 15m in height and the separation distance is considered to be appropriate to ensure that the pole does not have a significant overshadowing or overbearing impact on the immediate neighbouring properties. In any case, the amended plans show a Phase 9 monopole which is a slender and more discrete pole design which reduces any impact in terms of loss of outlook, or overshadowing.

It is appreciated that the monopole is to the south of neighbouring properties which generally means that buildings and structures have a greater overshadowing impact over neighbouring properties, but it has a slender design whilst maintaining the separation distances outlined above.

The siting of the proposed development is considered to be in line with Local Plan Policy GD1 and is acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

Conclusion

The applicant is seeking prior approval for the erection and installation of a 15m high 5G telecommunications monopole and associated ancillary works which includes the following:

- 1 no. 15m high phase 9 monopole to be painted in Fir Green (RAL6009) with associated antenna
- 2 no. ground-based cabinets to be painted in Fir Green (RAL6009)
- 1 no. G-100876 cabinet

An amended plan has been received to show a change from a 'Phase 8' monopole to the aforementioned 'Phase 9' pole, with a note added to the plans stating that it will be finished/painted in Fir Green.

The agent has submitted an SSSI providing justification for the proposed siting of the development in this particular site to serve the local 5G need, with other alternative sites discounted with the reasons provided. The Council does not contend the reasons for discounting these particular sites, and further justification has been provided to state why existing buildings or structures are not feasible, which again the LPA does not disagree with. The site is located with a separation distance of 22m and 23.5m, respectively, from the nearest residential properties to the North, with a slender Phase 9 design and can be partially camouflaged in front of and behind 2 x trees, and other vegetation.

To conclude, the development requires prior approval is considered acceptable in terms of its siting and appearance and is recommended for approval with conditions.

Recommendation

Prior Approval required and granted subject to conditions