

PLANNING DIVISION INFORMATION SHEET 3.1 TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

This fact sheet aims to give some general advice and information regarding the way the Council deals with telecommunications development (such as mobile phone masts) and answer some common questions about health concerns related to telecommunications development.

THE COUNCIL'S POWERS AS PLANNING AUTHORITY

The Government has set out the framework for submission and determination of telecommunications development applications by telecommunications code operators. The Council's planning powers are currently limited with regard to telecommunications installations on buildings, and for masts under 15 metres in height.

Minor telecommunications development, such as the addition of a dish to an existing mast, may not require planning permission and may be carried out without the need to consult the relevant local authority.

With some other telecommunications development, which does not require planning permission, such as masts under 15 metres in height, there is a requirement for the operators to consult the relevant local authority, with regard to siting and appearance, with a set period given for the authority to respond.

In the case of masts over 15 metres in height and applications within land which has a special designation (e.g. Conservation Area), full planning permission is normally required.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Council notifies adjoining residents and those in close proximity to a site by letter where a planning application is received. In addition, applications relating to telecommunications development are advertised in local newspapers and by site notice. The Council will notify local schools where proposals are nearby.

THE COUNCIL'S POWERS AS LANDLORD

In its capacity as landlord, the Council has adopted an approach of examining each request to site equipment on Council land or buildings on its merits, and has adopted a policy not to allow such equipment at schools within its control. However, this is in the Council's capacity as a landlord and not as local planning authority, which are two totally separate functions.





HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES AND PLANNING

Health considerations and public concern are not normally material considerations in determining planning applications. The "ICNIRP" guidelines state acceptable radiation emission levels for such equipment and the view expressed by the Minister for Housing and Planning is that if a proposed development meets the 'ICNIRP' guidelines, it should not be necessary for a planning authority to consider the health effects further.

The Stewart Report published in May 2000 provided the conclusions of evidence collected by a team of independent experts on possible health effects of mobile phone technology. This report can be viewed on line at www.iegmp.org.uk, and further information is available from the contact organisations detailed below.

Operators of radio transmitting apparatus are required to go through a licensing process, which may include the radio site clearance procedure of the Department of Trade and Industry. The Health and Safety Executive also deal with radiation safety, and as part of the licensing process operators are made aware of safety requirements. The National Radiological Protection Board is an independent statutory body, which can provide information on radiation issues.

Information regarding the location of telecommunications masts is available from the 'Sitefinder' website at www.sitefinder.ofcom.org.uk.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Health Protection Agency Web <http://www.hpa.org.uk/radiation>

Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Tel 0845 345 0055 Web www.hse.gov.uk

International Commission On Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP)
Web www.icnirp.de

Independent Expert Group On Mobile Phones (IEGMP) Web www.iegmp.org.uk

Ofcom Radiocommunications Licensing
Web <http://licensing.ofcom.org.uk/radiocommunication-licences/mobile-wireless-broadband/> Mast 'Sitefinder' Website www.sitefinder.ofcom.org.uk

Department Of Health Web www.doh.gov.uk/mobile.htm

Planning Division Tel 020 8313 4956 Web www.bromley.gov.uk/planning

This form is also available upon request in large-print format.
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