

Ms Jennifer Jennings  
Durham County Council  
Planning Development Central/East  
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Durham DH1 5UL

City of Durham Parish Council  
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23 August 2019

Dear Ms Jennings,

**DM/19/02375/ PNT | Prior notification for the installation of a 17.5m high HEL Phase 5 streetworks tower on D9-4 root foundation and associated works. | Land At Darlington Road Durham DH1 4PE**

The City of Durham Parish Council's Planning Committee considered this application at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019 and agreed to object on the following grounds.

Firstly, the proposed 17.5m high HEL Phase 5 streetworks tower would be a structure of significantly greater scale than other structures and features in this area and the Parish Council considers the harmful effect that the proposal would have on the character and appearance of Darlington Road to be unacceptable. The proposed site and along this stretch of Darlington Road is residential in character but this is an area of significant natural beauty.

It is the view of the Parish Council that the siting and appearance of the proposed tower would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of this area and its surroundings. The Parish Council regards the proposal to be contrary to policy U1(6) of the City of Durham Local Plan (May 2004), which relates specifically to public utilities and requires that the relationship between the design of the equipment and the site and its surroundings be taken into consideration.

Secondly, the Parish Council does not regard the extent and detail of the search area justification to be sufficiently robust to persuade the Council that the harm to the locality as highlighted above is outweighed by a need to site the proposed tower in the proposed location. For instance, there is no evidence based on the information before the Parish Council that the applicant has considered site or mast sharing with any existing structures or installations. Such an undertaking by the applicant being successful would accord with para 113 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that the number of masts, and sites for such installations should be kept to a minimum. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Parish Council can see that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structures; a requirement set in para 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Taking these points into consideration, the Parish Council also regards this application to be contrary to policy u1 (4) of the city of Durham Local Plan (May 2004) which requires that the possibility of shared use of existing sites and structure be considered as part of any application of this kind.

Thirdly, para 113 of the NPPF also requires that equipment be “sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate”. The design of the mast is identical to that of the previous proposal for a streetworks tower and is only (approx..) 130 metres away from the previous site which was dismissed on appeal (APP/X1355/W/18/3194567). In refusing the appeal for the previous application, it is worth noting that, the Planning Inspector Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI concluded that the streetworks tower would stand significantly, and harmfully, taller than other structures in the area and thus, rather than assimilating the tower into the streetscene, the tower would “stand incongruously and distinctly visually apart...”

In conclusion, the Parish Council is very much mindful of the social and economic benefits of improving access to 4G and 5G services in Durham and recognises that the provision of high-quality communications infrastructure can be of significant benefit. Nevertheless, the harm that the siting and appearance of the proposed 17.5m high HEL Phase 5 streetworks tower would cause to the character and appearance of the area of Darlington Road is, in the Parish Council’s view, unacceptable. In an environmentally sensitive City such as Durham, the impact of these services needs to be carefully assessed so that their intrusion is minimised wherever possible.

Yours sincerely,

**Adam Shanley**  
**Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council**