HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Telecommunications

## Supplementary Planning Document

December 2005

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Adopted 8th December 2005

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This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

# Contents

# 1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to complement the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) by providing additional guidance for those involved in the planning and design of new telecommunications development.

1.2 When considering proposals for new development the Council will expect applicants to demonstrate : -

a the need for the proposed development.

b that the site chosen is the best available option (given technical constraints) in seeking to minimise the amenity, community and environmental impact of such development; and

c that the proposed scheme represents the best practicable environmental / design solution.

1.3 This SPD will also serve to inform members and local communities and promote transparency, inclusiveness and consistency for all parties throughout the decision making process.

1.4 By stating this purpose, the Council will seek to improve through its function as a Local Planning Authority any development proposal that does not provide for, or meet the principles encouraged and required within this SPD and the Halton UDP.

# 2 Policy Background

2.1 This SPD revises and updates the previously issued Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on 'Telecommunications'. It has been produced to ensure that through its function as a Local Planning Authority (LPA), the Council: - acts in accordance with national and regional guidance and advice; reflects good practice in development ; and contributes, wherever possible, to meeting the priorities of the community it serves.

## National Policy

2.2 The Government's planning policy on telecommunications infrastructure is defined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 : Telecommunications. This policy is "to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum". In so doing the Government remains committed to established national policies and advice for the protection of urban and rural areas. Local planning authorities and operators are encouraged to work together to "find the optimum environmental and network solution on a case-by case basis" whilst having regard to the technical constraints on the location of and design of the proposed development. Whilst "health considerations and public concern can in principle be material considerations … it is the Government's firm view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards"

## Regional Policy

2.3 Whilst current guidance in the form of Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13), which is now by virtue of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) does not contain any specific policies relating to telecommunications development, indirect references are made to the need to encourage more sustainable forms of communication, economic growth and enhancing the urban and rural environment.

## Local Policy


2.4 The Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) contains a number of strategic aims and objectives, which are set out in Part I of the written statement. In relation to this SPD one of these aims highlights the need to maintain a sustainable balance between the needs of development and conservation by ensuring development shows a net gain of environmental value to Halton's natural and man-made heritage and to ensure that any significant losses are mitigated or compensated through associated measures.

2.5 This SPD supplements Policy BE21 : Telecommunications Apparatus of the adopted Halton UDP which will be 'saved' to form part of the Halton Local Development Framework (LDF). Policy BE21 sets out the policy criteria for telecommunications development in the Borough carrying through many of the main principles enshrined in PPG8.

2.6 This SPD is intended to contribute to the priorities, principles, objectives and targets of the Halton Community Strategy, 2002/03 to 2005/06. This strategy co-ordinates the resources of the local public, private and voluntary organisations towards common purposes.

2.7 Two of the main priorities set out in the Community Strategy cover issues that are expected to be raised in this SPD. Any telecommunications developments proposed should be consistent with the priorities and objectives set out in the Community Strategy and in particular, with the need to

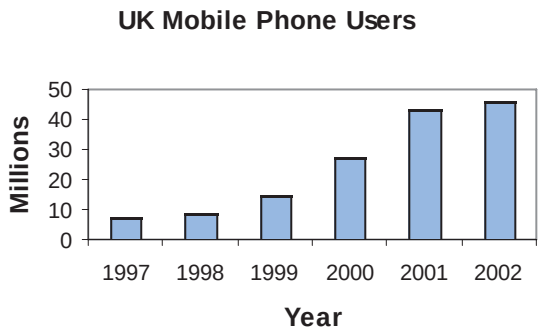
(a) ensure high quality design and landscaping throughout the Borough" and" promote sustainable development" and,

(b) bring about environmental improvements in all areas of the Borough reflecting the priorities of the public to improve public perceptions and attractiveness

# 3 Understanding the Issues

3.1 The Government identifies modern telecommunications as an "essential and beneficial element in the life of the local community and in the national economy" Modern telecommunications systems bring significant benefits to both people and business with over 46 million people in the UK using mobile phones according to the ODPM Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development. That popularity has continued to grow in recent years as clearly shown in the following graph.

Figure 1 : United Kingdom Mobile Telecommunication Subscribers



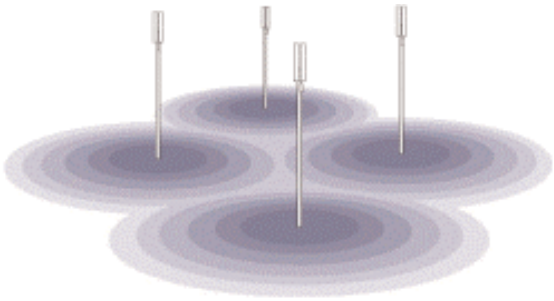

(Source: Code of Best Practice, ODPM)

3.2 Communications technology has similarly spread to meet the growing demands for better communications in business, electronic commerce, in the home and amongst the public and emergency services.

3.3 Good communications can work to attract businesses and inward investment to an area thereby providing increased employment opportunities and contributing to wider policy goals. They can also increase choice through providing opportunities for home working, education and entertainment, shopping and banking whilst providing potential benefits for the environment in terms of reductions in vehicle emissions, other pollutants and impacts on communities by reducing the need to travel.

3.4 Mobile communications are only made possible by the provision of a network of overlapping cells providing a seamless coverage of a geographical area. Each cell is served by a transmitting and receiving station, known as a 'base station', which allows mobile devices to communicate with the wider telecommunications network.

Figure 2 : Idealised network coverage showing overlapping cells around individual base stations.



(Source: Ofcom Website)

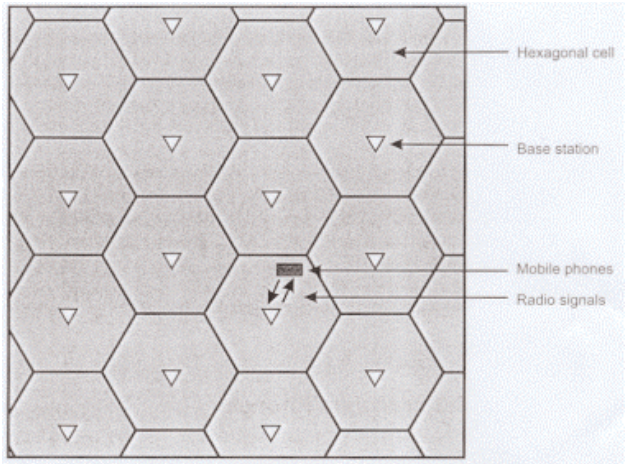
3.5 An ideal cell network may be envisaged as consisting of a mesh of hexagonal cells, each with a base station at its centre with cells overlapping at the edges to ensure the mobile phone users always remain within range of a base station. Without sufficient base stations in the right locations, mobile phones will not work. The size of each cell depends on three factors.

- the local terrain; radio signals are blocked by trees, hills and buildings.
- the frequency band in which the network operates (in general, the

higher the radio frequency, the smaller the cell).

- the capacity (i.e. number of calls) needed in any given area.

Figure 3 : Ideal network pattern with overlapping cells providing continuous signal coverage.



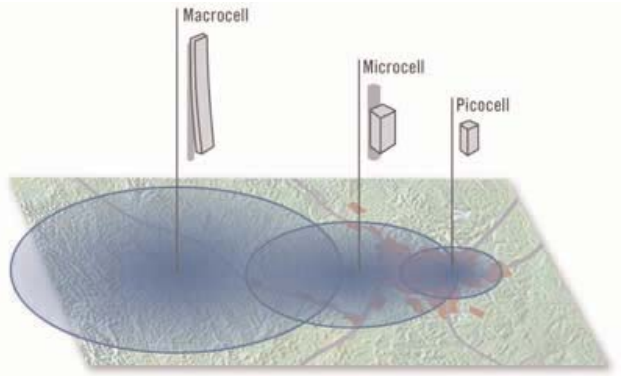

(Source: Ofcom Website)

3.6 In practice, networks are far more complicated than this. There will be smaller cells in urban areas, where there is higher usage demand and more structures and features (e.g. buildings) to limit coverage, than in rural areas, where given ideal conditions 2G cells can cover up about a 10km radius. In urban areas networks may need to boost coverage (or call capacity) to a small area by adding microcells which operate at much lower power and have a range of between 300~1,000m.

3.7 In localised areas of particularly high demand or poor signal strength, such as railway stations, stadiums etc, picocells may be added.

3.8 In addition to addressing simple geographical coverage concerns, operators have to juggle the radio frequencies available to them and carefully limit the output from individual transmitters in order to avoid creating interference between adjacent or overlapping cells.

Figure 4 : Diagrammatic representation of differing geographic coverage from different base station types.




(Source: MOA Website)

3.9 Microcells and picocells require smaller antenna than macrocells, and can often be accommodated with little or no visual impact.

Figure 5 : Examples of Microcell antenna
(Source: Ofcom Website)

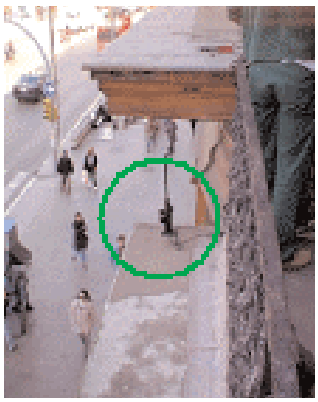



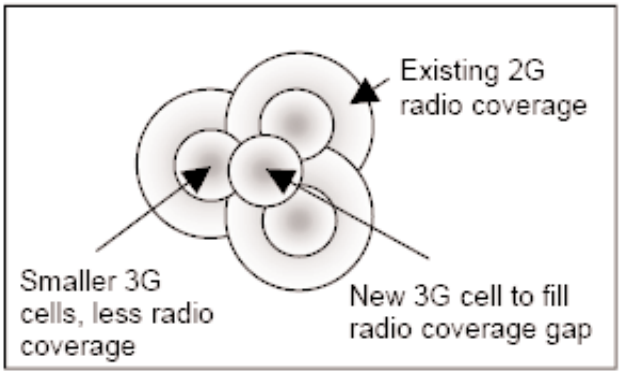
Figure 6 : Example of Picocell antenna


(Source: Ofcom Website)

3.10 Five UK operators have secured licences to provide the latest 3G coverage and enhanced services such as video calls and mobile internet access. The 3G licences require that the networks cover 80% of the UK population with a mobile phone reception by 2007. The corresponding 2G licences required that a network covered 90% of the UK population.

3.11 The existing operators will be able to modify and supplement their existing 2G systems to produce the new 3G networks, whilst '3' (formerly Hutchinson 3G) will have to build a completely new system. There are a number of differences between 2G and 3G mobile radio base station sites. Because 3G networks operate at a higher frequency, individual base stations do not provide as wide a coverage as those of the older 2G networks. Consequently, 3G networks will require additional base stations to achieve the same geographical coverage. The diagram below depicts this requirement. In addition, 3G cells expand or contract depending on the amount of call / data traffic they are handling (a process known as 'breathing').

Figure 7 : Diagram shows how existing 2G network can cover an area using 3 cells (larger circles) whilst the roll out of the 3G networks with smaller radio coverage around each base station (smaller circles) will require additional cells to achieve the same geographical coverage.




3.12 As the demand for mobile technology has increased so has the need for additional infrastructure to deliver these services in the form of masts or "base stations". Indeed it has been predicted that nationally the existing 35,000 base stations will need to be increased to at least 48,000 to provide the necessary 3G coverage alone.

3.13 Other systems such as TETRA (Terrestrial Trunk Road System) are also being developed and rolled-out to provide secure and improved communications for the police and other emergency and public services. These too will require the provision of new base-stations.

3.14 Such base stations, if poorly sited and/ or designed have the potential to cause significant and long-lasting visual harm to the local environment. Halton Borough Council dealt with 23 applications for telecommunications development in 2004. Whilst comprising only 2% of all applications in that year, applications for telecommunications development can raise significant amounts of public interest and/or concern for a number of reasons, including visual impact, health issues and effects on property prices.

# 4 Codes of Best Practice

4.1 The Government has produced a 'Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development' (2002), which was drawn up and agreed by representatives of Government, local government and the mobile phone industry. This encourages greater consultation between mobile phone operators, local authorities and local communities, seeks to give a better understanding of the Mobile Phone Industry and provides best practice guidance on the siting and design of telecommunications development. However, this is currently a voluntary code, and is not a statutory document.

4.2 The Operators 10 Commitments, as set out in the code of practice, are to:

1. Develop, with other stakeholders, clear standards and procedures to deliver significantly improved consultation with local communities;

2. Participate in obligatory pre-rollout and pre-application consultation with local planning authorities;

3. Publish clear, transparent and accountable criteria and cross-industry agreement on site sharing, against which progress will be published regularly;

4. Establish professional development workshops on technological developments within telecommunications for local authority officers and elected members;

5. Deliver, with the Government, a database of information available to the public on radio base stations;

6. Assess all radio base stations for international (ICNIRP) compliance for public exposure, and produce a programme for ICNIRP compliance for all radio base stations as recommended by the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones;

7. Provide, as part of planning applications for radio base stations, a certification of compliance with ICNIRP public exposure guidelines;

8. Provide specific staff resources to respond to complaints and enquiries about base stations, within ten working days;

9. Begin financially supporting the Government's independent scientific research programme on mobile communications health issues;

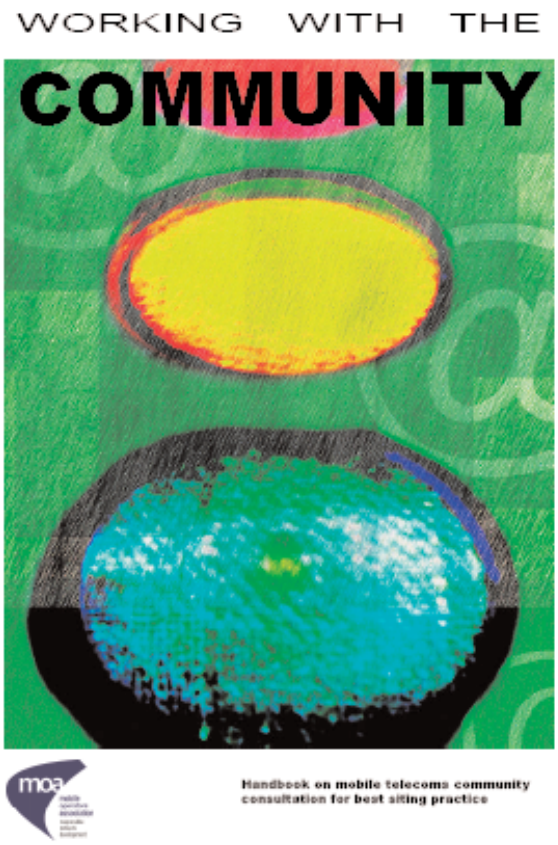
10. Develop standard supporting documentation for all planning submissions whether full planning or prior approval.

4.3 The Mobile Operators Association, which represents all five main UK operators, has published the 'Working with the Community' handbook.

This document is intended to assist mobile telecommunications site acquisition staff in their interaction with local communities when seeking to site radio base stations and to underpin the UK mobile operators' Ten Commitments to best siting practice.

4.4 The document sets out a requirement for all proposed sites to be assessed against a 'traffic light model' determining the level of public consultation required based on an appraisal of the planning and environmental issues and community issues.

4.5 The documents provides guidance on the most appropriate methods for engaging with the community to ensure a constructive dialogue and achieve the best possible outcome.



# 5 Planning Requirements

## 5.1 Permitted Development

Planning permission is required for the carrying out of 'development'. For certain categories of development, the Government has conferred 'permitted development rights', whereby certain classed of (usually minor) development are deemed to have planning permission without the need for submission and grant of a formal planning application.

Some permitted development is permitted without restriction; some is permitted subject to conditions; and some is permitted subject to special prior approval procedures.

The Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order (GPDO) 2001, sets out permitted development rights for telecommunications code system operators, including masts and other apparatus.

Minor works, including alterations to existing masts and the erection of additional antennae, which are permitted development do not require planning permission or "prior approval", although under the terms of the Electronic Communications Code, operators are required to notify the Council of their intention to carry out such works in some instances.

## 5.2 Prior Approval

In a limited number of cases although the development is 'permitted development' prior approval of the siting and appearance of the development is required: these two areas are very specific and cannot be used to challenge the principle that the development is permitted development.

The majority of ground based masts up to and including 15m in height and smaller rooftop installations are permitted development, and therefore do not require separate planning permission (except in conservation areas, areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of special scientific interest), subject to the operator satisfying a 56 day 'prior approval procedure'. Under this procedure, the local planning authority has 56 days, beginning with the date on which it receives the application, in which to make and notify its determination on whether prior approval is required to the siting and appearance and to notify the applicant of its decision to give or refuse such approval. There is no power to extend the 56 day period. If no decision is made, or the local planning authority fails to notify the developer of its decision within the 56 days, permission is deemed to have been granted and the operator can implement their development as per the submitted plans. The local planning authority can refuse to grant prior approval on design grounds. It must be noted that a refusal of prior approval under either procedure does not remove permitted development rights for an individual site. It is simply a refusal of the particular application under consideration. PPG8 clearly states that; "If approval is refused, or if refusal is upheld on appeal, an applicant may make a fresh application for prior approval determination to the local planning authority. Any fresh application may include details of different siting and/or appearance. Each individual application must again be considered by the local planning authority on its individual merits."

5.3 Under section 78(1)(c) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applicants enjoy a right of appeal against a refusal of approval made under the prior approval procedure. Such appeals must be made to the Secretary of State within six months of the date of the notice of the local planning authority's decision.

## 5.4 Full Planning Permission

For masts over 15m in height, larger installations, and those located in conservation areas, areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of special scientific interest full planning permission is required. These applications are dealt with in the same way as other planning applications, and all material considerations will be considered. In these cases the Council will consider applications against the policy background set out in UDP Policy BE21 and PPG8.

## 5.5 Roll out Plans

Mobile phone operators have made a commitment to provide local planning authorities with annual rollout plans for their area.

This information should include:

- A plan showing the locations of the operator's existing sites (on an appropriate scale map);
- A plan showing the locations of the operator's preferred locations for new sites (known as search areas) or approximate locations for the year ahead (on an appropriate scale map);
- A schedule identifying existing sites, to include a site name, reference number, address, grid reference and status of site;
- If available, the rollout plan in digital format to facilitate compilation of all the operators' rollout plans onto one plan; and
- A single point of contact to co-ordinate discussions.

## 5.6 Early Collaboration

Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 : Telecommunications, strongly encourages pre-application discussions between operators and local planning authorities on proposals for the installation of new telecommunications masts. Such discussions should help to establish the context for a proposed installation, clarify the policy approach, identify information to be sought and work to be undertaken prior to submission, including technical and environmental constraints, and agree documentation to be submitted in support of an application. The Council's aim will be to work with the operator to find the optimum environmental and network solution to a proposal.

## 5.7 Information to accompany Planning Applications or Prior Approval Applications

Applications for Prior Approval or for full planning permission should (where appropriate) include the following…

- Evidence to demonstrate that careful consideration has been given to the use of alternative masts, buildings and structures and that the proposal represents the best available option.
- Evidence of the process undertaken in determining the proposed design solution and how this document has been taken into account;
- A statement and evidence to demonstrate compliance with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP);
- Application / notification forms and

plans which clearly and accurately describe the development; and

- A statement to indicate what publicity and consultation has been undertaken (including, where appropriate, details of responses received).

- Site location plan (minimum scale 1:2500)

- Site layout plan (minimum scale 1:500)

- Plans and elevations (minimum scale 1:100) showing a clear differentiation between existing and proposed equipment

- Where applicable, a roof plan (minimum scale 1:100) for rooftop installations showing a clear differentiation between existing and proposed equipment

- Existing and proposed cross sections (minimum scale 1:100)

- An OS map base (usually 1:25000) showing the cell centre and existing sites within the cell and the location of adjoining cells, cell coverage and sites

- An OS map base (usually 1:25000 or 1:50000) highlighting all alternative sites that have been considered.

# 6 Principles

## 6.1 General Principles

The telecommunications operator or any person applying for prior approval or planning permission to undertake telecommunications development within the Borough, will be expected to demonstrate:

- that the proposed equipment is required;
- that the proposed scheme represents the best environmental solution;
- that the proposed scheme represents the best design solution;
- that the possibility of mast or site sharing has been fully explored;
- that the site chosen is the best available option;
- that all relevant bodies have been consulted about the proposal; and
- that the proposal will operate in accordance with ICNIRP Guidelines; and
- that the telecommunications apparatus will be removed from the land, building or structure on which it is sited, as soon as reasonably practicable after it is no longer required for telecommunications purposes.

## 6.2 Need

Where a new mast site is proposed it should be accompanied with evidence of a network need, including cell maps.

## 6.3 Visual Amenity

Locations should be chosen to minimise the prominence of installations in public views. Particularly visually sensitive sites should be avoided, and technical limitations permitting, for example where the development would be prominent in views from roads and rights of way (particularly approaches to main settlements) and of important skylines (particularly where detracting from views of historic buildings, structures or landscape features).

The impact of any installation on the environment will be minimised through sympathetic design, camouflage and appropriate screening.

Alternative designs, materials, colouring and siting will be explored, to ensure that any development has the least visual impact.

## 6.4 Design

The design of any telecommunications equipment should comply with the following criteria in order to be acceptable:

- consider the context of neighbouring buildings and the townscape and landscape of the wider locality;
- use colour and materials to minimise the environmental impact or to camouflage the telecommunications equipment;
- take into account the character of the area;
- consider the scale, massing and height of proposed mast in relation to topography, views, vistas, the general pattern of heights in the area; and the character of other features / structures.
- consider the use of fencing and/or landscaping to minimise the impacts.

[1] International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection

## 6.5 Existing Buildings and Structures

Existing buildings and structures can provide innovative opportunities for the concealment of telecommunications equipment. In such instances, antenna should:

- be in proportion to the building or structure;
- respect architectural style;
- be camouflaged, screened or disguised to minimise the environmental impact;
- have minimal impact above the roofline;
- not be detrimental to views and general skyline;
- avoid creating clutter; and
- use clean lines and maintain symmetry.

Care will need to be taken to ensure that the architectural quality and character of the host building or structure is not compromised, this will include consideration of the height, scale, colour and materials used.

Figure 8 : A good example of an Antenna that has been camouflaged so as to minimise the environmental impact. (Source: 3G Website)

Applicants should note that where equipment is to be mounted on top of or affixed to an existing building or structure, separate approval may be required under Building Regulations. Such permission will be required where the additional equipment adversely affects the loading on, or structure of the host building.

## 6.6 Sculptural / Architectural Masts as Public Art

In certain locations such as public squares, parks, tourist attractions, transport nodes (including roundabouts) and at the entries to business parks or residential estates, proposals for "architectural" or "sculptural" masts that can by themselves or as part of a larger installation be considered to comprise a landmark or significant public art feature will be supported.

Figure 9 : 'Telespine' Millenium Square, Bristol. Major public art feature incorporating a telecommunications base station.

( Source : Bristol City Council Policy Advice Note 18)

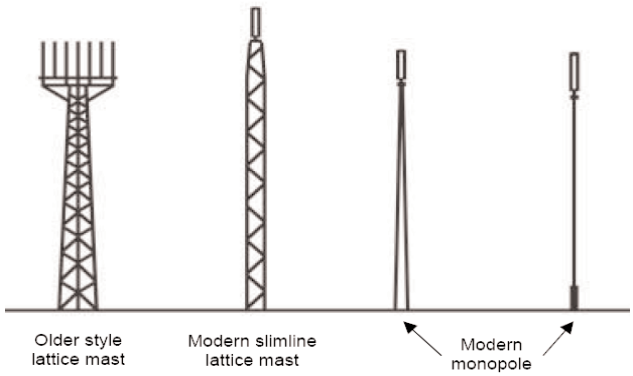
## 6.7 Mast and site sharing

Mast and site sharing is strongly encouraged where this will result in the least visual intrusion. Mast sharing will eliminate the need for a new mast and in certain circumstances can be designed to have less impact than an additional mast.

Where an existing mast offers insufficient spare capacity at the requisite height, operators will generally be expected to investigate extending or replacing the mast in order to accommodate mast sharing, where this represents the best option in environmental terms.

Mast sharing may necessitate an increase in the mast height, or bulk to minimise interference with equipment of other operators and it is recognised that mast sharing may not always be the optimum visual solution, often resulting in ungainly structures and/or enhanced visual intrusion. In such circumstances, several smaller masts may offer a preferable solution, but this will depend on the landscape setting, the relationship with other structures and development, and potential cumulative effects.

Figure 10 : Differing basic forms of mast used to support antennae at free-standing base stations.




## 6.8 New Masts and Base Stations

Where the need for a new mast or base station has been established the Council will consider the suitability of the submitted design in relation to the local environment. The Council would normally wish to see the use of slim line pole type structure rather than more bulky or lattice type towers.

New masts and base stations should aim to minimise visual impacts on the surrounding environment. The following measures can reduce visual effects of a ground-based mast:

- Placing a mast near to similar structures. For example, industrial and commercial premises, road signs, lampposts.
- Placing a mast within an existing group of trees (this may also include planting new trees to help integrate it into the landscape).
- Using plain and simple designs. Masts which have complex designs are more likely to dominate and be conflicting to the landscape and have adverse visual impacts.
- Use appropriate colouring. For

[2]Proposals for masts falling under this heading will still be subject to the provisions of Para. 6.10 concerning Highway Safety (including requirements for servicing)

example, masts seen against the sky are best painted or coated pale grey. Against a wooded backdrop, timber clad or a matt green or brown colour scheme would be more applicable. Those set within a street scene should be coloured to mimic or blend in with existing similar structures.

Figure 11 : An example of poor mast location, the mast has been located on top of a ridgeline and has a significant impact on the skyline.

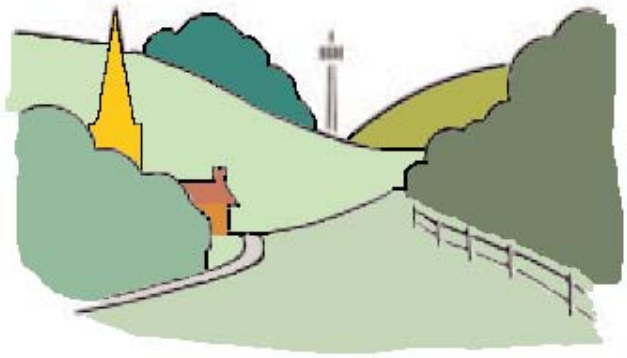
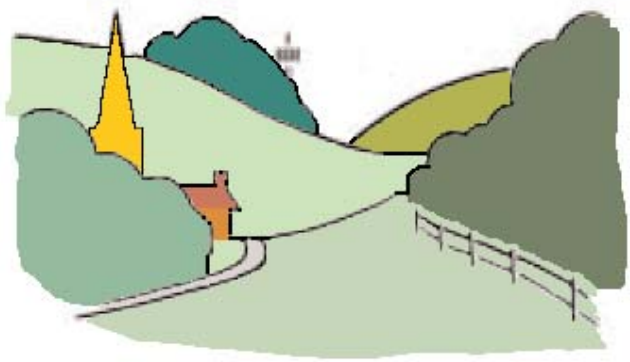


Figure 12 : An example of more sympathetic mast location where sensitive tree planting and screening has helped to limit the visual impact of the mast.



## 6.9 Utilities

Operators are reminded of the requirement to check for the presence of underground or overhead utilities apparatus before commencing work.

## 6.10 Highway Safety

Where applications for base stations located within the highway or on roadside verges are proposed, care must be taken to;

- ensure footpath / cycleway widths remain within limits to ensure the free flow and safe passage of pedestrians, cyclists or wheelchair users,
- ensure no interference with the safe approach to, or operation of, dropped crossings or bus stops etc.
- ensure that the legibility and visibility of road or direction signs are not obstructed
- ensure that highway safety is not otherwise compromised.

This will be done in consultation with the relevant Highways Authority.

In addition there should be adequate provision for the safe access by service vehicles to avoid any adverse impact upon highway safety.

Equipment cabinets should be of a suitably durable construction including anti-vandal lids and the operating company retains the responsibility for maintenance, cleaning, repair etc.

Appropriate permissions will need to be sought under the New Roads & Streetworks Act.

## 6.11 Sensitive Areas

Special consideration will be given to the environmental impact of development on areas or sites specifically protected for their importance in terms of landscape, nature conservation, heritage or design.

## 6.12 Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Proposed new free-standing masts and equipment cabinets will not normally be acceptable within or immediately adjacent to a Conservation Area or within the

curtilege or setting of a Listed Building.

Sympathetically designed installations attached to, or housed within, existing structures may be acceptable where their visual appearance (individually of cumulatively) will not detract from the special architectural or historical character and appearance of the building, or that of the wider area.

For more information, or to discuss specific proposals, please contact our Conservation Officer using the contact details in Section 8.

## 6.13 Areas of Special Nature Considerations.

In considering proposals (either full applications or for prior approval) for telecommunications development within areas identified as being significant for nature conservation the Council will have full regard to all the relevant policies in the Halton UDP. In addition to the requirements set out elsewhere in this SPD, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the identified nature conservation interests will be protected and preserved during the installation, operation and ultimately the removal of any such equipment.

## 6.14 Areas of Special Landscape Value / Important Landscape Features

In considering proposals (either full applications or for prior approval) for telecommunications development within areas identified as being of Special Landscape Value / Important Landscape Feature the Council will have full regard to all the relevant policies in the Halton UDP.

Proposals are likely to be unacceptable unless there is an overwhelming technical requirement for equipment within such an area and the individual proposal is designed to the highest possible standard to negate or minimise any visual intrusion.

## 6.15 Main Rivers, Watercourses and Areas at Risk of Flooding.

Where development is located within 8 meters of a main river under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Byelaws, the prior written consent of the Environment Agency will be required. The Agency may be expected to raise issues regarding any development affecting a watercourse or within an Area at Risk of Flooding including recommending the incorporation of flood proofing techniques and in some cases that the base levels are raised.

## 6.16 Green Belt

The Council fully accepts that to provide uninterrupted service coverage, operators may require to locate certain base stations within the Green Belt.

However, in the Green Belt, telecommunications development is likely to be inappropriate unless it maintains the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it.

The Council expects any such proposals to be sensitively sited and designed so as to minimise any visual intrusion.

## 6.17 Development on or Near Buildings Containing Sensitive Uses

Where the proposed development consists of the installation, alteration or replacement of a mobile phone base station on or near a building containing a sensitive use (usually within about 250m), the Council will require evidence that the relevant controlling body of that use has been consulted about the proposal.

The Council considers the following to be sensitive uses…

- Schools
- Further Education Establishments
- Nurseries
- Crèches
- Hospitals
- Care Homes
- or any building requiring a protected environment.

## 6.18 Radio Interference

In considering applications the Council will have regard to any technical evidence submitted with the application supporting a particular design solution where required to avoid radio interference between proposed and existing equipment or to avoid possible interference to other broadcasts.

## 6.19 Health

The Council, Central Government and the network operators recognise that the public may have certain concerns and worries about the possible health effects presented by telecommunications base stations. Following research by an independent group of experts into the possible health effects posed by mobile phones, and base stations, the Stewart Report concluded that: "the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations, on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of the guidelines."

## 6.20 Health Considerations ~ PPG8 Policy.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 : Telecommunications sets out very clearly the Government's view on public health concerns about telecommunications masts, and the approach that local planning authorities should take in this respect: "Health considerations and public concern can, in principle, be material considerations in determining applications for planning permission and prior approval. Whether such matters are material in a particular case is ultimately a matter for the courts. It is for the decision-maker (usually the local planning authority) to determine what weight to attach to such considerations in any particular case" (para 29). "However, it is the Government's firm view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. It remains central Government's responsibility to decide what measures are necessary to protect public health. In the Government's view, if a proposed mobile phone base station meets the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for a local planning authority, in processing an application for planning permission or prior approval to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them" (para 98).

"…the Groups report suggested a number of specific precautionary actions, which have been accepted by Government. The report does not provide any basis for precautionary actions beyond those already proposed. In the Governments view, local planning authorities should not implement their own precautionary policies e.g. by way of imposing a ban or moratorium on new telecommunications development or insisting on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development (para 101).

## 6.21 Health Considerations in the determination of Planning or Prior Approval Applications.

The Council will expect all applications for

Telecommunication development to be accompanied by a statement that certifies that the proposed development will in itself and cumulatively operate within the ICNIRP guidelines.

## 6.22 Community Involvement

Where applications are submitted the Council will undertake to ensure that all interested parties are made aware of the proposals by use of either press or site notices, and the use of individual letters where appropriate. In all cases the Council will notify residents within 100 metres of the proposed installations, schools, school governors and sensitive buildings / uses within 250 metres of a proposal, the local airport operator when the proposal is within 3km of the aerodrome and local Ward Councilors.

# 7 Glossary of Terms

- **Aerial / antenna**
  A device designed to transmit or receive electromagnetic energy (radio waves).

- **Base Stations**
  Facilities providing transmission and reception for radio systems, usually consisting of an antenna array, mast or other supporting structure and an equipment cabinet containing telecommunications equipment, electricity supply connections and air conditioning.

- **Cell**
  A geographic area of coverage that a radio base station covers. Cells link together like a honeycomb to provide continuous/seamless coverage across a wide area providing mobile phones with an uninterrupted service as they traverse through an area communicating with successive base stations. There are three types of cell; macrocell, microcell and picocell

- **Macrocell**
  Macrocells provide the largest geographical areas of coverage are typically mounted on ground-based masts, rooftops or other existing structures, at a height not restricted by land or buildings.

- **Microcell**
  Microcells provide additional coverage within built up areas where volume of call traffic is high. Microcell antenna are usually smaller than macrocell antenna, and are typically mounted at street level on external walls of existing structures, lamp-posts and other street furniture. They can often be effectively integrated into existing building features and streetscape. Their range is limited and they transmit at a low power. They are increasingly required to cope with the growing demand and the new third generation (3G) of mobile phones.

- **Picocell**
  Picocells are usually sited inside buildings where coverage is poor, or where there are a high number of users, such as airport terminals, train stations and shopping centres.

- **International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP)**
  An independent scientific organisation responsible for providing guidance and advice on the health hazards of non-ionising radiation exposure.

- **Mast**
  A ground-based or roof-top structure that supports antennas at a height where they can satisfactorily send and receive radio waves. Masts themselves play no part in the transmission of radio waves.

- **Mobile Operators Association (MOA)**
  Established in January 2003 to represent the five UK mobile phone network operators on radio frequency, health and planning issues.

- **Telecommunications**
  The sending and receiving of information, as words, sounds, data-files or images, usually over great distances, in the form of electromagnetic signals, as by telegraph, telephone, radio, or television. Telecommunications infrastructure includes masts, antennas, cable networks, relay stations etc.

- 2G (2nd Generation)
  The second generation mobile network based on the Pan-European GSM standard.

- 3G (3rd Generation)
  The third generation mobile network (currently being developed) based on the UTMS system, and expected to result in widespread use of video phones and access to multimedia information.

# 8 Contacts and Useful Information

## 8.1 General information

To access a downloadable copy of the Planning Policy Guidance notes or Planning Policy Statements detailed in Section 2, or for further general planning information visit the Communities and Local Government website at www.communities.gov.uk or for a hard copy contact Communities and Local Government by telephone on 0870 1226 236.

8.2 To access a downloadable copy of 'Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development and general telecommunications and planning information visit the Communities and Local Government website at www.communities.gov.uk

8.3 Mobile Operators Association (MOA) (formerly Federation of the Electronics Industry)
Russell Square House,
10-12 Russell Square,
London, WC1B 5EE,
www.mobilemastinfo.com
(includes details of the Traffic Light Ratings Model), tel: 020 7331 2015 or 2047, email: info@ukmoa.org

8.4 For More information on health and technical Issues associated with mobile phones and base stations:

- The National radiological Protection Board at: www.nrpb.org.uk
- The Office of Communication: http://www.ofcom.org.uk/telecoms/
- The World Health Organisation: www.who.int
- International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection www.icnirp.de
- To obtain copies of the Stewart Report contact the IEGMP Secretariat at: E-mail - information@nrpb.org.uk, or www.IEGMP.org.uk
- Department of Health leaflet on mobile phones ad base stations: www.dh.gov.uk

8.5 You can find out about the planning system and how it works at www.planningportal.gov.uk

## 8.6 Local information

For advice relating to submitting a planning application, for pre-application discussion or to purchase a copy of this SPD or any other SPD contact:

Operational Director
Environmental and Regulatory Services
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW
**Tel:**
0151 424 2061
**Fax:**
0151 471 7304
**Email:**
forward.planning@halton.gov.uk
**Website:**
www.halton.gov.uk/forwardplanning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