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**2021/1643**

Applicant: Three UK Limited

Replacement of 15m telecommunications mast and 1 x cabinet with 18m monopole with a wrap around cabinet base and 1 new ground-based cabinet

Land to rear of Birdwell Club, Sheffield Road, Barnsley, S70 5UY

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### Site Description

The application site is in relation to a piece of land located to the rear of Birdwell Club/Venue, Sheffield Road, Birdwell. The site contains a 15-m high telecommunications mast with associated ground-based equipment. It is fenced off and slightly raised, behind the car park for the club with a small piece of grass and benches directly adjacent to the base of the mast. The nearest building is the Club itself which is located at a distance of 46m from the mast at its nearest with the car park for the club in between. The site has an 'in-and-out' access leading to the car park. Both the entrance and exit are narrow accesses with the entrance to the South of no. 102 Sheffield and the exit to the North of no. 98 between this property and the Club. The site is off Sheffield Road which is the main artery which runs through Birdwell, connecting the village and the other settlements in the South of the Borough to Worsborough and eventually leads into Barnsley Town Centre.

Sheffield Road is predominantly mainly characterised by rows of stone and brick terraced residential properties along large sections of Sheffield Road. However, the street is diverse with a range of different use and building types, structures and external materials including a range of commercial uses and services. Directly adjacent from The Birdwell Club/Venue is Birdwell Primary School.





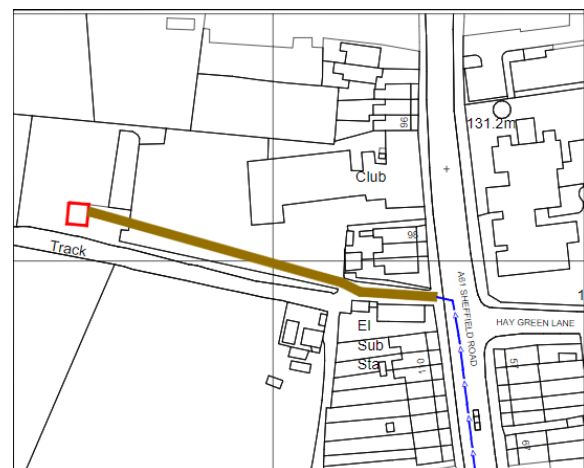
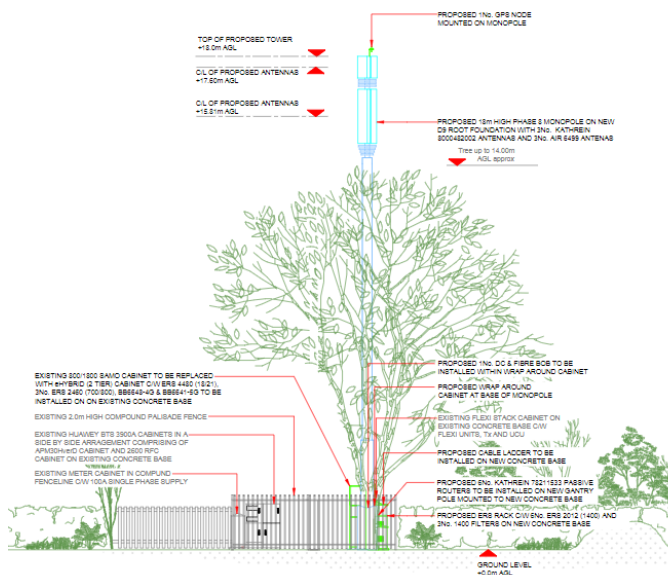
## Site History

2007/0351 – Installation of 1 no. 15m High telecommunications tower and 3 x no cabinets (Prior Approval – Not Required)

2015/0002 – Installation of 1 no. 15m High telecommunications tower and three no. cabinets (Prior Approval – Not Required)

## Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking approval for the replacement of the existing 15m-high telecommunications monopole and ground-based equipment with a 18m-high telecommunications monopole erected on top of ground-based cabinet.



## Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The development plan consists of the Core Strategy, saved Unitary Development Plan policies. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

## Local Plan

The new Local Plan was adopted at the full Council meeting held 3th January 2019 after it was found to be sound by the appointed Planning Inspector following the examination process. This means that it now takes on full weight for decision making process in planning law terms as the development plan for the Borough, superseding the remaining saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (adopted in the year 2000) and the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011).

Relevant Local Plan policies include:

GD1 – General Development – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents.

D1 – High Quality Design and Place Making – Development is expected to be of a high quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

T4: New Development and Transport Safety – New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

## NPPF

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).

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.

## **Consultations**

Neighbour notification letters were sent to nearby properties and a site notice placed nearby; no comments were received.

## **Representations**

Neighbour consultation letters were sent to neighbouring residents with a site notice placed nearby; no comments were received.

## **Assessment**

### Principle of Development

The NPPF actively promotes the growth of telecommunications infrastructure and 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).

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.

In this case, an existing telecommunications site is being re-used with the site currently hosting a 15-m high telecommunications mast with associated ground-based equipment. The application seeks to replace the existing mast with a taller 18m-high mast, re-positioned slightly – c. 1m to the North. The antenna head is also being replaced and made slightly bigger with a 0.7m diameter instead of the existing 0.5m. The development will provide operation requirements for 5G to meet capacity and coverage needs in Barnsley. This is considered to represent the most efficient use of an existing telecommunications base station as it lessens the overall proliferation of further equipment in the surrounding area. The NPPF seeks to re-use existing masts, buildings and structures for these needs but clearly the use of existing sites is the best next option. It is felt that, subject to other national and local planning policies being complied with, this presents a sustainable use of an existing site which will bring local and regional benefits and is considered to be acceptable in principle.

### Residential Amenity

The site is located to the rear of Birdwell Club/Venue, but Sheffield Road is largely residential and there are several residential properties in close proximity to the site. The nearest residential buildings are located to the East at nos. 98-102 Sheffield Road (c80m distance) and to the North-East 92-96 Sheffield (c.85m distance). The existing mast is being replaced and its replacement (18m) is marginally taller than the existing by 3m, with the antenna head also being increased in size. The existing antenna head is 0.5m in diameter whilst the proposed is 0.7m. The NPPF states that existing masts should be re-used where possible but clearly the next best alternative is to re-use existing sites with masts like this one. The increase in the size and height of the mast will increase the potential impact on the neighbouring properties but given the sheer distance to the neighbouring properties (80m and 85m at the nearest), the overbearing and overshadowing impact is considered to be marginal. In any case, the increased height and size to the antenna head is not considered excessive and will largely not be noticed on site. The separation distance mentioned above will significantly alleviate any such impact.

The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development in that does not have any significant adverse impact on the residential amenity of existing and future residents. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

### Visual Amenity

The proposed mast is to replace an existing one but will increase the height by 3m and the antenna head is being slightly widened. These changes will increase the visibility of the mast but given there is an existing mast on the site, there is very little, if any change to the character of the site itself. The site is located behind existing buildings on Sheffield Road and whilst it is visible from the neighbouring properties and from the car park for Birdwell Club, the existing buildings largely obstruct the views into the site from the main public realm of Sheffield Road. It is possible for fleeting views into the site through the access road but as mentioned, this relationship is largely as existing and the additional 3 metres to the height will not have any adverse affect to the character of the area. There are trees on the site, as shown on the elevation drawings, but the mast is higher than these and they do not present enough screening to camouflage the mast/proposal – as encouraged by paragraph 115 in the NPPF. However, the increase in height and diameter of the antenna head can be considered to be restrained compared to what is on site now and the equipment is considered to be sympathetically designed given the previous development of the site and the proposal being substantially set back from the road.

On balance, the proposal is considered to meet the necessary paragraphs in the NPPF in relation to design and also complied with Local Plan Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making. It is therefore considered acceptable in terms of Design and Visual Amenity.

### Highways

The increased height presents no material change to the users of the adjacent car park or the highway network as a whole. There are no concerns raised in terms of the impact on highway safety and the proposal is acceptable in terms of this.

## Conclusion

The NPPF clearly states that Planning Policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation technology (such as 5G) as such advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. The proposed development is in relation to a replacement mast on a site which currently contains a 15m-high telecommunications mast and ground-based equipment. The replacement mast measures 18m in height (a 3m increase) and a slightly wider head with a diameter of 0.7m compared to the existing diameter of 0.5m. The mast will be slightly re-sited on the site 1m to the North but will be contained within the existing fenced area on the site.

The mast is located at least 80m and 85m, respectively, from the nearest residential properties on Sheffield Road and the increase in the height and the diameter of the antenna head will have little impact on the residential amenity enjoyed by the neighbouring properties.

The site is off Sheffield Road which is the major artery through Birdwell but the mast is substantially set back from Sheffield Road itself (100m) and is largely screened by the existing buildings to the East, despite the increase in height and antenna head diameter. The mast will be clearly visible to nearby properties, from the entrance to Birdwell Club/Venue and from the adjacent car park but this relationship is well established by the existing mast. The increase of 3m will have no real detrimental impact on the character of the area or site as a whole.

On balance, the proposed development presents no significant detrimental impacts to residential or visual amenity and is to replace an established mast on the same site. It will present an efficient use of an existing telecommunications site with a marginal increase which will help to meet the capacity and coverage needs in Barnsley.

## **Recommendation**

**Prior Approval - Granted**