

Location: Land At The Rear Of 33 And 35 Coombelands
Melbourn Road
Royston
Hertfordshire
SG8 7DW

Applicant: Hutchison 3G UK Limited

Proposal: Installation of 15m monopole tower to support antenna, associated radio-equipment housing and ancillary development hitherto.

Ref. No: 22/01342/TD

Officer: Vicki Wood

Date of expiry of statutory period : 11.07.2022

Submitted Plan Nos

NHE20781 100 Rev A NHE20781 150 Rev A NHE20781 215 Rev A NHE20781 265 Rev A
A NHE20781 002 Rev A

1.0 Policies

2.0 Relevant History

2.1 None.

3.0 Representations

3.1 The application has been called in by the Ward Councillor, Councillor Hinchliff who has expressed the following concerns:

- The proposed mast is significantly taller than the nearby residential buildings and street furniture, is out of keeping with the existing design of the area and will harm visual amenity for local residents.

3.2 Royston Town Council have objected to the proposal which is supported by Ward Councillor Green on the following grounds:

- It would cause demonstrable harm to the character of the area.
- It is out of keeping with the area as it would be much higher than the nearby houses and lamp posts.
- Guidelines state that masts cannot be sited within 60m of a school but this one would be within that distance of homes with children living in them.

3.3 Neighbours – Three objections have been received, on the following grounds:

- The proposed site is totally unsuitable. The A10 is a busy road where there is no parking facilities.

- The development would be a complete eyesore immediately at the end of residential gardens and will doubtless bring the house prices down.
- Many of the reasons for rejecting the other sites would apply equally to this site (road proximity, visual eyesore, nearby residents etc).
- That there are other more suitable sites that have not been put forward.
- The 1m wide footpath would be affected with a consequent health and safety risk.
- The visual impact of the mast with associated antenna and other equipment would be visually unacceptable.
- No health and safety assessment has been submitted with the application.

3.4 In terms of TD (Telecommunications Determination), whilst the above objections have been received, the Local Planning Authority are only able to consider siting and appearance of the proposal.

3.5 According to the submission, the applicant initiated pre-consultation discussions with NHC and was advised that a formal pre-application was required hence the submission of this application for prior approval.

3.6 The supplementary information submitted with the applications confirms that the site is not within a conservation area, it not in close proximity to any listed buildings, ancient monuments or any other heritage assets. Neither is the site located close to any SSSI's or other designated sites.

3.7 **Hertfordshire County Council Highways** – No response to date.

3.8 **North Herts Council Environmental Health** – No response to date.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The mast and associated equipment would be sited within the grass verge between the footpath and Melbourn Road. Residential properties exist to the west and north of the application site.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 The installation of a 15m high mast antennas and cabinet around the base of the mast. Three other cabinets and ancillary paving are also proposed. The purpose of the mast is to provide additional telecommunications coverage, particularly 5G.

4.3 **Assessment**

4.3.1 This application has been assessed against the General (Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended, Schedule 2, Part 16; Class A – Communications. As such, the proposal constitutes Class A (a) - the installation, alteration or replacement of any electronic communications apparatus.

4.3.2 As the proposal constitutes the installation of a mast on highway land, the development is permitted subject to prior approval from the Local Planning Authority.

In terms of TD (Telecommunications Determination), whilst the above objections have been received, the Local Planning Authority are only able to consider siting and appearance of the development.

Key Issues

- 4.3.3 The key issues in this case is the siting and appearance of the proposed development.
- 4.3.4 The site is not located in an area which is subject to any constraints that would prevent the development being sited in this position.
- 4.3.5 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF 10 states that “.... *High quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.* That ‘.....*decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.*’ Paragraph 115 of the same NPPF states that ‘*Where new sites are required,.....equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.*’
- 4.3.6 Whilst it is accepted that the proposed mast and associated equipment will be visible, it is not positioned near any heritage assets or nature protected areas. Visibility is largely from users of the highway. Occupiers of nearby residential properties will be subject to some impact as a result of the height of the mast. Given that there is some distance from the proposed position of the mast and its associated equipment, the proposed colour and finish will match that of existing street furniture and so any impact is not considered to be significant.
- 4.3.7 The reasons for the application by the applicant are to increase telecommunications coverage, particularly 5G, which in general terms would bring benefits to people, businesses, and the economy. The detailed supplementary information statement submitted with the application states that the site proposed is the only viable one in the area.
- 4.3.8 There have been numerous objections received from nearby residents, some of which have been addressed above. Regarding the other comments received, the applicant has submitted the necessary ICNIRP certificate which demonstrates that the development will not be harmful to health, while concerns relating to property values are not material planning considerations.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 In line with paragraph 116 of NPPF 10, the assessment of the proposal is based purely on the siting and appearance of the development. The submitted details are sufficient for the Authority to assess the impact of the works upon the locality. I recommend that prior approval be granted as the siting and appearance of the proposal would not be detrimental to visual amenity and it would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 That prior approval be **GRANTED**.