

Report to: **Planning Committee**
 Date of Meeting: **23 August 2011**
 Report by: **Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)**

Application No HM/10/0578
 Planning Proposal: **Erection of 15 Metre Telecoms Mast and Associated Equipment**

1 Summary Application Information

- Application Type : Detailed Planning Application
- Applicant : O2 Ltd and Vodafone Ltd
- Location : Farm Road
Opposite Thornhill Avenue
Blantyre

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) Grant Detailed Planning Permission (Subject to Conditions – Based on Conditions Attached)

2.2 Other Actions/Notes

- (1) The Planning Committee has delegated powers to determine this application.

3 Other Information

- ◆ Applicant's Agent: Mono Consultants Ltd
- ◆ Council Area/Ward: 15 Blantyre
- ◆ Policy Reference(s): **South Lanarkshire Local Plan**
Policy RES6 - Residential Land Use Policy
Policy DM12 – Telecommunications

◆ Representation(s):

- ▶ 1 Objection Letter
- ▶ 0 Support Letters
- ▶ 0 Comments Letters

◆ Consultation(s):

Environmental Services

Roads and Transportation Services (Hamilton Area)

1 Application Site

- 1.1 The application site relates to an area of ground forming part of the public highway (pavement) on the north side of Farm Road, Blantyre.
- 1.2 The application site is located adjacent to an existing electrical sub station and an area of mature trees to the north. On the opposite (south) side of the road there is a convenience store. To the east and west there are residential dwellings, the closest being approximately 40 metres from the proposed mast. In addition there are existing street lighting columns approximately 10 metres in height.

2 Proposal(s)

- 2.1 The applicant seeks planning consent for the erection of a 15 metre high telecoms mast incorporating an 11.6 metre high pole, three Vodaphone antennas and three O2 antennas with a shroud. The proposal also involves the installation of ground based equipment which includes two equipment cabinets. All proposed apparatus will be located on the northern footpath of Farm Road.
- 2.2 The proposal is part of the strategic partnership between Vodaphone and O2 to share mobile assets in the U.K.
- 2.3 An ICNIRP compliant declaration and supporting statement has been submitted in respect of the proposal.

3 Background

3.1 Local Plan Status

- 3.1.1 In terms of the South Lanarkshire Local Plan the site is identified as being within a Residential Area (as defined by Policy RES6). Policy RES6 states that the Council will resist any development which will be detrimental to the amenity of those areas.
- 3.1.2 The South Lanarkshire Local Plan includes a specific policy on Telecommunications Development (Policy DM12). This policy states that the Council in assessing telecommunications proposals will require to minimise any adverse impact on the visual amenity, character and appearance of the surrounding area, minimise environmental and visual impact through exploration of a range of options and sets out the criteria which proposals relating to these sites must comply with. In addition individual proposals shall be sited and designed as sensitively as possible in order to minimise potential adverse cumulative impact.

3.2 Relevant Government Advice/Policy

- 3.2.1 The Scottish Government supports the expansion and diversification of the telecommunications industry, but recognises that this must be done sensitively to safeguard our natural and built environment. Government guidance with regards to the siting and design of telecommunication apparatus is set out within Scottish Planning Policy (February 2010) (which supersedes National Planning Policy Guidance Note 19 - NPPG 19 – Radio Telecommunications) and Planning Advice Note 62 (PAN62) – Radio Telecommunications.
- 3.2.2 In terms of the SPP this policy guidance advises that all new development should be sited and designed to minimise visual impact. It is advised that this may be achieved by following the series of options below:

- (a) Installation of smallest suitable equipment,
- (b) Concealing and disguising masts, antennas, equipment housing and cable runs
- (c) Using design and camouflage techniques,
- (d) Mast or site sharing,
- (e) Installations on buildings and existing structures, and
- (f) Installation of ground based masts.

3.3 **Planning Background**

- 3.3.1 There are no previous planning applications relative to the site.
- 3.3.2 This application could have been delegated however amended legislation which came into force in 2009 requires that as the Council has an interest in the land the application has to be determined by a Committee.

4 **Consultation(s)**

- 4.1 **Roads and Transportation Services** – Originally registered concern about the proposal commenting that the footway is 2 metres wide and therefore there is potential for the equipment to obstruct pedestrian and wheelchair movement, especially when the doors of the cabinet are open for maintenance works. In addition the mast is located opposite an entrance to the car park for the shop opposite and very close to the crest of a hill and therefore any maintenance vehicles parking on this section of Farm Road could cause an obstruction to forward visibility and disrupt the safe flow of traffic on Farm Road and traffic accessing the car park to the shops.

Following discussions with the agent, Roads and Transportation Services they have advised that the use of sliding cabinet doors or similar (ones that open 180 degrees) would reduce the impact on the width of the footway to within acceptable limits. In addition, there are no parking restrictions at present and any maintenance associated with the equipment/mast is sporadic (twice a year at most) and usually of short duration. On this basis, it is accepted that the impact on forward visibility can be accommodated as long as appropriate traffic management procedures are implemented on site. In this regard the agent has highlighted that any maintenance would be similar in nature to all other 'pavement' based masts and street lights.

Response: - Noted. The imposition of appropriate conditions and/or advisory note will be necessary to address the above aspects.

- 4.2 **Environmental Services** – No objections subject to standard advisory notes relating to noise.

Response: - Noted.

5 **Representation(s)**

- 5.1 Statutory neighbour notification was undertaken in respect of the proposal. One letter of representation was received from Scottish Power Energy Networks.
- 5.2 The grounds of objection are summarised as follows: -

a) Scottish Power has an operational substation and underground cable within the vicinity of the proposed development and therefore they object to

the proposal on the basis that there is no intimation as to whether the proposal will affect their apparatus.

Response: Scottish Power's comments are noted. The imposition of a planning condition will ensure that the developer shall arrange for any alteration, deviation or reinstatement of statutory undertakers apparatus necessitated by this proposal all at his or her own expense.

The above letter has been copied and is available for inspection in the usual manner and on the Planning Portal.

6 Assessment and Conclusions

- 6.1 The current proposal is for the erection of a monopole telecommunications mast and associated equipment adjacent to an area of wooded open space at Farm Road, Blantyre.
- 6.2 The main determining issues with regard to this proposal are whether it accords with government guidance and local plan policy and any impacts on road and pedestrian safety.
- 6.3 Government guidance is set out within Scottish Planning Policy (February 2010) and Planning Advice Note 62 (PAN62) – Radio telecommunications. Paragraphs 250 – 254 of Scottish Planning Policy and paragraphs 37-76 of PAN 62 relate to the siting and design of Telecommunication Equipment. They both advise that in selecting the site and design both operators and planning authorities should consider a series of options. The options are:
 - (a) Installing small scale equipment
 - (b) Concealment or disguising equipment
 - (c) Mast sharing
 - (d) Site sharing
 - (e) Installing on existing buildings or other structures; and
 - (f) Erecting new ground based mast.

In considering the options there must be regard to the cumulative effects of telecommunications masts. There is a need to think beyond individual proposals and consider how future telecommunications equipment will be integrated into the landscape.

It further advises that whilst antennas and other equipment can be disguised as street furniture, such as street lighting, such installations have to respect the townscape qualities of the area. In this instance the proposal does respect the existing street scene because of the existing street furniture and trees located within the general area, the latter of which will provide to some extent, a 'backdrop' to the mast thereby reducing its visual impact.

Paragraph 44 of PAN 62 relative to mast sharing, advises that conditions in the code systems operators' licences require that the possibility of sharing an existing radio site be explored and that evidence of this should accompany planning applications. The supporting information lists seven alternative sites that have been considered. On these options 6 have been discounted for a variety of reasons. The current proposal is part of the strategic partnership between Vodafone and 02 to share mobile assets in the U.K. Accordingly this proposal is considered to meet the criteria as no suitable alternative sites are readily available and the siting and external

appearance of the apparatus is such that it should have minimal impact on amenity due to its design, location and backdrop of mature trees.

In view of the above and the fact that the nearest residential property is approximately 40 metres away, it is considered that it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that a new mast at this location is the best solution. Paragraph 91 of PAN62 states that steps should be taken to conceal and disguise apparatus at visually sensitive locations such as public open space. Furthermore, paragraph 111 of PAN62 requires the operator to pursue the site which will create the least landscape impact. It is considered that the applicant has selected a site which adheres to this advice because in identifying a location within the residential area where the coverage is required, the proposed site is located adjacent to various clusters of trees. In addition the impacts on residential properties nearest the site would be limited due to the combination of the existing trees to the north of the site and the distance between the houses and the site of the proposed mast. Furthermore the design of the mast is a slim monopole, which would not appear too incongruous in the context of the existing street lights along Farm Road and it would house equipment for two operators, obviating the need for another mast elsewhere.

- 6.4 In terms of local plan policy, Policy RES6 requires that the Council will resist any development which will be detrimental to the amenity of residential areas and will seek to maintain or improve the areas of open space within such areas. With regards to amenity, it is considered that the impact on residential properties nearest the site would be limited due to a combination of the existing trees to the north of the site and the relationship between the houses and the proposed mast. In addition the design of the mast is a slim monopole, which would not appear too incongruous in the context of the existing street lights along Farm Road, albeit these are not as high. It is considered that masts of this design can become generally accepted features in the streetscene and therefore the proposal raises no issues in this regard. On this basis it is considered that the proposal respects the requirements of Policy RES 6.
- 6.5 With regards to the Council's telecommunication policy, Policy DM12 of the South Lanarkshire Local Plan states that the Council should have regard to government policy and to local plan policies which seek to safeguard amenity and the environment. The proposed location is a sensitive site because it is located in a residential area and the Council's approved Telecommunications Policy includes a presumption against telecommunications development within sensitive locations. It is recognised however that coverage is required within residential areas and that Scottish Planning Policy requires planning authorities to support the expansion of the electronic communications network. In this instance it is considered that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated that the application site is the most appropriate location and that no suitable alternatives exist, as detailed above in paragraph 6.3. Accordingly this proposal is considered to meet the criteria as no suitable alternative sites are readily available and the siting and external appearance of the apparatus is such that it should have minimal impact as detailed above in paragraph 6.4. Furthermore the mast would house equipment for two operators, obviating the need for another mast.
- 6.6 In relation to impact on road and pedestrian safety, Roads and Transportation Services have acknowledged that from a road safety perspective the impact of the proposal is acceptable subject to appropriate conditions and/or informatives.
- 6.7 On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of approved local plan policy and impact on road and pedestrian safety and it is therefore recommended that consent be granted.

7 Reasons for Decision

- 7.1 The proposal complies with government guidance and the terms of the adopted South Lanarkshire Local Plan, in particular Policies RES6 and DM12. In addition the proposals raise no road or pedestrian safety issues.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)

15 August 2011

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ▶ Application Form
- ▶ Application Plans
- ▶ South Lanarkshire Local Plan
- ▶ Scottish Planning Policy
- ▶ Planning Advice Note 62
- ▶ Neighbour notification, dated 2 December 2010

- ▶ Consultations

Roads and Transportation Services (Hamilton Area) 10/06/2011

Environmental Services 10/01/2011

- ▶ Representations
Representation from : Scottish Power Energy Networks
55 Fullarton Drive
Glasgow
G32 8FA, DATED 03/12/2010

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Murray Reid, Planning Officer, Brandon Gate, Hamilton
Ext 3521 (Tel :01698 453521)

E-mail: Enterprise.hamilton@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Detailed Planning Application

PAPER APART – APPLICATION NUMBER : HM/10/0578

CONDITIONS

- 1 This consent shall be carried out strictly in accordance with drawing numbers:
100

200
300
400

- 2 In the event that equipment becomes obsolete or redundant it must be removed and the site reinstated to the satisfaction of the planning authority within 6 months.
- 3 That the doors to the cabinets shall be of a sliding nature or be capable of being opened fully i.e. 180 degrees or capable of being fully removed for the purposes of servicing.
- 4 That the developer shall arrange for any alteration, deviation or reinstatement of statutory undertakers apparatus necessitated by this proposal all at his or her own expense.

REASONS

- 1 For the avoidance of doubt and to specify the drawings upon which the decision was made.
- 2 In the interests of amenity and in order to retain effective planning control.
- 3 In the interest of public safety.
- 4 In order to retain effective planning control

For information only

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