

DELEGATED DECISION OFFICER REPORT

AUTHORISATION	INITIALS	DATE
File completed and officer recommendation:	JR	01.02.2022
Planning Development Manager authorisation:	JJ	01/02/2022
Admin checks / despatch completed	SH	01.02.2022
Technician Final Checks/ Scanned / LC Notified / UU Emails:	CC	01.02.2022

Application: 21/01824/FUL **Town / Parish:** Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council

Applicant: MBNL On Behalf of EE

Address: Existing Mast Station Road Parkeston

Development: Proposed replacement of existing 25 metre mast with a 25 metre swan tower with crows nest headframe, mounted with 6 No antennas, 2 No. 0.3 metre dishes, the extension of the existing compound and associated development thereto.

1. Town / Parish Council

Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council No Comments Received

2. Consultation Responses

None

3. Planning History

02/00710/FUL	25m Telecommunications Monopole to support telecommunications antennas. Equipment compound, equipment cabinet and ancillary development in accordance with plans 00202972-111, -112, -113, -114	Approved	21.06.2002
15/00841/TELLIC	The addition of an electronic equipment cabinet within the compound and associated works.	Determination	10.06.2015

4. Relevant Policies / Government Guidance

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework July 2021
National Planning Practice Guidance

Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Section 1 (adopted January 2021)

SP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SP7 Place Shaping Principles

Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Section 2 (adopted January 2022)

SPL3 Sustainable Design
CP3 Improving the Telecommunications Network

Status of the Local Plan

Planning law requires that decisions on applications must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (Section 70(2) of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). This is set out in Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The 'development plan' for Tendring comprises, in part, Sections 1 and 2 of the Tendring District Council 2013-33 and Beyond Local Plan (adopted January 2021 and January 2022, respectively), together with any neighbourhood plans that have been brought into force.

5. Officer Appraisal

Site Description

The application site is located on the eastern side of Station Road, north of the junction with Parkeston Bypass and adjacent to the main parking area for Harwich Port. The site comprises of an existing 25m high mast comprising of 3 antennas and 2 dishes along with ancillary cabinets and equipment.

The site is set back from the main highway and is bordered by a chain link fence. The existing pole and associated equipment is set down from road level, within the grass bank, which slopes down towards the car park area. The site is surrounded on all sides by open car parking with the Harwich Ferry terminal to the west and the main port buildings to the north. Further south of the site are residential dwellings.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the removal of the existing 25m mast and the installation of a new 25m swann tower mast with crows nest headframe, with 6 No. antennas, 2 No. 0.3 metre diameter dishes. The new mast is sited further north and it is also proposed to extend the existing compound with associated equipment and new fencing.

The application has been submitted with supporting information including a covering letter, Planning statement, information regarding the new 5G network and an ICNIRP Declaration which confirms that the proposed equipment and installation would comply with current EU guidelines regarding public exposure to electromagnetic fields.

Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. (Para 126 NPPF).

Section 10 of the NPPF Paragraph 14 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) and full fibre broadband connections.

Paragraph 115 states 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.

Policy SP7 states that all new development should respond positively to local character and context to preserve and enhance the quality of existing places and their environs. Emerging Policy SPL3 seeks to provide new development which is well designed and maintains or enhances local character and distinctiveness.

Policy CP3 specifically seeks to provide telecommunications infrastructure which cannot be incorporated into or onto existing masts, buildings or other structures and is sympathetically designed, having regard to its appearance, impact upon local visual amenity and camouflaged if necessary.

The proposed development comprises of a new 25m high swann tower mast which would replace the existing 25m mast (albeit in a slightly different location) supporting 6 no. antennas, 2 no. transmission dishes. It is also proposed to extend the existing compound to incorporate the site of the new mast. The site is prominently sited, highly visible within Harwich port, however this is not considered to be a major thoroughfare and would only be visible to traffic accessing the port area.

In terms of appearance, the surrounding area is of a commercial/industrial nature, with car parking, buildings, areas of storage etc used in conjunction with this busy port. The site is bordered by tall floodlights which are present around the port and are of a similar height to the proposed mast. The proposed mast is the same height, but greater in width than the existing mast, but would have a greater amount of equipment to the top of the mast, resulting in a more prominent feature overall. The location however is considered to be appropriate for this type of equipment and given the industrial/commercial nature of the site, the proposal is not considered to conflict with policies SP7 and SPL3 in that the utilitarian design and increase in equipment would not particularly enhance the immediate area, but is in keeping with the character of the wider port site. Furthermore its benefits would outweigh any material harm.

Sitting and Appearance

The submission contains details for the basis for the sitting and appearance of the mast and antenna, in this location. There is a requirement for infrastructure improvements in this area of Tendring and in particular the port area due to the increased volume of traffic to the site. The proposed upgrade works will allow for better coverage and increased capacity to satisfy the traffic demands set by mobile users passing through this region and to the freight carriers at this site and will also help towards futureproofing the network to reduce the frequency of works required at the site. The tower is commensurate with the light industrial landscape of the area and is the same height as the one which it will replace.

The applicant has sought to cause as little impact on the visual amenity of the area as possible whilst also ensuring that sufficient coverage requirements are achieved and by selecting to upgrade an existing site the character of the local area will be preserved by removing the need to source a new telecommunications site within this area, which is in line with planning guidance.

The height of the monopole is determined by required technical objectives as well as surrounding features such as trees and other vegetation; the antennas must be above them to ensure optimal signal propagation towards the desired target area. In this instance the existing mast could not be utilised to support the upgraded technologies which has necessitated a replacement mast. The height of the new mast will be the same as the existing; consequently the coverage in the area will be maintained. The type of monopole which has been selected is appropriate to the site and is structurally capable of supporting the new antenna type and is considered to be appropriate in this locality.

The existing mast and compound base station has been in situ for a number of years and has become an established part of the streetscene, however in order to prevent a proliferation of masts in this area, it is necessary to add a condition to any grant of planning permission to ensure that the old column is removed and the area made good.

In conclusion, officers are satisfied that the mast proposed is the best design possible to enable all technologies to be supported from this site and avoid the provision of additional masts which would lead to the proliferation of masts contrary to the NPPF and The Code of Best Practice. Therefore the siting and appearance of the mast and antennas is considered to be acceptable and are of a design required to operate effectively. Despite the overall increase in width and additional equipment housed by the proposed mast, it is considered to integrate reasonably well in this location, and is sited some distance away from the nearest residential areas. The public benefits

of the proposal including the increased service and 5G coverage has been considered and it is accepted this is a suitable location for such equipment.

The cabinets and ancillary equipment proposed are relatively low scale and reflect the equipment that is already in situ in this location. The verge is wide enough to accommodate the cabinets without resulting in material visual harm. As such, it is considered, on that the proposed cabinets, given their relatively limited size and scale would, in themselves, be of an acceptable size, siting and appearance.

Health concerns and residential amenity impacts.

The NPPF Paragraph 118 states that 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.

The application is accompanied by a Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines. In light of this the proposal is acceptable on health grounds.

The proposed mast is over 200m from the nearest neighbouring properties in Makins Road and Tyler Street, Parkeston. The mast whilst larger in some respects is overall the same height as the existing mast and it's siting and appearance is considered to be acceptable and on balance the impact on residential amenity is not considered to be significantly more harmful over and above that already experience on the site by the existing mast provision.

Consultation Responses

No representations have been received against this application following a public consultation which included a site notice posted at the site and a neighbour consultation letter sent out to the adjacent property.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the National and Local Plan Policies identified above. In the absence of material harm resulting from the proposal the application is recommended for approval.

6. Recommendation

APPROVAL – FULL

7. Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason - To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan(s): 002 SITE LOCATION PLAN, 200 PROPOSED SITE PLAN, 250 PROPOSED SITE ELEVATION A

Reason - For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Within two months of the installation of the new 25 metre swan tower with crows nest headframe, mounted with 6 No antennas, 2 No. 0.3 metre dishes and associated equipment hereby approved the old 25m pole as shown on plan 200 PROPOSED SITE PLAN shall be removed in its entirety and area of grass verge re-instated.

Reason – To prevent a proliferation of masts in the area

8. Informatives

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Are there any letters to be sent to applicant / agent with the decision? If so please specify:	YES	NO
Are there any third parties to be informed of the decision? If so, please specify:	YES	NO