
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	7 July 2005	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Tony Sylvester (Ext. 5743)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	South Derbyshire Mobile Phone Mast Agreement	REF:
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS 03

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the draft South Derbyshire Mobile Phone Mast Agreement, as set out in the attached appendix, be sent to operators to sign up to its contents pursuant to the processing of applications for prior approval and planning permission as additional information to the policy set out in government guidance and the development plan.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek members' approval of a document relating to the installation of telecommunication base station development within the District. Members will recall agreeing to the formation of a working group to finalise the content of the document. The Group has now met and since last being presented to this committee the contents have been amended. A copy of the amended document is attached at Appendix A. The document has also been amended to take account of the changed circumstances regarding the emerging Local Plan.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 At the meeting of Council on 16th June 2005 it was agreed that a document entitled 'The South Derbyshire Mobile Phone Mast Agreement' be produced to which all the operators would be asked to sign up to.

The purpose of this draft document is to provide advice for development of telecommunications base stations within South Derbyshire. The document aims to provide guidance to prospective applicants and their agents considering such development within the District. It also aims to be a source of information to all interested parties in explaining the approach taken by the Council on this issue.

- 3.2 This document has been published to supplement Central Government set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (PPG 8) (revised August 2001) and policy set out in the adopted Local Plan and the increasing need for telecommunications masts within the District. Within PPG 8 the Government's policy is to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. (The Government itself also has responsibility for protecting public health). This document aims to set out South Derbyshire District Council's approach to telecommunication base station development and how it aims to tackle material issues.
- 3.3 In developing this guidance procedures have been reviewed. The Council considers it essential, within the legislative framework, to work with the mobile phone operators, local residents, and Parish Councils to attempt to overcome concerns in this area. To this end the document suggests a change to neighbour notification procedure and additional emphasis for prospective applicants to enter into pre-application consultation and discussion.
- 3.4 The document also recognises that Members of the Development Control Committee, in dealing with applications for telecommunication base stations, have consistently held the view that notwithstanding the findings of the Stewart Report on the health effects of mobile phones, compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines (the government test as to the safety of mast equipment) often does not address concerns people may have about health risks from telecommunications development. In preparing the draft document it has been assumed (given members views previously expressed) that such a fear is likely to be exacerbated where the development proposed is sited in close proximity to sensitive land uses, such as educational facilities and residential properties. Members of the Working Group have strengthened the document in this regard by adding comments that reiterate members very serious concerns regarding masts proposed close to schools, hospitals etc. and that such applications tend to be accompanied by vociferous lobbying by members of the community. The revised document also requires operators to use existing structures (including electricity pylons) where possible and to produce robust evidence if they claim they cannot.
- 3.5 In drawing up this document, consideration has been given to other (numerous) texts on the subject. These include: CPRE Briefing document – Telecommunications Development (2004), Code of Practice for Telecommunication Operators (ODPM), Mobile Phone Operators' Ten Commitments to best siting practice.

4.0 **Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Financial Implications relate to staff costs associated with the consultation exercise and the changes to procedure were the document to be accepted for development control purposes. These costs will be absorbed into the existing work programme and budgets.

5.0 **Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 None

6.0 **Community Implications**

6.1 None

7.0 **Conclusions**

7.1 The Council is committed to the continuous updating and improvement of all its guidance in accord with the Best Value Improvement Plan for Development Control. The attached interim document seeks to provide guidance to prospective applicants and their agents considering contemplating base station development within the District. It also aims to be a source of information to all interested parties in explaining the approach taken by the Council on this issue. It is envisaged that the operators will sign up to the agreement and that it will then be in immediate use. However, if it transpires that any operator cannot agree to any fundamental part, the issue raised will be brought back to this committee for further consideration.

8.0 **Background Papers**

8.1 APPENDIX A: Supplementary Planning Document on Telecommunication Base Station Development (attached)

CPRE Briefing document – Telecommunications Development (2004)
Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development (ODPM, 2002)
Mobile Operators' Association Ten Commitments to best siting practice.

