

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

Application No: HM/11/0216
 Planning Proposal: Erection of 12.5m Telecommunications Mast and Associated Equipment

1 Summary Application Information

- Application Type : Detailed Planning Application
- Applicant : Telefonica UK Ltd
- Location : Highway Outside SLC Care Home
Main Street
High 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 the 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 (adopted 2009)**
DM 1 - Development Management Policy
DM 12 - Telecommunications Development Policy
RES 6 - Residential Land Use Policy

◆ Representation(s):

- ▶ 0 Objection Letters
- ▶ 0 Support Letters
- ▶ 0 Comment Letters

◆ Consultation(s):

Environmental Services

Roads and Transportation Services (Hamilton Area)

Planning Application Report

1 Application Site

- 1.1 The application site forms part of the public footway along Main Street, High Blantyre. In particular the proposed telecommunications mast is to be positioned on the pavement between the vehicular entrance to a South Lanarkshire care home and the semi-natural trees which lie within its grounds. It will be close to the junction with Auchinraith Road and just after the bend on Main Street when travelling west into High Blantyre neighbourhood centre.
- 1.2 The site is located within a residential area and the care home sits immediately to the rear of the site. There are dwellinghouses located on the periphery. Apart from the care home, no properties sit immediately opposite or alongside the proposed location. In the wider context, Main Street is interspaced with commercial units. Notably, the High Blantyre village/neighbourhood centre is located within walking distance of the site and further along Main Street there are shops, takeaways and a pub.
- 1.3 The properties along Main Street and within the surrounding area are one and two stories in height. The streetscape is characterized with bus shelters and street lighting columns of approximately 9 metres in height and the care home car parking area also has high light poles of approximately 3 metres in height.

2 Proposal(s)

- 2.1 The applicants seek planning consent for the erection of a 12.5 metre high telecoms mast and associated equipment at this location. The associated equipment involves a small cabinet measuring 1898x798x1648mm in dimension. The cabinet box is to sit alongside the mast (west facing side).
- 2.2 The applicant has advised that the proposed base station is required to provide 3G coverage specifically within High Blantyre and forms a collaboration of both 02 and Vodafone networks to consolidate the number of base stations required.
- 2.3 An ICNIRP compliant declaration and supporting statement has been submitted in respect of the proposal. Coverage plots demonstrating a need for this development in terms of the operators' networks have been submitted. These plots indicate the current lack of 3G coverage within the target area and the predicted improvement with the proposed base station in operation.

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 Policy DM1 requires all planning applications to take account of the local context and built form. In addition all proposals should be compatible with adjacent buildings and surrounding streetscape in terms of scale, massing, design, external materials and impact upon amenity.
- 3.1.3 The South Lanarkshire Local Plan also 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 have been no previous applications for the site; however, pre-application discussions did take place prior to the application being submitted.
- 3.3.2 An initial location was proposed at the corner of Main Street and Larkfield Drive for a mast 14.8m high. This was subject to a round of pre-application letters to stakeholders and a site meeting with the Council planning officers.
- 3.3.3 The Planning Service raised concerns about the specific location as the mast was in close proximity to residential properties and in direct view of them. Concerns were also raised with regards to the height of the proposal as the area was notably of low and spacious development form. The agent agreed to go back and look at an alternative location further away from residential properties and one which would have less impact. On this basis, this new location and decreased pole height (2.5m less) is being proposed.
- 3.3.4 This application could have been delegated however as the Council has an interest in the land the application requires to be referred to Committee.

4 Consultation(s)

- 4.1 **Roads and Transportation Services** - Have raised no issues with the proposal subject to a condition regarding pedestrian safety. This is considered acceptable and can be attached.
Response: - Noted.
- 4.2 **Environmental Services** - Have raised no issues with the proposal.

Response: - Noted.

5 Representation(s)

- 5.1 Statutory neighbour notification was undertaken and the application was advertised as a result of non notification of neighbours. No third party objections have been received.

6 Assessment and Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposal relates to the erection of a 12.5 metre high telecoms mast and associated equipment on a footpath in High Blantyre. The main determining issues in this case are compliance with government guidance and local plan policy and any impacts on road or pedestrian safety.
- 6.2 In terms of government guidance, this 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 requires that the possibility of sharing an existing radio site be explored and that evidence of this should accompany planning applications. The supporting information highlights that other sites were considered but were ruled out for a number 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 be acceptable particularly as the mast has been reduced in height from that originally proposed on a site nearby. The siting and external appearance of the apparatus is such that it would have minimal impact on amenity due to its design and location relative to other street furniture.

In view of the above, it is considered that it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that a new mast at this location is acceptable. 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 other items of street furniture.

- 6.3 In terms of adopted local plan policy, the South Lanarkshire Local Plan identifies Policies RES6 – Residential Areas General, Policy DM1 Development Management Policy and Policy DM12 – Telecommunications as being relevant.
- 6.4 Policy RES6 states that the Council will resist any development which will be detrimental to the amenity of residential areas. Policy DM1 requires all planning applications to take account of the local context and built form. Although designated as a residential area the site is located along the main commuter route running through High Blantyre which is interspersed with commercial units and characterized with various elements of street furniture. In this regard the site is relatively commercial in character and the mast will not introduce a feature significantly detrimental to the integrity, quality and character of the area. In addition, it is considered that the impact on residential properties nearest the site would be limited as the mast will not be in the direct view of them and the existing trees adjacent to the site will help mitigate its presence on the street. 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 Main Street, albeit these are not as high. Collectively there will therefore be no adverse impact with regards to residential amenity.
- 6.5 Policy DM12 – Telecommunications policy states that telecoms developments should meet a number of criteria. In this regard the applicant has identified seven alternative sites all of which were discounted for either a) being more visually intrusive than that proposed, given the sites character and existing street furniture and b) in being closer to residential properties. 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 6.2. Furthermore the applicant has demonstrated the need for the development in accordance with a comprehensive network plan. In view of the above and that the proposal will not be in the direct sight line of any residential properties, the proposal accords with Policy DM 12.
- 6.6 In terms of traffic and pedestrian safety the Roads and Transportation Service were consulted and have offered no objection subject to a condition being attached with regards to the associated cabinet.
- 6.7 Overall it is considered that the proposal will have no serious impact on either residential or visual amenity and is acceptable in terms of local plan policy and impact on road and pedestrian safety. Given the above, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

7 Reasons for Decision

- 7.1 The proposal has no adverse impact on the amenity of the area and is acceptable with Policies RES 6, DM1 and DM12 of the South Lanarkshire Local Plan. The proposal also raises no issues in terms of traffic or pedestrian safety.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)

9 August 2011

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ▶ Application Form
- ▶ Application Plans
- ▶ South Lanarkshire Local Plan
- ▶ I.C.N.I.R.P declaration and supporting information
- ▶ Neighbour notification letter 16 May 2011
- ▶ Hamilton Advertiser: 26 May 2011

- ▶ Consultations
 - Environmental Services 02/06/2011
 - Roads and Transportation Services (Hamilton Area) 07/06/2011

- ▶ Representations: None

Contact for Further Information

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

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Detailed Planning Application

PAPER APART – APPLICATION NUMBER: HM/11/0216

CONDITIONS

- 1 This decision relates to drawing numbers: 100, 200, 300 and 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.

REASONS

- 1 For the avoidance of doubt and to specify the drawings upon which the decision was made.
- 2 To minimise the level of visual intrusion, and ensure the reinstatement of the site to a satisfactory standard.
- 3 In the interest of public safety

For information only

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