

Re: **Objection to Planning Application Ref: 25/03032/TD – Proposed 10m Mast with Horizontal and Vertical Bifold Aerial at Corner Sports Club, Whitethorn Lane Letchworth.**

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish to object to the above application for a **10-metre mast with horizontal and vertical bifold aerials**. I have set out a list of reasons below:

1. Harm to Local Character and Visual Amenity

The Corner Sports Club is a recreational sports and leisure ground surrounded by residential homes. The roads themselves have grass verges with streetlamps (approx. 8m high) and with mature cherry trees (approximately 5m tall). The introduction of a 10-metre steel monopole would nearly double the height of the building it is attached to and provide a stark vertical eyesore that clearly breaks the roofline of all houses in the neighbourhood and would therefore loom over the rooftops, streetlamps and trees on the road.

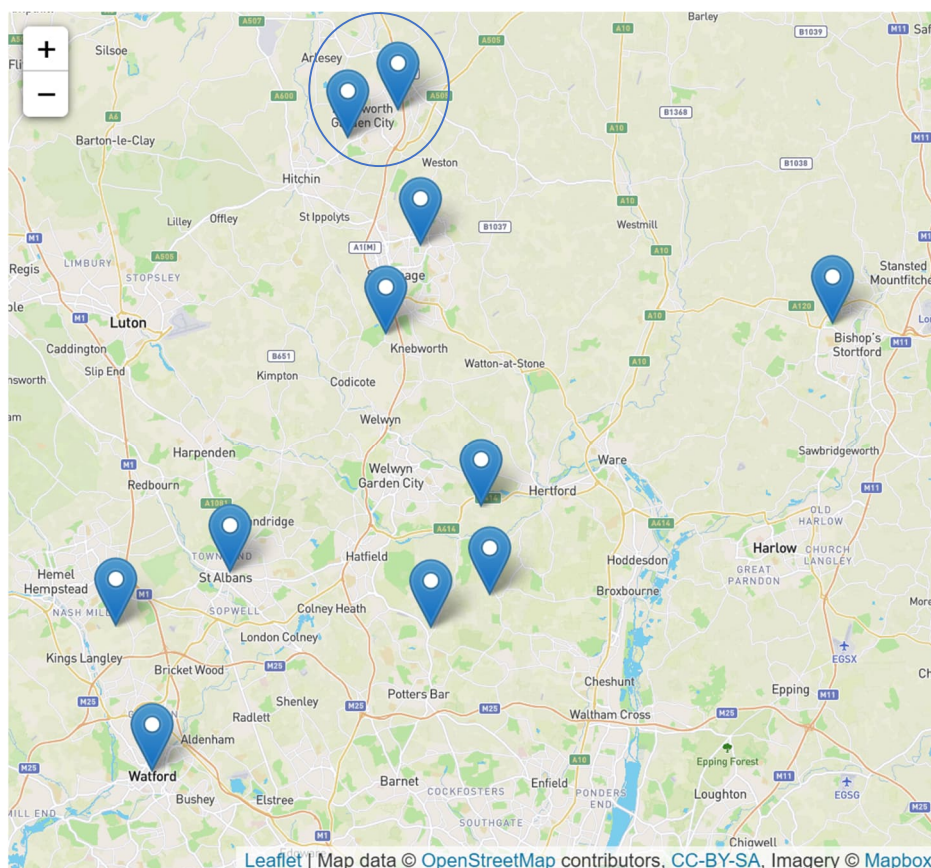
There would be no shielding whatsoever and a clear line of sight of the monopole over a wide field of view, from many front rooms, bedrooms, gardens, roads and the bowling and cricket club itself.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2025 guidance on communication masts (Sect 10 para 120) states: “...equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.”

- The application does not attempt to minimise this highly prominent structure, the application does not meet this guideline and should be refused.

2. Lack of Demonstrated Need

The applicant has not provided technical mapping, coverage plots, or propagation diagrams demonstrating a coverage gap. Without these, the Council surely cannot assess whether the mast is necessary. To redress this please see the map below (RadioDNS.uk) which shows the radio transmitters in Hertfordshire. This shows how the existing provision of mast sites in Letchworth is much higher than elsewhere in Hertfordshire.



The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2025 states: “The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum”

- By suggesting three RF mast sites are required in Letchworth, a smaller town of approximately eight square metres, the proposal ignores the guideline and therefore should be refused as disproportionate.

3. Failure to Demonstrate Use of Existing Infrastructure

A Heart FM mast already exists in Letchworth in Briar Patch Lane and serves both Letchworth and Hitchin. A much larger mast exists on the opposite side of town which houses a DAB multiplex.

NPPF (2025) guidance **“Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged.”**

- If this proposal is accepted it would embolden further speculative applications in the North Herts area without regard for use of existing bases.

4. Evidence of consultation

NPPF (2025) guidelines on evidence on the outcome of consultations:

“Applications for electronic communications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include a) the outcome of consultations with organisations with an interest in the proposed development.”

I am a fee-paying member of the Corner Sports Club and the Whitethorn Lane Bowls Club and did not receive any invitation to consult on this matter. I was first aware of the plan when I received a letter from NHDC. The Bowls Club committee were only informed of the application by Whitethorn Lane residents rather than the Corner Sports Club.

I also note that there were no planning applications on the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation planning portal (either with or without a concrete installation). It is unclear if the landowner (LGCHF) has been consulted.

- This application should be refused as evidence of consultation is entirely missing from the application.

5. Future expansion

A successful application would result in further planning proposals in the grounds. It would be difficult for NHDC to refuse such applications as evidence suggests that appeals by applicants are frequently successful. This would result in an increase in cumulative radiation exposure, which, even if it would not exceed the International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection, would still be a concern for many.

It is good to see that most telecommunication sites are in non-residential areas, in keeping with the guideline ‘allows for reasonable capacity for future expansion...’ (NPPF (2025)). This would not be the case in the Corner Sports Club. The original planning proposal (January 2026) was for a 15m tall steel lattice on a concrete base on a narrow stretch of grass already housing a fire escape and an equipment shed. Furthermore, the patch is bounded by the bowling green, club house and narrow entry road which must accommodate two-way traffic, as the only access from the road. Not surprisingly Whitethorn Lane Bowls Club made objections to the Corner Sports committee on the grounds that it would reduce their accessibility to the green.

- This location does not have capacity for further telecommunication development and should be refused.

Conclusion

The proposal is inconsistent with guidance from the NPPF. The mast would be incompatible with the character of the local area and become the dominant feature in the neighbourhood. The applicant has not justified need for further development or, if required, why existing mast sites cannot be used; the original proposal was misleading and contradictory. It is disappointing that this stage has been reached without consultation of member of the sports club. I have drawn the attention of this matter to LGCHF. NHDC is compelled to reject this application if it is to uphold the essence of strategic planning set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Yours faithfully,

Rebecca Clarke (23 Whitethorn Lane, Letchworth, Hertfordshire. SG62DN [REDACTED])