

Item 3b **16/00098/TEL**

Case Officer **Adele Hayes**

Ward **Astley And Buckshaw**

Proposal **Prior notification of intention to install 1no. 12 metre high Smart Metering static streetworks pole with 1no. omni antenna and 1no. Smart Metering equipment cabinet.**

Location **Land 35M North West Of Billinge House, Euxton Lane, Euxton**

Applicant **Daly International**

Consultation expiry: **29 February 2016**

Application expiry: **28 March 2016**

Recommendation

It is recommended that this application is approved.

Proposal

1. The application site is a grass verge that forms part of the adopted highway of Euxton Lane. To the east is an access road that provides access to Billinge House, a children's day nursery, with fields to the south. To the north are commercial premises located on the opposite side of Euxton Lane. The local streetscape has a collection of street furniture including high-level vertical structures, in the form of lamp posts and a telegraph pole.
2. This application proposes the erection of a 12 metre high monopole, installation of 1 no. omni antenna to be mounted on the monopole (taking the total height to approximately 13.4m high) and installation of an equipment cabinet at the base.

Representations

3. Councillor Perks has requested that this application be determined by Committee. He is concerned that sharing the existing telecommunications mast located virtually opposite this proposed additional mast on an extremely busy highway such as Euxton Lane has not even been considered.

Consultations

4. Euxton Parish Council – no comments have been received.
5. Environmental Health Section – no comments have been received.

Site History

6. This application involves a replacement site to accommodate Smart Metering apparatus which has already been approved and was proposed to be installed at an alternative location to the west on Euxton Lane (15/00125/TEL). However, despite receiving consent in February 2015, detailed design has found that the apparatus cannot be installed at the approved location because of the presence of underground services.
7. The significance of this is that this current proposal would not result in an additional mast in this area but would see the replacement of an approved mast. The proposed apparatus is of the same design and appearance as that which has already been approved.

Principle of the development

8. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 confers 'permitted development rights' for certain types of telecommunications development. This now includes the erection of telecommunications masts which do not exceed a height of 20m above ground level. These permitted development rights remove the need to submit a full planning application, but rather require what is termed a 'prior notification' application to be made.
9. This means that the Local Planning Authority can only control the details of the siting, design and external appearance of a telecommunication development as the acceptability of the principle of the development is already established. The Local Planning Authority has 56 days in which to let the applicant know of its decision on whether prior approval is required for siting and appearance and to let the operator know of its decision to allow or refuse approval.

Analysis of Issues

Principle of development

10. The applicant advises that the proposal is part of Arqiva's planned smart meter network which is being created as part of the Government's initiative to roll out smart electricity and gas meters to homes and small businesses across Great Britain between 2014 and 2020. The applicant goes on to state that the network forms part of the UK's National Infrastructure Plan and that the information provided by smart meters will help consumers to better manage and reduce energy use and potentially save money. Smart meters will play an important role in the Government's policies to achieve a transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy. It has been identified

that a new installation is required to secure coverage between other cells identified in the borough and the applicant has submitted a coverage map to highlight the area which would be covered by this installation. A sequential assessment of other sites has been undertaken and each one evaluated and thereafter discounted for technical reasons.

11. The applicant has confirmed that the existing telecoms mast located on the opposite side of Euxton Lane cannot be shared. This mast is sited on the highway and is therefore a slim-line structure with shrouded antennas. The mast was not designed to facilitate the installation of additional apparatus, largely because the structure does not have the physical capacity. This type of mast can therefore not be shared and had to be discounted as a site option.
12. In terms of the Framework, section 5 supports the provision of high quality communications infrastructure and states that local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, masts should be kept to a minimum and existing masts, buildings and structures should be used unless the need for a new site has been justified. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate. In justifying the site selection, the applicant advises that the proposal is part of a planned network expansion, that there are no operationally suitable alternative sites with less environmental impact, mast sharing has been discounted technically, there are no existing buildings which could accommodate the antenna and the visual impact of the development has been minimised.
13. The monopole is part of the smart meter network which is advocated in the National Infrastructure Plan (NIP) 2014, paragraph 8.11 of which states the following: -

The government is committed to minimising the UK's energy needs through the introduction of measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce demand. As set out in the government's Energy Efficiency Strategy, this includes:

- *requiring suppliers to roll out smart electricity and gas meters to all households and small non domestic sites by the end of 2020 to put consumers in control of their energy consumption*

14. Paragraph 8.28 of the NIP also identifies the smart meter network as a top 40 priority investment. Strong support for the proposal therefore exists in the Framework and the NIP which are material considerations, and as stated it is considered that the development complies with the specific criteria.

Impact on neighbours

15. The nearest property is Billinge House, a children's day nursery which is located approximately 35 metres away with trees and hedging in between. In terms of the potential health impact of the proposed equipment, paragraph 45 of the Framework requires applications for telecommunications development to include certification which confirms that when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met. The application includes an ICNIRP declaration which confirms that the proposed development is compliant with the requirements of the radio frequency (RF) public exposure guidelines set out by ICNIRP and therefore accords with the Framework.
16. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposal will have a harmful impact on the amenities of local residents.

Siting, Design & External Appearance

17. There is an existing telegraph pole adjacent to the location of the proposal which is approximately 8m high and street lights along Euxton Lane. There is also another mast close by on the opposite side of Euxton Lane.. The proposal has an overall height of approximately 13.4m, however, the antenna on the top of the monopole is thin having a diameter of less than 100mm, the diameter of the monopole itself tapers from 0.5m to 0.4m at the top and is 12m high. Therefore the main bulk of the proposal is 12m high with the antenna on top being much thinner and viewed as more akin to a lamppost than the normal telecoms masts that are normally thicker at the top, therefore having more impact on the street scene..

18. The proposed cabinet will be approximately 1.5m high x 1.8m wide x 0.7m deep. It will be set on a concrete base with incoming ducts. The cabinet will be positioned on the verge on the outside of the footway and cycle path so will not obstruct access. Similar cabinets are not unfamiliar within the street scene in the Borough being similar to control boxes for traffic lights or for telecoms. Its siting, design and appearance are therefore considered acceptable.
19. The monopole will be galvanised steel and therefore grey in colour, similar to the street lamps on Euxton Lane. The cabinet will be coloured dark green.
20. On the basis of the above, it is considered that the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed monopole and cabinet are acceptable and thus the proposal accords with the Framework and the objectives of the NIP 2014.

Conclusion

21. The smart metering network is now a Government priority that this proposal would help to meet and on the basis of the above, it is not considered that prior approval is required as to the siting and design of the proposed monopole.

Planning Policies

In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review 2003 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposals has had regard to guidance contained with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the development plan and the emerging Local Plan 2012-2026.