



**Development Plan allocation and policies:**

Primarily Residential Area

**Planning History:**

ANT/2010/01516 - Installation of 13.8 metres high shared Vodafone and O2 telecommunications mast housing 6 No. antennas within a 480mm GRP shroud, 1 No. shared radio equipment cabinet and 1 No. electrical metres cabinet (Withdrawn 25/01/2011)

**Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:****Representations**

A Site Notice was displayed and a total of 97 letters of notification sent to properties in the area. As a result, there were two objections received, objecting on the grounds that the proposal would be an eyesore, would ruin private amenity area by virtue of it's visual presence, would harm property value, and on potential health grounds.

**Consultations**

Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management Division) - No objection

Director of Law, HR & Asset Management (Environmental Protection) - No objection, having considered that:

1. The level of emissions from the proposed telecommunications mast conforms to the standard set by the International Commission on Non-ionising Radiation Protection
2. Members of the public will not have access to the exclusion zone.
3. The Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation, in the report of the 14th January 2004 states that: "Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health."

**Director's Comments:****REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Councillor Karen Hayes requested that the application be taken out of delegation, and objects to the proposal on the grounds that it would clutter the streetscene, be detrimental to local amenity and will be located too close to a primary school.

**INTRODUCTION**

The application is for the erection of a 12.5 metres high telecommunications mast, appearing as a replica telegraph pole. There will also be one ground based equipment cabinet, measuring approximately 1.8 metres (width) x 0.4 metres (depth) x 1.4 metres (height), and an electrical metres pillar. The proposal will be a mast share for the use of both O2 and Vodafone.

**PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The application is a prior approval notification of the applicant's intention to erect a mast and seeks the Local Planning Authority's approval for its siting and appearance only. The principle of the mast is permitted under Part 24 of the (General Permitted Development) Order, and as such the local planning authority cannot object to the principle of a mast.

**SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site is the pavement just in front of a grass verge located at the junction of Mill Lane and Rostherne Avenue, adjacent to a bridge on Mill Lane which crosses the Kingsway Tunnel Approach.

The area is designated as a Primarily Residential Area within Wirral's Unitary Development Plan and is predominantly residential - although there are a number of commercial uses on the opposite side of the junction.

There are lampposts throughout the area, measuring approximately 10m in height, whilst the grass verge also contains a number of trees, approximately 5m in height.

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

PPG8 gives national guidance on planning for telecommunications development including radio masts and towers, antennas of all kinds, radio equipment housing, public call boxes, cabinets, poles and overhead wires.

It should be noted that the Government's policy is to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The aim of telecommunications policy is to ensure that people have a choice as to who provides their telecommunications service, a wider range of services from which to choose and equitable access to the latest technologies as they become available.

Policies TEL1 (Principles for Telecommunication) TE1 (Criteria for Telecommunications Development) of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Document 1 (Designing for Development By Mobile Phone Operators).

The criteria outlined by the policies and associated guidance document require that proposals such as this should be assessed based on, the impact of the proposal on residential amenity through siting and external appearance, that it has been demonstrated the apparatus cannot be located on an existing building or that an existing mast cannot be shared.

### **APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES**

The applicant has demonstrated that they have searched for alternative sites. These sites and the reasons for them being discounted are:

St Luke's Church, Mill Lane and Imperial, Breck Road: These buildings are relatively low and an installation of this height would not provide the required level of coverage to the whole of the target area.

The Wood Company, Mill Lane and pavement outside Bubbles Car Wash, Breck Road: It was considered that a proposal in either of these locations would be more visually prominent within the street scene due to the nature of the surrounding land uses.

Poulton Victoria FC, Limekilm Lane: The site owner is unwilling to allow this site to be used.

Huws Grey Timber, Breck Road: There is insufficient space available to implement a proposal of this nature.

Existing H3G mast, Wallasey Fire Station, Mill Lane: The existing mast is designed as a single user installation and therefore cannot accommodate additional operators.

An alternative suggestion was to install a mast designed as a replica telephone pole. However, this was not considered feasible as due to this type of pole employing a stacked antenna system, the lowest set of antennas would have to be above 11 metres due to the height of the surrounding buildings and would result in the mast having to be 15 metres in height, which would be considered unacceptable.

A previous application (ANT/2010/01516) was withdrawn due to land ownership issues. There was also some concern over the height of the proposed mast, which would have been 13.8 metres.

The proposal has been reduced in height to 12.5 metres, which the applicant states is the lowest height feasible given the location, and given that the site is a mast share between two mobile phone operators. Mast sharing will negate the requirement for a further telecommunications mast within the immediate area, which supports this application. Along with this, it is considered that the proposal, set against the backdrop of the grass verge, a number of trees and the Kingsway Tunnel Approach, is a fitting location for the proposed mast, ensuring that it will not appear as an obtrusive, overly large feature.

The proposed cabinet has also been reduced in height from the previous proposal and it is now considered that it is an acceptable size and scale, and will not harm the character or appearance of the street scene.

Overall, the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the appearance or character of the street scene, nor will it appear as an obtrusive feature. The proposal will have no adverse impact on the amenities of nearby properties. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy TE1 and TEL1 of Wirral's Unitary Development Plan.

#### **SEPARATION DISTANCES**

Separation distances do not apply in this instance, as no habitable windows will be directly affected by the proposed development.

#### **HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are no highway or traffic implications.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to these proposals.

#### **HEALTH ISSUES**

The Government recognises that health considerations and public concern can, in principle, be material considerations when determining applications for planning permission or prior approval. National planning policy in PPG8, however, indicates that if base stations meet ICNIRP guidelines it should not be necessary for the Local Planning Authority to consider further the health aspects or concerns about them. The Local Planning Authority expects all applications for mobile telephone equipment to be accompanied by a certificate confirming that all proposed apparatus would be compliant with ICNIRP guidelines. The applicant has confirmed by the necessary certification that the emission levels from the proposed antennae will be in full compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. Consequently a refusal on these grounds could not be reasonably and robustly sustained.

#### **CONCLUSION**

It is considered that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the street scene, the character of the area, or the amenities of nearby residential properties. As such, it is considered to comply with Policy TE1 and TEL1 of Wirral's Unitary Development Plan.

**Recommended          Approve**  
**Decision:**

**Further Notes for Committee:**

**Last Comments By: 08/04/2011 15:39:45**  
**Expiry Date: 06/05/2011**