

CTIL 112827-23, North Footpath of Slater Road, Front Street/Chirton Lane, Opposite Chirton Social Club, North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE29 7QF

Cornerstone are currently in the process of upgrading a number of their existing telecommunications sites, such as the existing site on the footway at Front Street, opposite Chirton Social Club. The upgrade will allow Telefonica UK Limited, to provide improved 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and capacity, and new 5G service provision, to the area. The Government fully supports the provision of this latest technology due to the significant economic and social benefits that high quality, advanced and reliable communications are known to provide. It expects the UK to be a leader in 5G and everyone to have access to the 5G network. The operator is working within Government national targets for most people to have access to 5G technologies by 2027. This was further endorsed by Matt Warman MP (former Digital Infrastructure Minister) in his Connected Britain 2020 Keynote speech outlining the ongoing work by the government and telecoms industry to boost the UK's world class digital connectivity.

It is imperative to note that the proposal is for the upgrade of an existing telecommunications site, which is fully in line with National and Local planning policy, which advises operators to take a sequential approach. Upgrading existing sites is sequentially the most preferable option.

Cellular networks are made up of several individual cell areas, each of which has a base station within it. A good analogy for describing a cellular network is that of a patchwork quilt with each cell area being one of the many patches that are sewn together making up the network 'quilt'. The existing site forms a mature and established part of the operator's network in North Shields. Therefore, the replacement monopole must be located as close as possible to the existing in order for it to continue to serve this 'patch' of the 'quilt' with replica coverage. If a patch is removed, then a hole is formed in the quilt. Similarly, removing the existing site and relocating it a distance away would cause a hole in coverage leading to dropped calls and buffering and thus a worse customer experience. This is an unacceptable situation for the operator and would fail its design brief of improving coverage to this cell area with new 5G service provision, whilst still being able to provide 2G, 3G and 4G coverage. For technical reasons these older technologies are still required for 5G to be able to access the network. Take them away and 5G would not be able to be provided in and around Front Street.

3G and 4G signals by their very nature do not travel very far, 5G even less so due to their poorer propagation properties at the higher frequencies that they operate within. This is also dependent on the topography of the land, building clutter and vegetation including trees in the area which can all reduce their effectiveness.

A large part of the objection relates to health. The legislation on this is very clear, as set out at paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states Local Planning Authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. They should not set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure (ICNIRP). An ICNIRP certificate and Declaration of Conformity have been included as part of the application supporting documentation, and therefore any objections relating to health are not something to be considered in the planning application or its determination.

The proposed replacement mast would be located some 5m south west of the existing column. Therefore, the new column would be positioned at a greater oblique angle than the current situation for the properties on Simpson Street.

The objector suggests that a better alternative would be where the existing CCTV pole and camera is located along Silkey's Lane which appears to be outside the football club. This is too far from the existing site to be able to provide replica 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and new 5G service provision for the target coverage area. It would therefore lead to dropped calls and buffering and ultimately a worse customer experience than the current situation.

Similarly, the alternative location stated as '*space at the top of Ripley Avenue off Front St*' would also be too far away from the existing installation and as such would fail the design brief of improving coverage and bringing 5G into the surrounding area.

The proposed upgrade of this existing established telecommunications radio base station to provide improved existing coverage and new 5G service provision to this busy area of Chirton and all the associated economic and social benefits which are fully outlined within the applicant's supporting statement, is in full conformity with national and local planning policy guidance. It is respectfully requested that members approve this planning application.