

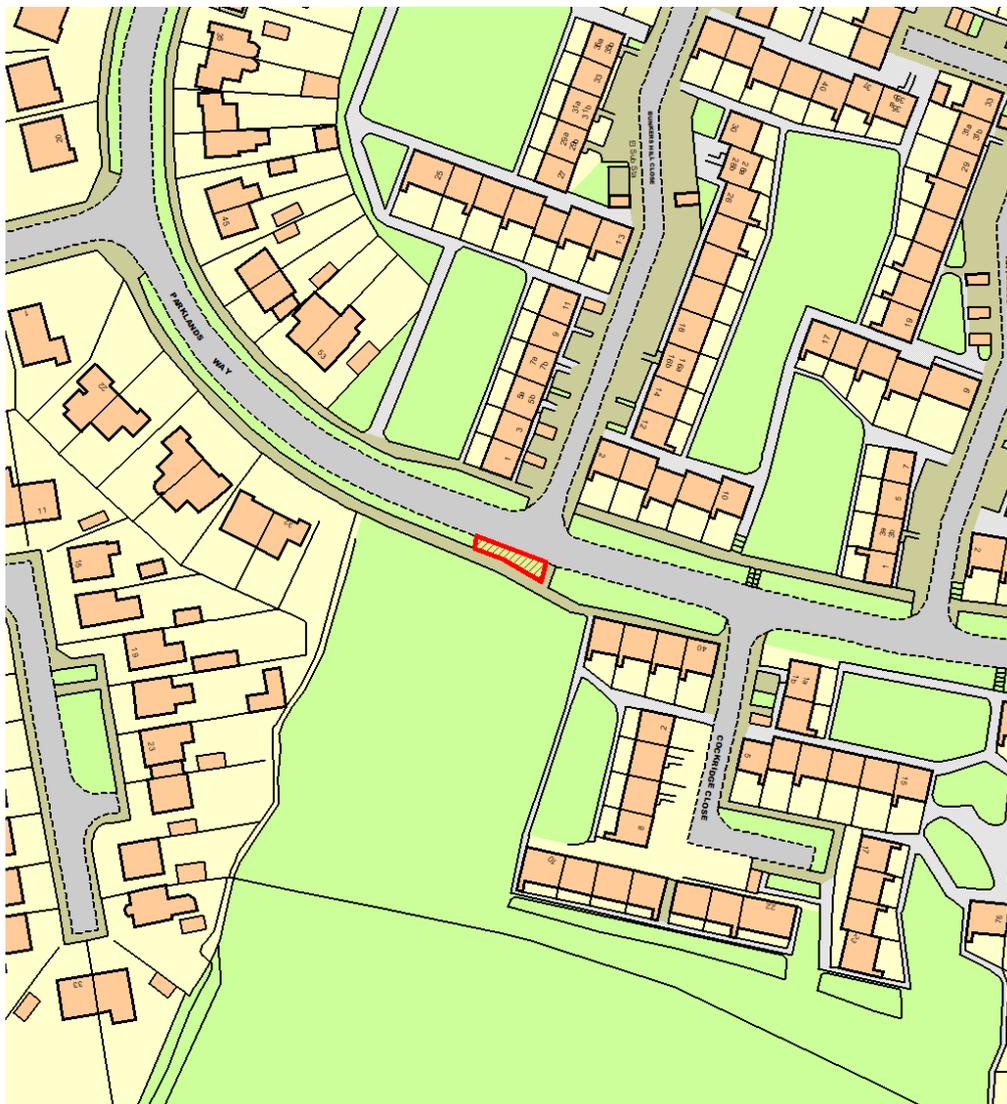
**Proposed development: Full Planning Permission - Removal of 12m high street furniture style mast with 3No. antennas with GRP shroud, 6No. cabinets, 1No. pillar and all ancillary development and installation of 20m high street furniture style mast with 6No. antennas, 3No. cabinets and all ancillary development**

**Site address: Telecommunications site, Parklands Way, Blackburn, BB2 4RH**

**Applicant: Cornerstone c/o Agent**

**Ward: Ewood**

**Councillor Jon Baldwin  
Councillor Maureen Bateson MBE  
Councillor Jim Casey**



## **1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 The proposed development is recommended to be granted planning permission, subject to the conditions and informative notes detailed in Section 5.

## **2.0 KEY ISSUES/SUMMARY OF PLANNING BALANCE**

- 2.1 This application is presented to the Planning and Highways Committee, in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation, and given the fact that the application site forms part of the public highway network, thereby falling within the ownership of the Council.
- 2.2 The proposed development has been publicised through letters to residents of the nearest 13 adjacent properties on 09<sup>th</sup> February 2022. A site notice was also displayed outside of the site on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022. No public representations have been made insofar. Should any be made ahead of the date of committee, they will be presented as part of a committee update report.
- 2.3 The Council's development plan supports new telecommunications developments and associated works, provided they constitute sustainable development and accord with the development plan, when taken as a whole.
- 2.4 The proposal will deliver a replacement telecommunications mast and associated ground-based radio equipment housing cabinets for the provision of 5G mobile technology.
- 2.5 On balance, the proposal would be satisfactory from a technical point of view, with all issues having been addressed through the application process, or capable of being controlled or mitigated through appropriately worded planning conditions.
- 2.6 The key issues to be addressed in determining this application are as follows;
- Establishing the technological need for the development
  - The design of the proposals
  - Establishing likely impacts on the visual amenity of the area
  - Ensuring the amenities of residential neighbours are adequately safeguarded
  - Ensuring public health is adequately safeguarded
  - Establishing likely impacts on the public highway network

## **3.0 RATIONALE**

### **3.1 Site and Surroundings**

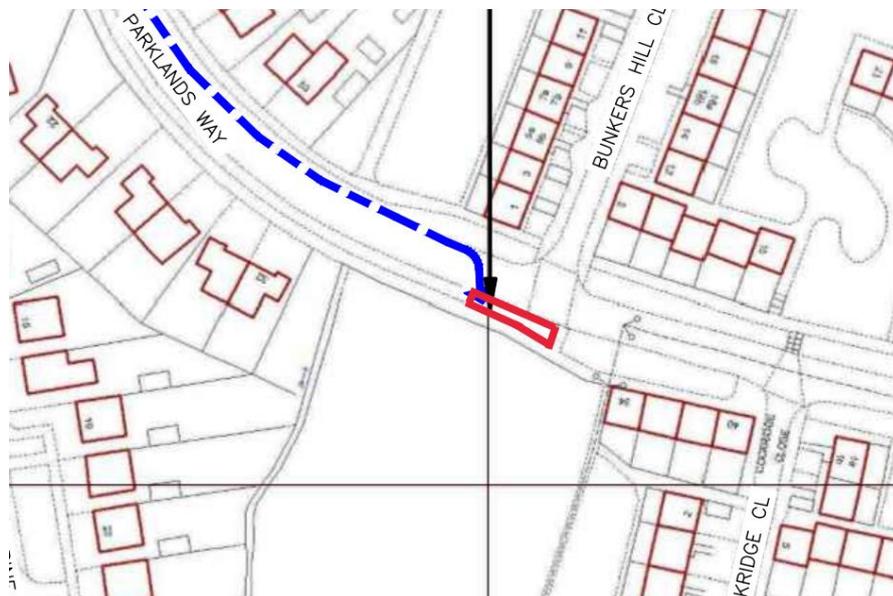
- 3.1.1 The application site is small strip of grassed public highway land located within the settlement of Blackburn. The site covers an area of circa 75 square meters and the carriageway of Parklands Way defines the north boundary.

3.1.2 A 12.5m high telecommunications mast and various associated ground-based radio equipment housing cabinets are currently in place, which were approved under application 10/14/0527 (Prior Approval application). Two-storey dwellings and open public amenity land surround to all sides. Land levels rise towards the south where the town gives way to agricultural land uses.

Figure One – Satellite image of the site



Figure Two – Location Plan showing the extent of the site



### 3.2 Proposed Development

3.2.1 This planning application initially involves the initial removal of a 12.5m high streetpole and six associated ground-based radio equipment housing cabinets. In their place, a replacement 20m high street furniture style mast would be installed with six antennas. In addition, three associated ground-based radio equipment housing cabinets would also be installed.



### 3.3 Case Officer Site Photos



### 3.4 Development Plan

#### 3.4.1 Local Plan Part 2 (adopted December 2015):

- Policy 8: Development and People
- Policy 10: Accessibility and Transport
- Policy 11: Design
- Policy 44: Telecommunications

#### 3.4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 10: Supporting high quality communications

## 4.0 **ASSESSMENT**

### 4.1 Technological Need

4.1.1 Within Policy 44, there are initial requirements regarding need to explore alternative opportunities to erecting new telecommunications masts. In support of those requirements, a Supporting Statement has been submitted outlining the technical requirements of the proposals.

4.1.2 Given that new 5G technologies operate in higher frequency bands than older systems, they are more susceptible to inference from street clutter such as trees and buildings, thereby requiring a higher structure to achieve the same coverage footprint as say for example 4G technologies. Furthermore, unlike older systems 5G frequencies use adaptive beamforming technologies to increase capacity and data speeds to the user. For effective beamforming the antenna will normally need to be mounted higher than conventional antennas.

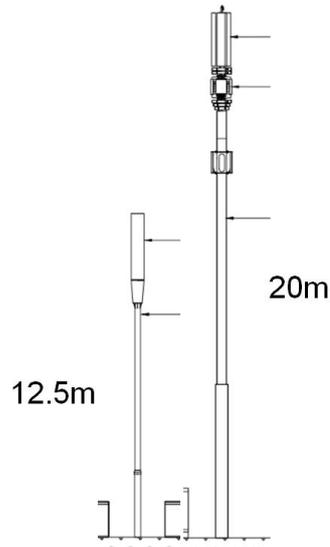
4.1.3 These factors drive a requirement for an increase in antenna height for the provision of 5G technologies and there are no existing buildings locally of the

required height to support the proposed technology. Therefore, the supporting information provided adequately confirms that a 20m high mast is required in order to meet the needs of the development, in compliance with the initial requirements of Policy 44.

#### 4.2 Design and Visual Amenity

- 4.2.1 In general terms, Policy 11 requires all development proposals to represent a good standard of design through demonstrating an understanding of the sites wider context and making a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the local area. Specific sections within Policy 11 concern character, townscape, and the public realm. Positive aspects of character must be taken into account and reinforced in new developments, including the established height of the adjacent buildings and the relationship between development proposals and the streetscene.
- 4.2.2 New development is required to create an attractive and coherent townscape both within the development itself and by reference to its integration with the wider built environment through respecting the scale of adjacent buildings and adding definition to the streetscape. In addition, new development must create a high quality and stimulating public realm that prioritises the needs and amenities of people. The overall design and furnishing of developments within public spaces must be implemented in a way that complements the character of the area and minimises street clutter.
- 4.2.3 With specific reference to telecommunications developments, Policy 44 reinforces those requirements. The impacts of such forms of development on townscape quality of areas must be minimised, within the constraints of operating requirements, through appropriate siting, design, materials and colour schemes.
- 4.2.4 In addition, Paragraph 115 of the Framework 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.
- 4.2.5 Figure Five below shows the comparative heights of the existing and proposed masts. A height increase of circa 60% would be applicable. It is acknowledged that the proposed 20m mast would form an overly prominent feature within its immediate setting. The exclusively residential character of the surrounding area is also noted. That said, there is already a tall telecommunications mast (12.5m in height) and number of radio equipment housing cabinets on site and the presence of those existing structures must be given a significant level of weight in assessing this application.

Figure Six – Comparative heights of the existing and proposed masts



4.2.6 The height of the proposed mast coupled with the open character of the area would make camouflaging the development impossible. That said, both the mast and associated cabinets would be grey in colour, thereby ensuring a certain level of visual consistency is maintained with existing street furniture. In addition, the total number of cabinets would be reduced, thereby reducing the overall amount of street clutter associated with the development.

4.2.7 When those positions considered alongside the technological need for the development, the proposals would not cause any material level of harm to the aesthetical character of the locality or the townscape generally, in accordance with Policy 11, the relevant requirements of Policy 44 and Paragraph 115 of the Framework.

#### 4.3 Residential Amenity and Public Health

4.3.1 Policy 8 states that all development proposals must secure a satisfactory level of amenity and safety for surrounding uses with reference to the relationship between buildings. An adequate level of separation would be maintained between the nearest residential properties to ensure the development does not appear oppressive to neighbours.

4.3.2 Concerning public health, the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England (2016) states that telecommunications systems should comply with guidelines laid down by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and that LPAs should not seek to determine health and safety matters that are subject to separate public health controls.

4.3.3 Provided applications are accompanied with an ICNIRP certificate, no further judgement on health and safety issues can be applied as part of planning applications. Such a certificate accompanies the application and BwD Public Protection have raised no objections on public health grounds having viewed it.

The proposed development is thus acceptable in relation to residential amenity and public health, in accordance with Policy 8.

#### 4.4 Highway Safety

4.4.1 An overarching requirement for all development proposals to not prejudice road safety or the safe, efficient and convenient movement of all highway users is contained within Policy 10. As detailed above, the proposals would be contained within a grassed strip of the highway and no obstructions would be caused for pedestrians. Equally, both the proposed mast and cabinets would be sufficiently set back from the carriageway edge to prevent any visibility issues for passing motorists.

4.4.2 BwD Property Services have reviewed the merits of the application and a request has been made to lay a hard surface around the development in order to aid future highways maintenance efforts. However, such requirements are controlled by highways legislation and through the issuing of permits in order to undertake works within the public highways network. When those factors are considered, the proposed development is thus acceptable in relation to highway safety, in accordance with Policy 10.

#### 4.5 Summary

4.5.1 This application involves the installation of a replacement telecommunications mast and associated radio equipment housing cabinets. Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposed development would be acceptable on all the relevant planning grounds, in accordance with the policies detailed in Section 3.4.

4.5.2 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal would be acceptable in relation to technological need, design and visual amenity, residential amenity and public health, and highway safety.

4.5.3 The proposed development therefore complies with the development plan. There is a positive presumption in favour of approving the development and there are no material reasons to object to the application.

### **5.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

#### **5.1 Delegated authority is given to the Strategic Director of Place to approve planning permission, subject to the following conditions.**

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

REASON: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Unless explicitly required by condition within this consent, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the proposals as detailed on drawings: Location Plan (100), 201,

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to clarify which plans are relevant to the consent.

3. The external finishes applied to the development hereby approved shall be as stated on the application form and approved drawings and those details shall not be varied within the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: Those finishes are acceptable for the proposed and site, in the interests of visual amenity, and comply with the requirements of Policy 11 of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Local Plan Part 2, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Adopted 2015).

## **6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 6.1 10/10/0176 – Installation of a streetworks monopole supporting 3no Vodafone antenna and 3no O2 antenna within a GRP shroud overall height 13.8m 2no equipment cabinets and ancillary development – Approved by deemed consent – April 2010.
- 6.2 10/14/0527 – Replacement of existing 13.8m monopole with 15m dual user monopole housing 3no. antennas and new ancillary cabinet equipment – Approved, with conditions – July 2014 (Prior Approval application).

## **7.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 BwD Public Protection – No objections, given the submission of an ICNIRP declaration certification.
- 7.2 BwD Property Services – No objection. Ideally, a solid base would be laid around the development to aid grounds maintenance.
- 7.3 Ward Cllrs
- 7.4 No public comments have been received

**8.0 CONTACT OFFICER:** Christian Barton – Planning Officer

**9.0 DATE PREPARED:** 03<sup>rd</sup> March 2022