

Council reject plans for 5G mast in Granton

Plans for a 5G mast on a site earmarked for a 'future tram stop' in Granton have been thrown out by The City of Edinburgh Council following an appeal.

Councillors refused mobile network Three permission for the 20 metre-high telecoms pole in 'close proximity' to a 'future tram route safeguard and future tram stop' on West Harbour Road, which is designated in the city's Local Development Plan.

Planners raised additional concerns that the mast would be on the capital's core path network, which local group Spokes argued would "cause an obstruction and reduce the space available for walking and cycling".

Meeting on Wednesday (August 10) to discuss the appeal, lodged after the proposal was refused in February, planning officer Ken Tippen said it was a "problematic case" as the application had been submitted wrongly – and would otherwise have been likely to be successful the first time.

He explained the council had invited Three to withdraw and re-submit but the company "insisted it be reviewed".

Cllr Neil Gardiner said he "would expect this applicant to know the rules in Scotland differ" and added the application should nevertheless be determined "on its merits".

He continued that there were "strong grounds for refusal".

Mr Tippen said: "The council's transport service was consulted, they recommended that the application should be refused as it was within the limits of deviation of the future Edinburgh tram line. The limits of deviation are essentially the envelope in which the tram could be constructed."

He added it wouldn't have a negative visual impact on the area but "would prejudice the implementation of an identified public transport safeguard and would be damaging to a path which forms part of the core path network".

20 objections were sent to the council regarding the plans, including from one Granton Square resident who said the mast would be "20m from my bedroom window", adding he is "seriously concerned" about the potential health impacts for his family as a result of being exposed to 5G.

Another local resident said the pole would 'remove space from a busy shared use' by reducing the width of the path 'by 25 per cent'.

In an appeal letter to the council, Three argued there is an "acute need" for the mast to "bring the benefits of 5G to the area".

It added: "It is our opinion the local planning authority has not fully considered the significant efforts made to ensure the designs strike an appropriate balance between operational requirements, and the significant improvements enhanced 5G will bring.

"The apparatus will blend into the existing street scene and the overall proposal represents an appropriate balance between visual impact and operational requirements.

"At 20 metres, the pole is at the absolute minimum height which can be deployed. In addition, the pole and cabinets are to be coloured green to blend in with the adjacent parcel of grassland and trees within the wider area."

Councillors unanimously agreed to uphold the council's initial decision to refuse the mast planning permission.

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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