

<b>Application Number:</b>	2021/0804/FUL
<b>Site Address:</b>	Telecommunication Station 75465, Moorland Avenue, Lincoln
<b>Target Date:</b>	27th November 2021
<b>Agent Name:</b>	Galliford Try
<b>Applicant Name:</b>	Cornerstone C/o Agent
<b>Proposal:</b>	Removal of existing 15m high mast and all associated street furniture; and replacement with 20m high mast, 6no. antennas, 1no. meter cabinet and associated development.

### **Background - Site Location and Description**

The application is for the erection of a 20m high mast incorporating six antennas with an associated meter cabinet on Moorland Avenue. The application proposes an upgrade to an existing telecommunication site, replacing an existing 15m high mast and associated equipment.

The proposed site is located on the north side of Moorland Avenue, to the east of the junction with Tritton Road. The site sits in the grass verge to the south of the Crown and Arrows public house, a part single and part two storey structure. To the south of Moorland Avenue is an area of open space, within which are a number of mature trees, and beyond are two storey semi-detached properties.

The application is being presented to Members of the Planning Committee for determination at the request of Cllr. Bob Bushell.

### **Site History**

Reference:	Description	Status	Decision Date:
2014/0334/PA	Upgrade of existing telecommunications base station comprising the removal of the existing 14.43m high column, replacement with a 15m high column, siting of 2 equipment cabinets (existing cabinet to be removed) and ancillary development.	Prior Approval Req and Approved	20th June 2014

### **Case Officer Site Visit**

Undertaken on 13th October 2021.

### **Policies Referred to**

- Policy LP26 Design and Amenity
- National Planning Policy Framework

## **Issues**

- Policy Context
- Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity
- Highway Matters

## **Consultations**

Consultations were carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement, adopted January 2018.

## **Statutory Consultation Responses**

Consultee	Comment
Highways & Planning	Comments Received

## **Public Consultation Responses**

None.

## **Consideration**

### **Policy Context**

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) Policy LP26 states that development should respect the existing topography, landscape character and identity, and relate well to the site and surroundings, particularly in relation to siting, height, scale, massing and form. All development proposals must take into consideration the character and local distinctiveness of the area (and enhance or reinforce it, as appropriate).

Section 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the government's general approach is to facilitate the growth of new and existing communications infrastructure. Specifically, paragraph 114 advises 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) and full fibre broadband connections.

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF advises that 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.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF advises that developments should be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

The application suggests that “there is a clear operational need for the development. The subject proposal will result in improved 2G, 3G and 4G network services whilst establishing a 5G solution for Telefónica UK Limited (O2), allowing local residents, businesses and visitors in the locale to access the many social and economic benefits associated with modern communications network services”.

### Visual Amenity

The application states that the siting of any new base station development should be directly linked to operational need. “In this instance, the coverage requirement relates to the upgrade of a well-established base station site at a removed location in terms of built/natural heritage assets. Although located close to a residential area the established site has been offset from as many residential frontages as possible, making best use of existing features for context, screening and backdrop purposes. The subject site is not subject to any restrictive planning policy designations and because this is an upgrade proposal, no alternative sites have been considered”.

In terms of the design the application advises that “similar to siting requirements, the design of any new base station development is directly linked to operational need. It also has to be tailored to the bespoke nature of the site in question, i.e., with consideration in a context of topography, proximity to other natural and manmade features, planning policy and other local sensitivities, and it must be structurally capable of accommodating the necessary transmission apparatus. Following the nomination of the existing base station site for upgrade, a well-considered design process has been implemented with the applicant having to balance technical requirements including operational, wind loading and structural calculations, with the minimisation of visual impact. A replication of the design principles of the existing base station have been incorporated as far as is reasonably possible and a minimum amount and size of apparatus has been proposed. A lesser sized mast simply would not be able to provide an efficient or effective coverage solution from this site”.

The site is located close to the junction with one of the main approaches into the city, Tritton Road. There is substantial commercial development to the west, however, the immediate area to the east of Tritton Road is characterised by two storey development. The junction is abutted by the open space to the south and the car park serving the public house to the north. Therefore, with the exception of the trees within the open space and a smaller number of trees within the grounds of the public house, the site has an open character with views available from the north and south along Tritton Road and from the east on Moorland Avenue itself.

The existing 15m high mast has a grey finish with the antenna concealed within a slightly larger enclosed hood at the top. It sits to the east of two equipment cabinets within the grass verge, in between two lighting columns. The plans submitted as part of the application identify the height of the existing lighting columns as being approximately 12m. The plan also identifies the height of a nearby tree within the grounds of the public house sitting at an approximate height of 9m.

The proposed mast would measure 20m in height. This would be far taller than the existing mast, streetlights and trees, and also significantly higher than the nearby two storey buildings. The diameter of the pole is also marginally larger than the existing but, most notably, the antennas are exposed and are much bulkier in appearance than the existing

arrangement. Officers therefore consider that the height of the mast combined with the pole's width and the bulky and distinctive headframe would appear as an obtrusive, prominent, dominant and imposing addition in the street scene, particularly given the open aspect of the junction and highly visible location of the site. This impact would be further exacerbated by the fact that the mast is proposed to be positioned further west in the verge than the existing mast, over 9m closer to Tritton Road on the opposite side of the cabinets.

The mast is therefore considered to be inappropriate as, by reason of its height, size, design and position, would fail to respect the existing character of the area and would not relate well to the site and surroundings.

The need for telecommunications equipment is not disputed and officers acknowledge the public benefit of the installation in terms of the enhancement of the telecommunications network and its contribution to economic growth, as required by the NPPF. It is also positive to see that the proposals relate to the upgrading of an existing site. However, it is not considered that these points outweigh the aforementioned harm to the established character and appearance of the area.

Officers would note that there is no objection in principle to the associated meter cabinet, which will replace a slightly smaller meter cabinet in a similar location. This would sit adjacent to the two larger cabinets in the highway verge.

#### Residential Amenity

The site is over 45m from the closest residential property and accordingly it is not considered that the mast would cause undue harm to the amenities which occupiers of neighbouring properties may reasonably expect to enjoy, in accordance with CLLP Policy LP26.

A declaration has been submitted with the application to confirm that the equipment is in line with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection Public Exposure Guidelines (ICNIRP), and as such the NPPF states that the issue of health is not a material planning consideration.

#### Highway Matters

Lincolnshire County Council as Local Highway Authority has considered the application and has noted that the proposal is for a replacement mast and ancillary equipment, still located in the highway verge. They are satisfied that the proposal would not have an impact on the public highway.

#### **Application Negotiated either at Pre-Application or During Process of Application**

Yes, officers advised of concerns at the pre-application stage.

#### **Financial Implications**

None.

### **Legal Implications**

None.

### **Equality Implications**

None.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed mast would have an unduly harmful impact on local character and the surrounding built environment by reason of its height, size, design and position, which is exacerbated by the site's open and highly visible location. It would appear as an obtrusive, prominent, dominant and imposing addition within the street scene, contrary to Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Policy LP26 and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Application Determined within Target Date**

Yes.

### **Recommendation**

That the application is refused