



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

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Planning Services
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall, Edward Street
Stockport
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20th May 2022

To: Planning Officer

Reference: DC/085065

Proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for proposed telecommunications installation: Proposed 15.0m Phase 8 Monopole C/W wrapround Cabinet at base and associated ancillary works.

Location: Chester Road Woodford Stockport

1. General comments

- 1.1. We believe that this is an application for permitted development and that the planning issues to be considered relate to the siting and appearance of the proposed development.
- 1.2. The documents from CK Hutchison Networks (UK) Ltd (ref: SPT18855) erroneously describe the proposed site as “Chester Road, Woodford Garden Village”.
- 1.3. The proposal is outside of the perimeter of Woodford Garden Village and in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, Woodford Neighbourhood Plan is applicable and it seems appropriate for the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum to comment.
- 1.4. The mast and associated cabinets are large structures and the proposed site is in a very prominent position in the village. We believe that it is not in keeping with the character of Chester Road.
- 1.5. There is a large tree adjacent to the proposed mast site, which is currently lower than the height of the mast. However, this tree will grow larger and may begin to interfere with the structure and the signal. Any future removal of this tree would be detrimental to the aesthetic appearance and the environment.
- 1.6. We note that other options were discounted due to “residential amenity issues and exposure”, including D1 Lancastrian Way and D6 Chester Road. We believe that the proposed site on Chester Road should also be discounted due to residential amenity issues and exposure, due to proximity to a bus stop, the Notcutts car park and particularly number 413 and adjacent properties on Chester Road, which are very close to the proposed site on the opposite side of the road.
- 1.7. The Site Specific Supplementary Information document states the new mast is needed “to enhance 5G coverage levels and network capacity within the Woodford Garden Village area”. It also states that “The cell search areas for 5G are extremely constrained with a typical cell radius of approximately 50m meaning that it would not be feasible to site the column outside of this locale.” and “Mobile phone base stations operate on a low power and accordingly base stations therefore need to be located in the areas they are required to serve. Increasingly, people are also using

their mobiles in their homes, and this means we need to position base stations in, or close to, residential areas.”

- 1.8. Given that the mast is needed to serve the Woodford Garden Village and given the short range of the 5G signal, it would seem appropriate to locate the mast within the garden village. Parts of the site are still under construction, which could provide an opportunity to factor in the need for the mast within the development.
- 1.9. Due to harm to the visual appearance and residential amenity the proposal is not compliant with the NPPF, Stockport Development Plan or Woodford Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.10. Examples are shown in the Appendix where Councils have refused similar applications for 5G masts on the grounds of appearance and the Planning Inspector has dismissed the subsequent Appeal by the telecommunications company.

2. Policies relevant to the application

We believe that planning policies relevant to this application include:

- NPPF 2021
- Stockport Development Plan:
 - o Woodford Neighbourhood Plan 2019
 - o Saved UDP 2011
 - o Core Strategy 2011

3. Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

DEV4: Design of new development

All new development in Woodford Neighbourhood Area should achieve a high standard of design. New residential development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and respond to the Neighbourhood Area’s rural character, to its ecology and to its landscape. Where appropriate and viable, the development of sustainable drainage systems, the retention and enhancement of landscape, wildlife and ecological networks and the achievement of high environmental and energy standards will be supported.

Assessment

We believe that the proposed development does not comply with this policy because it does not respond to the character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The mast is a visually intrusive structure in a prominent position in the village and thus contravenes this policy.

4. Stockport Development Plan

Policy SIE-5 states:

3.413 Proposals for telecommunications development which would improve existing operational facilities or a new development which would improve present service provision will be permitted provided that, having due regard to operational efficiency:

1. The proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the character or appearance of the locality, the visual amenities of residential occupiers or the free and safe flow of traffic on adjoining highways;

Assessment

The proposal does not comply with this policy because it would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the locality and the visual amenities of residential occupiers on Chester Road.

5. NPPF (2021)

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 126 states that:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Assessment

The proposed location of the mast in a prominent and sensitive location in the village is not compliant with this policy. An alternative site in a less prominent position should be sought.

Paragraph 130 states that:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Assessment

The 5G mast in the proposed location fails to comply with paragraphs b, c, d and f of this policy, as shown above.

Summary

We understand the need for enhanced telecommunications, but the proposed site on Chester Road is not appropriate. It will harm the character of the neighbourhood area. It should also be discounted on the grounds of residential amenity issues and exposure. It contravenes policies in the NPPF, Stockport Development Plan and the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan. We request that an alternative site is found. As a suggestion, a site could be earmarked in parts of the Woodford Garden Village that are still under construction, so that the issues can be addressed in advance.

Yours sincerely,

E. M. Frearson

Evelyn Frearson On behalf of Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee

Appendix

There are instances of Appeals against Council refusals of 5G masts being dismissed by Planning Inspectors. The first of the examples below has similar characteristics to the position in Woodford.

- In [Hartlepool](#), where the Planning Inspector concluded that “The proposal would be an obtrusive feature that would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.”
- In [Old Windsor](#) (Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/W/20/3265640) where the Planning Inspector concluded that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area.
- In [Brighton and Hove](#), where the Planning Inspector noted that “The proposal would sit uncomfortably in this context and would significantly erode the sense of openness that prevails in this area.”