

## INTERIM TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Adopted by the Council as supplementary planning guidance on 3 January 2002, following public consultation.

Through its operation of available planning controls, the council will encourage the provision of environmentally sensitive telecommunications apparatus, taking account of siting, design and amenity. Innovative design solutions will be encouraged where appropriate.

### 1. Siting and Location Considerations

Within the City there are locations that are considered more sensitive than others for the siting of telecommunications equipment due to the potential such installations have to be visually obtrusive and/or harmful to amenity.

Within the more sensitive locations listed below, telecommunications equipment will only be acceptable if:

- It is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the applicant has investigated alternative sites in a less sensitive location and that no such site is available.
- The equipment has been so designed and sited to minimise its impact on the visual amenity of the area.
- There is no adverse impact on amenity sufficient to outweigh other considerations.

### 2. More Sensitive Locations

- (a) Transport Corridors - sites fronting onto or dominating views from the ring road, main roads, railways or canals.
- (b) Predominantly Residential Areas (Locations to the front or rear of main habitable room windows should, wherever possible, particularly be avoided.)
- (c) Listed Buildings, their curtilage and setting - where the location and appearance of a mast would adversely affect the setting and appearance of a listed building.
- (d) Conservation Areas and areas adjacent to a Conservation Area where the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the areas.
- (e) Historic Parks and Gardens, public open space, greenways (as identified in UDP Policy R5) and greenbelt. Proposals should not involve the loss of public open space.
- (f) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS), Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCS), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other important archaeological remains.
- (g) Grounds of education and health institutions. These may be acceptable where the applicant can demonstrate compliance with the precautionary approach

adopted by the Stewart Report for the location of equipment. The applicant will be expected to demonstrate the agreement of the relevant school or health institution.

### 3. Less Sensitive Locations

- (a) Existing ground based masts where such masts are not already having a detrimental effect on visual or general amenity.
- (b) Commercial and industrial areas (excluding locations close to a boundary with a more sensitive location) subject to satisfactory screening and no adverse effect on the backdrop of other buildings or the skyline.
- (c) Locations on existing non-residential buildings provided the equipment has been located, designed or screened to minimise its impact on the skyline.
- (d) New tall buildings specifically designed to incorporate telecommunications equipment through the use for example, of screens and disguise.



(e) Existing plant and other structures eg electricity pylons, floodlights, CCTV camera columns, multi-storey car parks subject to equipment being of appropriate size and colour

(f) Sites substantially screened by trees or undulating landscape.

### 4. Detailed Design and Appearance Considerations

The factors which will be of particular importance in the consideration of siting include those mentioned in PPG8 and listed below:

- the height of the site in relation to surrounding land;
- the existence of topographical features and natural vegetations;
- the effect on the skyline or horizon;



- the site when observed from any side, including from outside the Authority's own area;
- the site in relation to areas designated locally for their scenic or conservation value;
- the site in relation to existing masts, structures or buildings, including buildings of an historic or traditional character, and
- the site in relation to residential property.

Developments should be designed to keep visual intrusion to a minimum. The choice as to whether ground based or building based masts, antennae and cabins are the more suitable will depend on the impact the proposal will have on visual amenity, the local character, skyline and neighbouring uses.

### (a) Ground Based Masts

- (i) Ground based masts are appropriate only in industrial areas or locations away from dwellings and their gardens, schools and health facilities.
- (ii) Opportunities should be taken to use existing screening or backdrop to buildings to reduce the impact of development. Masts and antennae are most prominent when sited in open locations when viewed against the skyline. Such locations should be avoided as they are unlikely to be acceptable. Locations in areas of public open space, particularly those involving loss of public open space, are unlikely to be acceptable.
- (iii) Ground based masts should be of the minimum height necessary for their successful operation. Monopole masts are

preferred to lattice masts which will normally only be allowed in industrial areas or where they will not be visually prominent.

- (iv) Mast sharing will be encouraged where any necessary increase in the height or bulk of the mast will not have an adverse effect on visual amenity. When proposed new masts are in the vicinity of existing masts the Council will require an explanation of why mast sharing has not been proposed.
- (v) Sufficient land should be included within the proposal to enable landscape screening including appropriate planting where deemed necessary.

## (b) Installations on Buildings

- (i) Installations on buildings will not be allowed if they would detract from architectural features of the building or from the street scene or skyline.
- (ii) Equipment should, wherever possible, be screened by existing or new screening structures.
- (iii) Where rooftop cabins would be visually prominent consideration should be given to their location within the building or at ground level in screened or unobtrusive locations eg to the rear of the building.
- (iv) Stub masts will not normally be allowed because of their impact on the skyline. The use of slimline "flagpole" masts will be encouraged.
- (v) The location of new installations on existing sites will be encouraged where the new installation would not have an adverse effect on visual amenity.

## (c) Microcell Installations

Microcell installations will normally be expected to be located on existing street furniture. Equipment cabinets should be located sensitively with regard to visual amenity and pedestrian flows.

When Microcell installations are proposed on buildings they should be sited so as to minimise the visual impact. Such proposals should be accompanied by an explanation of why the Microcell cannot be installed on street furniture.

Microcell installations proposed in Conservation Areas, on Listed Buildings or which would affect the setting of Listed Buildings should be located and designed with particular sensitivity. Proposals for Microcell installations on Listed Buildings should be accompanied by an explanation of why the Microcell

cannot be located on a nearby non-Listed Building.

In certain circumstances microcell antennas may be considered too small to be development. However, where such antennas are prominently located, particularly if on a listed building, within a Conservation Area or in any of the other sensitive areas listed in section 2 above, the Council is unlikely to take this view.

## (d) Telephone Kiosks

The siting, design and materials of telephone kiosks should be chosen to ensure that the kiosk will not interfere with pedestrian flows or detract from the street scene, character or appearance of Conservation Areas or the setting of Listed Buildings. The use of appropriate, high quality innovative designs and materials will be encouraged. Operators will be encouraged to install traditional kiosks in Conservation Areas.

## 5. Information Requirements to Enable Full Assessment and Informed Public Consultation

- (a) The information requirements for an application for prior approval are set out in Part 24 of the GDPO which specifies that the application shall be accompanied "by a written description of the proposed development and a plan indicating its proposed location together with any fee required to be paid". Nevertheless the Council will encourage applicants to provide the following additional information:

- (i) Site layout plan and elevations of the equipment and building to a minimum scale of 1:100 (larger scale plans may be requested as appropriate) including information on the plans stating the height of the equipment and height above ground level. Survey drawings when there is existing

telecommunications equipment on the site which clearly identify the new proposals and indicate all existing equipment including that of other telecommunication operators and other radio communications equipment.

- (ii) The technical justification for the location including a cell plan showing all the surrounding sites, excluding the one being applied for (the Doughnut plot), to provide an indication of the leeway available for the re-siting of the mast/base station and the technical constraints.

- (iii) A photo-montage showing the equipment in situ.

- (iv) A statement that the installation will meet the guidelines of the ICNIRP.

- (v) Evidence that alternative sites have been considered with reasons why the application site has been chosen and others rejected.

- (b) Some telecommunications development requires full planning permission. Such applications will not be registered unless accompanied by the information listed above.

## Glossary of Terms

**GDPO** - The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995

**ICNIRP** - International Commission on Non Ionising Radiation Protection

**UDP** - Unitary Development Plan

**PPG8** - Government Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 'Telecommunications'

## Contact Details

Development Control Help Desk  
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# Interim Telecommunications Policy

**Wolverhampton**  
City Council



Regeneration and Transportation