

# **REVIEW OF MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS**

**REPORT OF**

**REGENERATION ENVIRONMENT HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE  
PANEL**





## **Chairman's Forward**

This report concludes the work of the scrutiny panels Telecommunications Masts Working Group. It was instigated in response to concerns expressed by many of the Borough residents about the impact of mobile phone masts, perceived or otherwise, on the health of those living and working near to where they are sited and on the visual impact the masts have on residential areas.

It is hoped that the contents of this report will help develop a coherent policy which will enable the citizens of the Borough to exploit the full potential of mobile phone technology, whilst at the same time removing many of the negatives surrounding it.


The scrutiny panel would like to thank everyone who contributed to the scrutiny, and in particular the mobile phone operators for their voluntary attendance at an event held at Bescot Stadium, which was a mutually beneficial event for all able to attend.

Finally, I am grateful to the members of the Scrutiny Panel Working Group, lead officers and the Scrutiny Support Team for their commitment and hard work during this exercise.

## **Councillor Ian Shires**



**Chairman of Regeneration Environment Housing  
scrutiny and performance panel**



Walsall MBC would like to credit the following organisations from whose websites images were obtained, which to our knowledge have not been distorted:

World Health Organisation  
NRPB (Health Protection Agency)  
Health and Safety Executive  
Ofcom (Radiocommunications Agency)  
Mobile Operators Association  
T Mobile  
Vodafone  
BT  
3  
O2  
Virgin Mobile  
Orange

And to other internet websites that may have been used.

## **Lead Members Comments**

During consideration of the work programme for 2004-5 issues relating to the public's concerns about perceived health issues, installation of telecommunications equipment on or near school premises, consultation on planning applications and planning policy were identified by members and this work group was set up.

The working group has been gathering evidence since October 2004. Initial investigations clarified what research has been undertaken nationally and what current planning policy guidance is.

Our members gained a greater understanding of the processes, the problems and the perceived health risks associated with telecommunications masts and also what other authorities are doing to address issues.

To find the background and evidence for the report members of the work group have carried out research independently, received information at work group meetings and have held a half day event for mobile phone operators, officers and members who were all invited to participate.

As work group members we have looked into health concerns, planning issues and the concerns of the general public and we feel generally that the more information we revealed the more deeply we wanted to delve. The work of the group could carry on as there are issues still not fully investigated and others that need to be followed up, we feel however that the group has met its remit and that the work group has been useful and productive having produced a good report with clear findings and sound recommendations.

We also recognise that issues relating to telecommunications masts will continue to be a concern nationally and that members of the public need to be informed of its findings in this report.

## **Councillor Ayshea Johnson**



**Lead member  
Telecommunication Masts work group**



## MEMBERS OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS WORKING GROUP

The members of the Telecommunication Masts working group consist of selected members from the Regeneration, Environment, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

### Members

Councillor A Johnson  
Councillor L Harrison  
Councillor I Shires  
Councillor B Twedde

### Contact Officers

Lead Officers:  
David Elsworth  
01922 652409  
[elsworthvd@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:elsworthvd@walsall.gov.uk)  
Manager Planning, Building and  
Pollution Control Services

John Grant  
01922 652277  
[grantj@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:grantj@walsall.gov.uk)  
Principal Pollution Control Officer

Scrutiny Support:  
Deb Breedon  
01922 652074  
[breedond@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:breedond@walsall.gov.uk)  
Scrutiny Officer

Katherine Morris  
01922 652080  
[morriska@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:morriska@walsall.gov.uk)  
Scrutiny Support Officer

## CONTENTS

		Page
1.0	Introduction	6
2.0	Remit of the Working Group	7
3.0	Legal Requirements	7
4.0	Background	8
5.0	Evidence Considered	16
6.0	Findings Lobby of Local Government Planning Guidance Notes Design of Telecommunication Equipment Use of Council Land and Buildings Health findings Misuse of Mobile Phones Roll Out Programme Recycling	16 - 20
7.0	Recommendations	21
Appendix 1	List of documents and information considered by the Strategic Review of Disability Working Group	23
Appendix 2	Schedule of Scrutiny & Performance Panel and Working Group Activity	24
Appendix 3	Guidance for applicants	27
Appendix 4	Notes of Telecommunications Event	30



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In recent years the complexity and usage of mobile phones has rocketed. Businesses, service industry and individuals, young and old, all rely on their mobile phones and some cannot operate without them. Mobile phones are part of our society and we want our phones to work wherever we are. The mobile phone industry strives to ensure their customers are satisfied with the service they deliver by keeping up to date with technology and ensuring adequate coverage.

What could this mean? More coverage, more telecommunications masts and more concerns for the people who live, work or go to school within the shadows of them, creating an increase in community concerns.

The panel recognised the dilemma everyone wants a mobile phone but no one wants to see a mast in their back garden or run the risk of their child, mother or significant other being at risk of ill health. In addition members are aware, through their role as ward councillors, of the controversial nature of many applications for telecommunication masts and the unrest it causes in the community.

Members decided there was a need to find out more, to delve a little deeper into the whys and wherefores and to consider a way forward, so that all parties are able to carry out their daily business with a clearer understanding, which may allay fears and misconceptions about this complex issue.

1.2 At a meeting of Regeneration Environment Housing and Community Safety, 22 September 2004, in response to increasing community concerns a working group was established to review issues identified relating to telecommunications masts.

1.3 The telecommunications working group was established with an outline brief to research:-

- what other Councils were doing
- to give the operators opportunity to address the group
- to consider a policy for planning applications

1.4 The membership of the group is:-  
Councillor Johnson (Lead)  
Councillor Harrison  
Councillor Shires  
Councillor Tweddle



## **2.0 REMIT OF THE WORKING GROUP**

2.1 At the first meeting of the group 14 October 2004, members scoped the remit and it was agreed that the focus of the groups work would be:-

- To undertake research to identify what action neighbouring councils within the West Midlands were undertaking in respect of telecommunications masts, and to identify any specific examples of best practice nationally.
- To give the operators opportunity to address the scrutiny panel and inform the working group, in the form of a presentation.
- To evaluate existing policy and guidelines for planning applications.

2.2 In addition to the initial brief, it was agreed that the working group focus' upon how best to identify improvements in the communication of information relating to telecommunications masts, for the benefit of residents of the borough.

## **3.0 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

3.1 The main legislative provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 in relation to scrutiny empowers overview and scrutiny panels and their members to review and/or scrutinise decisions made by cabinet and council officers in relation to key decisions, actions carried out within the remit of the council and the performance of the council in relation to targets and policy objectives.

3.2 Walsall Council commits to a vision which is unique and special to Walsall because it is based on the views, wishes and needs of local people. It is shared and supported by our partners, our staff and our members and is underpinned by targeted actions to provide a firm foundation for the future– for the borough and for the council. The vision:

- Focuses the efforts of all the employees of the council on the issues that matter to citizens
- Ensures we put resources firmly behind their priorities
- Strengthen our joint working with our partners to deliver the overall community strategy for the borough
- Enables local people and our partners to judge how well we are doing and whether we are achieving our objectives.

3.3 The vision priorities are:-

Ensure a clean and green borough  
Make it easier for people to get around  
Ensure all people are safe and secure  
Make our schools great  
Make Walsall a healthy and caring place  
Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall  
Make it easier to access local services  
Strengthen the local economy  
Listen to what local people want  
Transform Walsall into an excellent local authority

3.4 During consideration of the work programme 2004-5, issues relating to the public's concerns about perceived health issues, installation on or near school premises and planning policy guidance (PPG8) were identified by members as issues that impacted on the vision priorities and that should be scrutinised as part of the work programme.

3.5 This scrutiny has been carried out in accordance with the rules of procedure arrangements detailed in part 4 of the constitution of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (amended September 2003).

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 In November 2002, the Government published a new "Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development". It provides updated advice for undertaking better consultation and improved proposals for the siting and appearance of masts. This code of practice should provide a strong steer for operators.

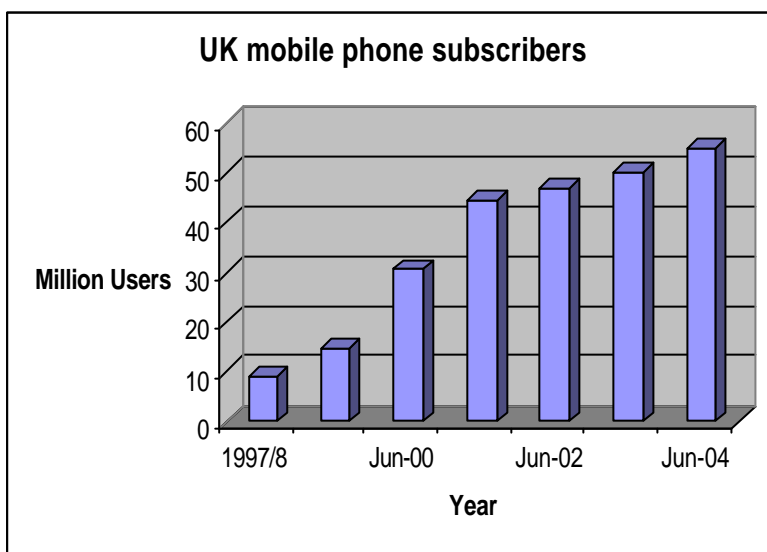
4.2 Existing planning procedures include:

- Permitted development rights whereby Mobile operators can replace some existing antenna and erect associated equipment without the consent of the council subject to certain criteria.
- Masts below 15m require prior approval – which effectively means that they have Permitted Development subject to the council accepting the proposed siting and appearance of the installation – decision within 56 days or consent by default.
- Any new base station installation over 15m requires planning permission

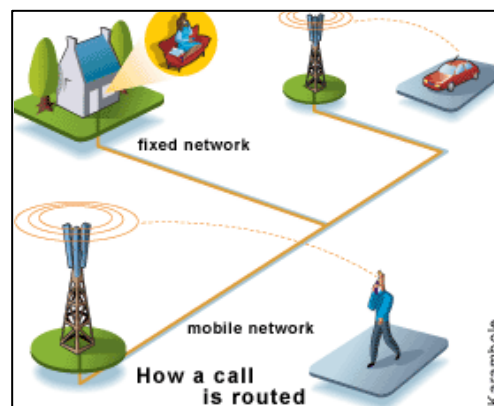
4.3 There has been an ongoing debate about the growth of Telecommunications Masts and their safety over the last decade

which has resulted in many national and international studies into the effect of the technology on human health.

- 4.4 As of 2004 there are reportedly more than 40 million mobile phones in the UK and over 30,000 base stations. The table below illustrates the rapid increase in the number of subscribers of mobile phones over recent years. This increase is projected to continue with the rapid growth of third generation, or 3G, mobile phone technology.
- 4.5 In 2000, the Stewart Report agreed with previous multinational and national research in finding no demonstrative health problems caused by mobile phones, but advised caution especially among the young, until more research was carried out. A further report in 2004 backed this up.

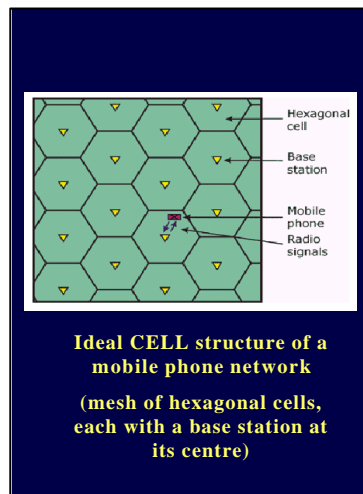


- 4.6 A mobile phone sends and receives information (voice messages, fax, computer data, etc.) by radio communication. Radio Frequency (RF) signals are transmitted from the phone to the nearest base station and incoming signals (carrying the speech from the person to whom the phone user is listening) are sent from the base station to the phone at a slightly different frequency.



4.7 Base stations link mobile phones to the rest of the mobile and fixed phone network. Once the signal reaches a base station it can be transmitted to the main telephone network, either by telephone cables or by higher frequency radio links between an antenna (e.g. dish) at the base station and another at a terminal connected to the main telephone network. Each base station thus provides radio coverage to a geographical area known as a 'cell'.

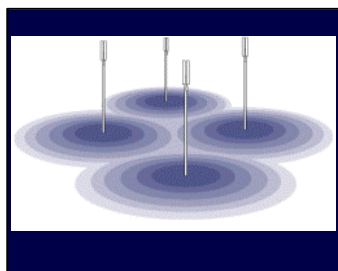
4.8 Base stations are connected to one another by central switching centres, which track calls and transfer them as the caller moves from one cell to the next. The diagram shows the principle of cell structure of a mobile phone network.



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

4.10 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); and
- the capacity (i.e. number of calls) needed in any given area. Base stations are typically spaced about 0.2 to 0.5 km in towns and 2 to 5 km apart in the countryside.



4.11 Cells fall into three categories: macrocells; microcells and picocells, which vary in size and power output.

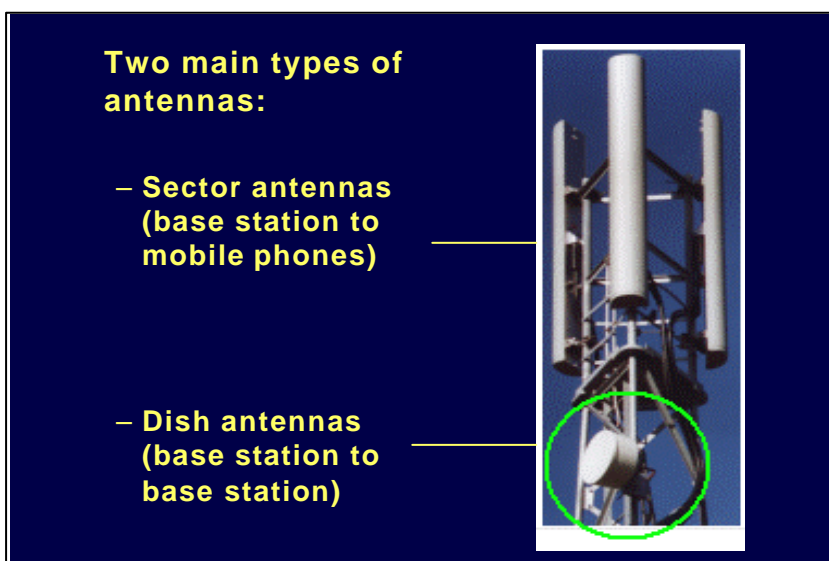


A macrocell provides the main coverage in a mobile network, having a typical power output of tens of watts. The antennas for these are normally mounted on ground-based masts, rooftops and other existing structures, positioned at a height that is not obstructed by surrounding buildings and terrain.

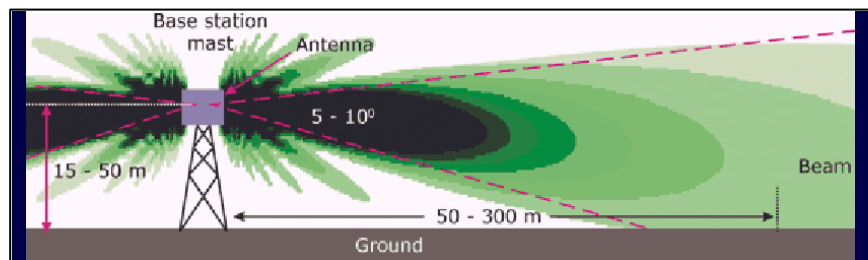
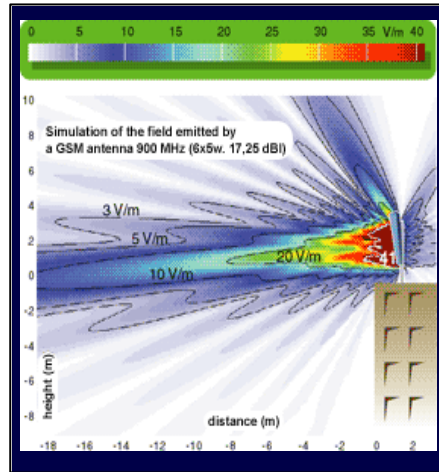
4.12 A picocells provide in-fill signal coverage and additional capacity where there are high numbers of users within macrocells. The antennas for microcells are mounted at street level, typically on the external walls of existing structures, lamp posts and other street furniture. The antennas are smaller than macrocell antennas and can often be disguised as building features. Typically, they provide radio coverage across smaller distances and are placed 300m-1000m apart, having power outputs of the order of a few watts.

4.13 A picocell provides even more localised coverage than a microcell and are normally found inside buildings where coverage is poor, or where there are a high number of users, such as airport terminals, train stations or shopping centres.

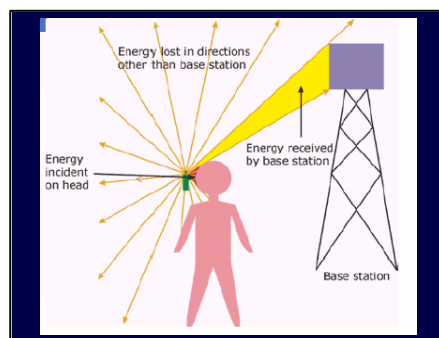
4.14 There are two main types of base station antennas in use:



- 4.15 Base Station are usually mounted on rooftops or towers. Antennas emit RF beams horizontally (tilted slightly downwards) and not vertically. The power is focussed into a main beam. Typical maximum power output is 5 to 10 W per signal; this is up to 100 W with multiple transmitters.



- 4.16 RF field intensity at ground directly below the antenna is low. RF field intensity increases slightly moving away from the base station and then decreases at greater distances from the antenna.
- 4.17 RF energy is classed as NON –IONISING radiation. RF fields cannot cause ionisation or radioactivity in the body. Exposure to a mobile phone user is higher than to a person living near a base station.



- 4.18 All established health effects of RF exposures are clearly related to heating. No study has shown adverse health effects at exposure levels below international guideline limits. Current scientific evidence indicates that exposure to RF fields, such as those emitted by mobile phones and their base stations, is unlikely to induce or promote cancers.
- 4.19 The Stewart Report noted: “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 international guidelines”. The report continued: “A precautionary approach to the use of mobile phone technologies be adopted until much more detailed and specifically robust information on health effects becomes available”.
- 4.20 In November 2002, the Government published a new “Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development”. It provides updated advice for undertaking better consultation and improved proposals for the siting and appearance of masts. This code of practice should provide a strong steer for operators.
- 4.21 Mobile Phone Operators agreed to operate on this basis which is known as the ten commitments:
- Develop with other stakeholders, clear standards and procedures to deliver significantly improved consultation with local communities.
  - Participate in obligatory pre-rollout and pre-application consultation with LPA’s
  - Publish clear transport and accountable criteria and cross-industry agreement on site sharing against which progress will be published regularly.
  - Establish professional development workshops on technical developments for LPA officers and elected members.
  - Deliver with Government, a database of information for the public.
  - Access all radio base stations for ICNIRP compliance for public exposure and produce a programme for ICNIRP compliance as recommended by the Stewart Report.
  - Provide a certificate of ICNIRP compliance with all applications in ten days.
  - Provide specific staff resources to respond to complaints and enquiries about radio base stations.
  - Begin financing Government independent research programme on health issues.
  - Develop standard documentation for all planning submissions.

4.22 Existing planning procedures are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act and the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended. The guidance to local planning Authorities which gives a framework of advice on how to determine planning application or prior approval applications is set out in planning policy PPG8. In particular the following paragraphs of PPG8 are considered relevant:-

*1. 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 also has responsibility for protecting public health.*

*9. Pre-application discussions should be carried out between operators and local planning authorities on a specific development proposal and should be set in the context of the operator's strategy for telecommunications development in the area.*

*11. Where a mast is to be installed on or near a school or college it is important that operators discuss the proposed development with the relevant body of the school or college concerned before submitting an application for planning permission or prior approval to the local planning authority.*

*13. Where a mast is to be installed on or near a school or college the local planning authority should consult the relevant body of the school or college concerned and should take into account any relevant views expressed.*

*15. Local planning authorities and operators should work together to find the optimum environmental and network solution on a case-by-case basis.*

*20. The sharing of masts and sites is strongly encouraged where that represents the optimum environmental solution in a particular case. Authorities will need to consider the cumulative impact upon the environment of additional antennas sharing a mast or masts sharing a site.*

*29. 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.*



*30. However, it is the Governments firm view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. It remains central Governments responsibility to decide what measures are necessary to protect public health. In the Governments view, if a proposed mobile phone base station meets the 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.*



## 5.0 EVIDENCE CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The Telecommunication Masts working group has gathered a wide range of evidence from which to make its deliberations. This has included;
- Oral and written evidence about planning, technical information and health related issues presented by David Elsworthy, Manager, Planning, Pollution and Building Control Services and John Grant, Principal Pollution Control Officer
  - Written evidence (leaflets) provided by Department of Health
  - Written evidence from the Stewart Report.
  - Written evidence from the Planning policy guidelines from Bradford City Council, Chichester District Council and Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
  - Written evidence from media articles in the local press.
  - Planning Policy Guidance Note 8
  - Oral and Written evidence presented and discussed at a Telecommunications event arranged by Walsall Council at Bescot Stadium with Members, officers and mobile phone operators
  - Desk top research. Reviewing neighbouring authorities policies, concerns and recent actions relating to mobile telecommunications

Full listing details of the above are detailed in appendix 1

## 6.0 FINDINGS

### 6.1 Lobby of Local Government

During research and evidence gathering for this review members and officers have viewed many websites and published information including the Local Government Association site and reviews from other authorities in order to gather examples of good practice.

It is evident that several likeminded authorities were supporting the Local Government Association which had been organising to lobby Government for the removal of permitted development rights. Permitted development rights allow mobile phone operators to erect telecommunications masts below fifteen metres in height and other small scale apparatus without the need for planning permission or in the cases the prior approval of the local planning authority. The removal of the permitted development rights would mean all future telecommunications installations would require full planning permission from local planning authorities.

Whilst this would increase the number of planning applications received by the Council this would largely not affect the service because the applications for installation of telecommunications masts would be a direct replacement of the current requirement - Prior Approval applications, which are dealt with on a similar basis as a planning application but require the determination within 56 days or the applicant receives consent by default. It is considered that this deadline places a burden on the applicant and the Council and hinders purposeful negotiation between the Council and the telecommunications operator. As a result many Prior Approval Applications may be refused as the Council are unable to fully engage with the applicant and other interested parties. Given more time to consult more suitable locations or design solutions may be found as suggested in the 'ten commitments' and PPG8.

Members of the working group have also found that a report of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Mobile telecommunications supports this view and feel that the installation of any type of mobile phone mast generates a lot of interest in local communities and that it is only right that Local Authorities are given an appropriate amount of time to consult local people on their views.

The LGA are calling for the Government to act on the recommendations announced by the All Party Mobile Group which would allow Local Authorities to consult more fully on applications to erect mobile phone masts of any kind and to help Local Authorities better engage local communities on issues that affect them.

Members of the working group are in agreement with the principles of the Local Government Associations lobbying of Government for removal of permitted development rights and recommended to the Regeneration Environment Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny and Performance Panel that Cabinet be requested to agree a letter of support be sent to the LGA indicating that Walsall Council support for their campaign.

## 6.2 **Planning Guidance notes**

Following the investigation of other Council's literature and web sites and taking into account current legislation and guidance the working group has designed new planning application guidance notes for prospective applicants (a copy of this is attached at appendix 3).

It is considered that the guidance represents best practice and will encourage better and more complete information at the receipt of a planning or prior approval application rather than experiencing further delay during the course of processing the applications.



This will enhance the consultation process giving Councillors, officers and citizens more information and explanation at the initial stage of the process, particularly about applications in close proximity to schools. It will also help in the speed of processing applications.

### 6.3 **Design of Telecommunication Equipment**

The working group considered evidence based on the available design of masts and base stations. It was evident that many of these consisted of micro cells which the operators were requiring to infill areas which had no signal or where demand outstripped existing capacity.

In many instances the industry are pursuing what they refer to as a street works option that replicates a wider than normal lamp post in appearance of between 10 and 14 metres high with a small cabin close to its base. These are usually located on the highway (footpath or verge) if no existing mast or high building is available.

An alternative to these is the use of a dummy alarm box (or similar item) which is fixed to the face of buildings. At present these are permitted development (not requiring the consent of the Council) and whilst effectively doing the same job as the street works option are considerably less visually intrusive.

The working group considers that these are preferable in appearance to the street works option and would be more complicit with both local and national planning policy and guidance.

The working group consider that operators should be encouraged to pursue these where possible and provide information or a presentation to the Development Control Committee and Local Neighbourhood Partnerships about the options open to them.

### 6.4 **Use of Council Land and Buildings**

At the telecommunications event at Bescot Stadium the mobile phone operators industry asked key questions about using Council owned land and property and the siting of telecommunications equipment. It was identified that currently there is not a policy regarding the use of Council land and buildings for the siting of Telecommunication equipment. It was suggested that Cabinet may wish to explore this issue in greater detail and recommend that a policy should be developed that would guide future enquiries or applications from the mobile phone industry. It was further discussed that at least 50% of the potential revenue from the use of Council owned land and/or buildings could be used to capacity build Local Neighbourhood Partnership funds for future re-investment in the local area.

## 6.5 Health findings

Research in the United Kingdom into the health effects associated with mobile phones and base stations is primarily undertaken by the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), which has recently become part of the Health Protection Agency. Various work is also undertaken by the National Physical Laboratory, OFCOM and academic institutions (universities). Information is also available on behalf of government from the Department of Health.

At an international level, research and health protection information is available from the World Health Organisation and the International Committee on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection.

From a technical standpoint it is very difficult for other bodies or institutions to undertake meaningful studies in this field on account of the resources and expertise required. This extends to measurement equipment, regional and national surveys, epidemiological studies and appropriate finance. It would therefore be extremely difficult for Walsall or any other council to commission or otherwise get involved in such work on a unilateral basis.

## 6.6 Misuse of Mobile Phones

It was reported to the working group that the misuse of phones was becoming an issue, particularly by youths and children. Members were informed of incidents of bullying and anti-social behaviour and agreed that the investigation of misuse of mobile phones needed to be picked up.


The group acknowledge that this is outside its remit but feel that there is genuine public concern. Mobile phone industry representatives acknowledged that there were concerns and that the operators within the industry are looking at ways that they can help reduce such incidents .

The working group consider that this problem is so acute that the issues raised by the misuse of mobile phones should be referred to the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership theme group to raise awareness of the issue and for the group to give consideration to the development of a policy to deter misuse of mobile phones in schools, colleges and youth facilities across the Borough.

## 6.7 Roll out programme

The working group were advised that each October / November the mobile phone industry release a roll out programme which identifies where additional coverage is needed to be sited in order to ensure good network coverage for their networks. Members agreed with mobile phone operators that the roll out





programme should be consulted upon with Councillors as they had local knowledge and can advise of the most suitable sites.

Members also considered that Councillors on the Development Control Committee should receive further information from mobile phone operators with regard to the roll out strategy.

Members recognised that ward Councillors could have a real part to play in effectively siting equipment to suit all parties. The roll out plan would give Local Neighbourhood Partnerships opportunity to influence the preferred site and engaging public and partners in the process at the earliest possible stage.

In addition, by inviting mobile phone operators to Local Neighbourhood Partnership meetings the role out plan would be open for discussion with public and partners alike. The operators have indicated that they would provide information and present the alternative telecommunications equipment available at the meetings and can advise on the benefits of alternative designs.


#### 6.8 **Recycling**

The working group were advised that there were recycling facilities available at various locations, particularly at mobile phone retailers for unwanted or discarded hand sets and that mobile phone operators were promoting recycling. The Council supports this initiative and are trying to encourage further recycling in Walsall.

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Telecommunications working group recommends that the Regeneration Environment Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny and Performance Panel consider the contents of the report and make recommendations to Council as set out 1-10 below:-

- 7.1 That Local Neighbourhood Partnerships be requested to include an item on their agenda in October/November each year to consider the roll-out plan for telecommunications equipment to give them an influencing role of preferred site options.
- 7.2 That Local Neighbourhood Partnerships be recommended to invite the mobile phone operators to the meeting to give a brief presentation on the types of equipment available to enable members' opportunity to gain a greater understanding of alternative equipment and its usage
- 7.3 That the issues raised about the misuse of mobile phones should be brought to the attention of the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership theme group to raise awareness of the issue and for the group to give consideration to the development of a policy to deter misuse of mobile phones in schools, colleges and youth facilities across the Borough.
- 7.4 That the Council endorses the adoption of new guidance notes for planning applications from the telecommunication operators.
- 7.5 That council request that :
  - (i) SERCO advise school governors of the requirement for telecommunication operators to consult when making a planning application close to schools.
  - (ii) SERCO be advised of the growing problems of misuse of phones and requested to consider possible preventative actions.
- 7.6 That the Executive Director for Neighbourhoods be requested to develop mobile phone recycling initiatives in Walsall, in conjunction with mobile phone operators and businesses
- 7.7 To note that Scrutiny Panel welcomes Cabinets decision to support the Local Government Association in its campaign to remove permitted development rights from the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 and requests that Walsall Council join any future Local Government Association lobby relating to the effect of Telecommunication equipment on health or the planning policy guidance.



7.8 To endorse current practice that Walsall Council follow the advice as set out in planning policy Guidance Note 8 Telecommunications in:

- (i) not pursuing independent research or findings relating to the effect of telecommunication equipment on health, as this research is ongoing nationally and internationally and would be out of the reach of the Council to play any meaningful part in this process.
- (ii) to encourage the development of a stronger working relationship and a greater understanding of the range of available equipment with a view to identifying potential suitable sites for the positioning of new mobile telecommunications base stations and in particular in the annual lead up to the roll out planning to identify potential sites for the positioning of mobile phone equipment in October / November

7.9 That Cabinet be requested to give consideration to the feasibility of the use of Council land and buildings to site telecommunications equipment and in doing so considers the feasibility of potential use of 50% of revenue to capacity build Local Neighbourhood Partnerships funds for future re-investment in the local area.

7.10 To request that Council note that any actions resulting from this work will be monitored by scrutiny and fed into the end of year review of scrutiny to Council.



## APPENDIX 1

### List of Documents and Information considered by the Telecommunications Masts Working Group

(available on request)

#### Documents

1. Extracts from the minutes of the Regeneration, Environment, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny and Performance Panels relating to Telecommunication Masts Working Group.
2. Minutes from the Telecommunication Masts Working Group held on 11 October 2004.
3. Minutes from the Telecommunication Masts Working Group held on 1 December 2004.
4. Minutes from the Telecommunication Masts Working Group held on 2 February 2005.
5. Minutes from the Telecommunication Masts Working Group held on 23 February 2005.
6. Minutes from the Telecommunication Masts Event held on 26 April 2005.
7. Mobile Operators Association (MOA), "Developing Mobile Networks – Ten Commitments to best siting practice" document.
8. Department of Health Leaflet, Mobile Phone Base Stations and Health.
9. Department of Health Leaflet, Mobile Phones and Health.
10. Various newspaper reports relating to Telecommunication Masts and mobile phones.
11. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, "Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development".

Full details of this can be found:-

- At the Councils One Stop Shop
- At public Libraries in the Borough
- On [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk)

**Schedule of Scrutiny Panel/Working Group Activity**

**22 September 2004**

Members of the Regeneration, Environment, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny and Performance Panel (REHCS) received presentation from David Elsworthy and John Grant - Telecommunications Mobile Telephone Base Stations Health Effects and Policy.

**11 October 2004**

The working group received more in depth information of the key areas discussed at the previous panel meeting on 22 September 2004:-

- Health risks
- Planning Policy Guidelines (PPG8)
- Public fears

Members considered information from neighbouring authorities and agreed to prepare a workgroup pro-forma with suggested actions and programme of activity and to research other authorities sites.

**2 November 2004**

The REHCS panel heard feedback from Councillor Johnson who advised the working group were considering joining other local authorities to lobby Government through the Local Government Association (LGA) to change the policy and remove permitted development rights. It was agreed that research information submitted to the panel be fed back to the working group.

**1 December 2004**

Members of the working group agreed to feedback a number of recommendations to the scrutiny and performance panel :-

- that officers would produce a draft guidelines document for Mobile Phone Operators ;
- draft a letter to the Local Government Association (LGA);
- circulate Department of Health leaflets to receptions ;
- contact Organisational Development to discuss members development opportunities.

**15 December 2004**

The REHCS Panel agreed the following recommendations :-

- 1) That the Regeneration, Environment, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny and Performance Panel agree to recommend to Cabinet that a letter of support be sent to the LGA indicating Walsall MBC's support of the lobby for removal of permitted development rights which allow mobile phone operators to erect telecommunication masts below 15 metres in height without planning permission.

- 2) That the Regeneration Environment Housing Community Safety scrutiny and performance panel agree the following recommendations of the Telephone Mast working group:-
- That Department of Health information leaflets be made available at reception areas, schools and to member group rooms.
  - That panel agrees in principle to an exhibition stand in spring 2005 to raise public awareness and to provide information to the citizens of Walsall about mobile phone and telecommunication masts
  - That the progress of the work group is noted and that further updates be submitted at its next meeting.

### **19 January 2005**

Cabinet agreed the resolution from the last meeting and resolved that a report and presentation should be given to Council by members of the working group.

### **26 January 2005**

Members of the panel were informed of the agreement from Cabinet.

### **2 February 2005**

Members of the working group decided to draft a letter to support the Local Government Association (LGA). The first draft of the guidelines document was submitted, comments were noted and officers were tasked with producing a second draft.

### **23 February 2005**

Members of the working group planned the member development event. Additional guidance notes were agreed in principle.

### **16 March 2005**

The panel members were advised of the revised date of the telecommunications half day event. Panel were informed that working group members had become actively involved in the research and work of the group.


### **26 April 2005 (1.30-4.30pm)**

Telecommunications event (appendix 4 )

### **26 April 2005 (6.00-8.00pm)**

Councillor Johnson gave a brief verbal summary of the afternoon's events and that a number of actions from the meeting would be pursued through the work of the telecommunications work group in particular: -

- The rollout of information relating to mobile phone operators plans for the year.
- The involvement of Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNP) in the rollout procedure.

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- Investigation of different street furniture such as mini masts and mono poles.
  - Mast sharing – the operators had indicated they were willing to mast share but it was felt that further encouragement from members would be required for this to happen.
  - Schools becoming involved in joint working to consider school bullying videos on phones and the age of children and ability to have phones in schools.

Members reported that the event had been very positive and that the discussion had been open, frank and honest and most mobile phone operators had been represented at the event. He said it was a very informative session and that members, and mobile phone operators had benefited from the event and had learned from each other. He said that members had emphasised the desire to scrutinise the annual telecommunications industries rollout plan which would be available in October which indicates where new masts are needed

## APPENDIX 3

# TELECOMMUNICATIONS APPLICATIONS GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Modern telecommunications systems have a vital part to play in our life and bring significant economic and social benefits. But it is essential that the infrastructure needed to underpin these systems is delivered sensitively, keeping the impact on the environment to a minimum.

Walsall Council is keen to encourage a joint working approach to telecoms development with everyone concerned and the objective of this guidance note is to develop an understanding between the telecommunications systems operators and the Council as to what is expected from both parties in the consideration of proposals for telecommunications masts.

We wish to develop relationships with everyone that ensures the maximum amount of information about the possible location of telecoms equipment is made public, and debated as soon as is practicable. We would like these guidance notes to represent our commitment to a joint solution to telecoms in the Borough.

The advice contained in this guidance note is in line with Government guidance; PPG8 “Telecommunications” and the Code of Best Practice “Telecommunications Prior Procedures as applied to mast/tower development”. For more information please consult the “Code of Best Practice” at [www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/advice.htm](http://www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/advice.htm)

### PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

In accordance with the guidelines contained in the “Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development” 2002 you are expected to discuss all proposals with a planning officer before making an application for prior approval or planning permission.

It is expected that you will submit details of your proposal in writing including information about the location of the site, the type and design of apparatus to be constructed, other operators already on the site, the area of search and possible alternative sites. Council Officers will provide you with advice about particular issues that you may need to take into account and seek to agree a preferred site option with you wherever possible.

Whilst every effort is made to give advice of the highest quality, it is always given without prejudice to the outcome of the formal determination of an application.





## **PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS**

In addition the Council also expects that you will undertake pre-application consultation with local residents, elected members, schools/colleges and other interested groups. The Council believes that this is in your own interest as it will highlight any potential concerns at an early stage and enable you to seek to address these issues prior to the submission of a formal application.

You are expected to comply with the Code of Best Practice and submit details to the Council of the rating given to viable site options under the Traffic Light Rating Model. Officers will then identify any relevant issues that may warrant a change to these ratings and through discussion seek to agree a final rating with you wherever possible.

In addition it is also recommended that you submit a consultation plan giving details of who is to be consulted and the nature of the consultation proposed. The Council will provide advice as to whether your proposals are considered appropriate based on its own local knowledge and will in some instances suggest that you undertake additional and/or other methods of consultation.

All consultation letters should provide details of the preferred option including a justification for its choice and allow a minimum of fourteen days for a response. It is also recommended that you inform consultees of the decision and an explanation of the reasons for it.

All consultations should be undertaken prior to the submission of a planning or prior approval application.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

In addition to the information required to be submitted under Part 24 of Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) for a prior approval application and the requirements specified on the Council's application forms for planning permission we would request that you also supply the following information in order to assist with the processing of your application:

1. A signed declaration that the equipment and installation fully complies with the ICNIRP requirements
2. Site type (micro or macro)
3. Confirmation as to whether the Council's mast register and/or the industry site database has been checked for suitable sites.

4. Details of annual rollout and pre-application discussions with the Council
5. Details of all consultations carried out
6. Details of any consultations carried out with a particular school, further education college or Hospital if relevant
7. Details of any consultation carried out with the CAA/Secretary of State for Defence/Aerodrome operator if relevant
8. Area of search and rationale used for the extent of that area.
9. A written description of the proposed structure/development including the type of structure and its dimensions, height of existing building and details of the size of equipment housing and materials
10. Plans showing the proposed location.
10. A statement explaining the reasons for the choice of the design
11. Technical information including the frequency, modulation characteristics, power output and the height of the proposed antenna. Please also include an indication in writing that the location and design proposed is not likely to cause radio interference with other electrical equipment.
12. Technical justification – details about the purpose of the site and why the particular development is required
13. Details of alternative sites rejected with a justification for rejecting them. This should include existing masts, structures and other buildings within the search area
14. An explanation if no alternatives considered
15. Visual impact assessment where relevant and a statement to indicate how the preferred site is designed to minimise environmental intrusion including landscape considerations (e.g. is it designed to be sympathetic to its surroundings)
16. Acoustic report where relevant
17. Any other relevant additional information

Whilst failure to supply any of the above information will not result in your application being invalidated it may lead to delays as a result of requests for further information by the case officer or a refusal on the grounds of lack of information.

## APPENDIX 4

TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS EVENT  
Held on Tuesday 26 April 2005  
At The Savoy Lounge, Bescot Stadium, Walsall

### Attendees

#### Members

Councillor Johnson  
Councillor Tweddle  
Councillor Bentley  
Councillor Madeley  
Councillor Towe  
Councillor Ault  
Councillor Sarohi  
Councillor Underhill  
Councillor I Robertson  
Councillor R Burley

#### Officers

D Elsworthy, Manager Planning, Building and Pollution Control Services  
J Grant, Acting Pollution Control Manager  
S Ward, Planning & Transportation Services  
C Dean, Planning & Transportation Services  
N Hickson, Planning & Transportation Services  
R Ark, Planning & Transportation Services  
V Osborn, Planning Development Control  
O Williams, Planning Development Control  
M Kowalski, Planning Development Control  
H Smith, Student Environmental Health Officer  
S Lupton, Strategic Leader

#### Telecommunication Representatives

Stuart Eke, Mobile Operators Association  
John Shaughnessy, T-mobile Community Liaison Officer  
Sue Hammett, Orange, Local Government Community Relations Officer  
Angela Johnson, O<sub>2</sub>, Community Relations


The event began with David Elsworthy firstly thanking everyone for attending and outlined the purpose of the event was to create better links with the representatives from the mobile phone industry, to feed into the review of the Telecommunication Masts Working group and finally to increase everyone's understanding of Telecommunications and the Planning process,

Stuart Eke, Public Affairs Manager, Mobile Operators Association then gave a presentation on the current mobile phone network and the need for continuing development After the presentation, David offered the members / officers opportunity to ask questions based on the presentation Discussion themes centred around,



- Coverage of masts
- Annual roll out meeting
- Leases
- Alternative designs for masts (tree designs, sculptures, street lights)
- Every site to be looked at in its own merits
- Concerns of residents not taken on board
- Need to encourage genuine two way dialogue
- Need for improved mechanisms in order to consult local people and schools
- Need for more and improved information to be available as background information e g reason why operators have chosen a particular site
- House values - no hard facts that they are affected
- Only 8% projected increase in the number of masts in order to support the 3G network
- Increased participation / consultation of ward councillors
- Policy of all operators to write to all councillors in relation to a proposed mast in their ward does not appear to have been consistently followed (patchy)
- Traffic Light System - Walsall was seen as being predominantly as having amber and red areas
- No plans for generation at this moment in time but this is an unknown science
- Future technologies may result in less masts
- After erection masts are maintained annually by external contractors
- OFCOM will test emissions on masts on schools / hospitals if requested - do schools know this is available?
- Can mobile operators come to an agreement with planners by offering further ICNIRP post installation testing in an attempt to increase community relations and increase trust?
- Need to take up every opportunity to allay public concerns,,
- What are the recycling opportunities for mobile phones?
- Nearest recycling site is in France, however handsets can be handed into mobile operators shops,
- Operators use roll out plan to encourage site sharing. Masts are built depending on number of sites sharing it when it is built Masts are made more substantial as the number of antennae increase The last operator to join a mast will have to gain an ICNIRP certificate for the whole mast not just their own antenna However there does need to be a degree of vertical separation between each antenna,,
- Site sharing does not increase the emissions from the mast as the individual antennas are facing in different directions,
- Operators confirmed they do consult with school governors when thinking of siting a mast on a school.
- Video bullying - cannot control the content of a video, perhaps the location the phone is being used in should





restrict their use e.g. schools stop children using phones during the school day,

- O<sub>2</sub> representative advised they have produced a set of leaflets which offer advice on the use of video phones etc,
- They would be quite willing to arrange discuss supplying schools in the area with these leaflets.
- The idea of a cross-operator competition where students can create alternative designs for masts was put forward.
- Should telecommunication mast discussions be held at the
- LNP meetings?
- Could the accessibility planning software be used to overlay maps showing areas of available council land with areas where mobile phone coverage is needed?
- Council not keen to offer 15 year leases due to the restrictions this would put on improvement plan for the land
- Perhaps radio planners from the operators need to meet with
- Council planners in an aim to work together

#### Actions from the Event

- a) Mobile Operators to check that all relevant Councillors do receive planning application information from them,
- b) Operators to be invited to discuss the way forward with planning applications with the Planning department,,
- c) Council land to be looked at in terms of availability for mobile masts,,
- d) Art features to be considered when planning mast siting,
- e) O<sub>2</sub> to discuss distributing leaflets into schools,,
- f) Information pack to be made available to Councillors detailing the different types of masts available,

David Elsworthy thanked everyone again for attending and for making a real step forward in improving relations between all of the parties concerned