

APPLICATION NO	PA/2015/0845
APPLICANT	Quickline Ltd
DEVELOPMENT	Planning permission to erect a WiFi mast and accompanying generator
LOCATION	Land adjacent to the reservoir, access road to Northwold Farm, Worlabby
PARISH	WORLABY
WARD	Brigg and Wolds
CASE OFFICER	Andrew Law
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION	Grant permission subject to conditions
REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE	Objection by Worlabby Parish Council

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework: Paragraph 42 states that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

Paragraph 43 states that existing masts, buildings and other 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.

North Lincolnshire Local Plan: Policy DS1 (General Requirements)

Policy DS19 (Telecommunications Equipment)

Policy RD2 (Development in the Open Countryside)

Policy HE9 (Archaeological Evaluation)

North Lincolnshire Core Strategy: Policy CS1 (Spatial Strategy for North Lincolnshire)

Policy CS2 (Delivering More Sustainable Development)

Policy CS3 (Development Limits)

CONSULTATIONS

Highways: No objection.

Historic Environment Record: No objection.

Humberside Airport: No objection subject to conditions.

PARISH COUNCIL

Worlaby Parish Council objects to the mast on the grounds that it would have a visual impact on the parish. The application may be looked at more favourably if the mast was located nearer to Northwold Farm infrastructure or nearer to the Elsham telecommunications mast on Wootton Road.

PUBLICITY

There are no residential properties adjacent to the site; the application has been advertised by site notice.

ASSESSMENT

The application site is a piece of agricultural land adjacent to a covered reservoir approximately 750 metres north-east of Worlaby. The site sits close to the top of the Lincolnshire Wolds scarp slope, with land to the west sloping sharply down to the low villages of Bonby and Worlaby. Access to the site is gained via the access road to Northwold Farm.

This application seeks planning permission to erect a wi-fi mast and associated generator on the site. The mast is 40 metres tall and will sit, along with its associated generator, within a compound measuring 10 metres by 12 metres which will be bounded by 1.8 metre high palisade fencing.

The main issue in the determination of this application is whether the mast will have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity.

Policy DS19 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan is the most relevant development plan policy in the determination of this application. Policy DS19 recognises that modern telecommunications systems are an essential component of a sustainable economy. This policy states that when considering planning applications for telecommunications equipment consideration will be given to the siting, design and visual impact of the equipment; the impact upon heritage assets and residential amenity; whether the operator has explored the possibility of using existing buildings, structures or masts; and securing the removal of telecommunications apparatus that is no longer required for its original purpose and the restoration of the site.

Visual impact

The application site forms part of an agricultural field and sits directly adjacent to an existing covered reservoir. It is adjacent to the access road to Northwold Farm close proximity to the junction of this road and Middlegate Lane to the west. The site is not allocated for any purpose and is not covered by any landscape designation.

The mast is of a fairly typical lattice tower design and is 40 metres in height. Whilst the site is located in a relatively isolated location within the open countryside, there are existing vertical structures in the area, including power lines and a telecommunications mast close to the B1206 to the east. For these reasons it is considered that the proposed mast would not be visually intrusive and would not have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity in the area.

Heritage

The applicants have submitted a heritage assessment as part of their application to consider the impact of the proposed mast on the historic environment, including listed buildings and archaeology. The heritage assessment concludes that there will be no significant negative effects on the historic environment from this scheme. The council's Historic Environment Record has been consulted on the application and has raised no objections with regard to impact on the historic environment.

Residential amenity

The application site is located atop the Wold scarp slope, in a relatively isolated position. As such there is a significant distance to residential properties. Furthermore, the nearest settlements of Bonby and Worlaby are located at the bottom of the scarp slope and as such the mast will not be visible from these settlements. On this basis it is considered that the proposed mast will have no significant impact on residential amenity in the area.

Site sharing

The applicant has confirmed that they have investigated the possibility of using existing masts or structures rather than erecting a new mast. However it is not possible to use existing sites due to issues with capacity on existing masts and potential frequency clashes. Furthermore, there are issues with gaining access for maintenance on existing masts such as the one outside of Elsham: Quickline are required to resolve faults with their service within 24 hours, whereas more than 24 hours' notice is required to access the other masts. In addition to these issues the applicant has stated that due to increases in rental charges, it would not be financially viable to use existing sites.

It is considered that the applicant has properly investigated the possibility of site/mast sharing and that the need for a new mast is justified.

Restoration of the site

A condition has been recommended that requires the mast to be removed, and the site restored to its former condition, should the mast no longer be needed to house telecommunications equipment.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed mast will have no unacceptable impact on local residents or the surrounding area. Furthermore, the mast will play an important role in providing a high quality telecommunications network across North Lincolnshire. For these reasons the application should be supported.

RECOMMENDATION Grant permission subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason

To comply with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2.

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 152-108-01, 152-108-02 and 152-108-03.

Reason

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

3.

If the mast hereby permitted ceases to be used to house operational telecommunications equipment for a continuous period of 12 months, it shall be dismantled and removed from the site, and the site shall be restored in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority no later than 2 months from the said period of 12 months.

Reason

In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy DS19 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Informative 1

The applicants' attention is drawn to the attached letter from Humberside Airport and the recommendations contained therein.

Informative 2

In determining this application, the council, as local planning authority, has taken account of the guidance in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework in order to seek to secure sustainable development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

North Lincolnshire Council

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APPLICATION SITE

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