COMMITTEE EXTRACT

Committee Date: 16 December 2008

Reference:- 08/01035/GDOT **Parish:- Burbage Parish Council**

Applicant:- Vodafone Ltd
Vodafone House
The Connection
Newbury
Berkshire

Location:- Boyslade Road Burbage Leicestershire

Proposal:- ERECTION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST

Introduction:-

This is an application for prior approval of the siting and appearance for a 10 metre telecommunications mast on land at Boyslade Road, Burbage.

It is proposed to erect the mast on the grass verge located to the east of the garden of number 2 Twycross Road and opposite the west elevation of The Galaxy public house. The proposal also includes the installation of an equipment cabin which would be located to the north west of the mast.

The application site consists of a grass verge that contains three equipment cabins serving cable television and an existing telecommunications cabin. The site to the east is residential with housing facing the main distributor roads and gardens backing on to each other. The Galaxy public house and associated parking is located to the west of the site with a local shopping centre with residential accommodation above, to the north.

The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:-

a) Health and mobile phone base stations- provides a summary of research undertaken regarding the health implications of mobile base stations.
b) General background information on radio network development for planning applications- History of mobile technology and reasons why more mast are required including government policy.
c) Vodafone supporting technical information provides data on the existing level of coverage and the anticipated coverage should the proposal go ahead
d) Site specific supplementary information- provides details of pre-application consultations undertaken, other sites investigated and reasons why they were disregarded and policy considerations.
e) ICNIRP certificate which declares that the mast conforms with the ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines.

History:-

None relevant.

Consultations:-

No objection has been received from:-
Director of Highways, Transportation and waste Management (Highways)
Director of Community Services (Ecology).

Site notice and Press notice were displayed and neighbours notified.

6 letters of objection have been received raising the following concerns:-

a) Close to adjacent properties that house young families.
b) Masts should not be sited near schools or elderly persons homes according to the Governments Stewart report.
c) Would have a negative affect on the health of surrounding residents
d) Should be sited in the countryside away from elderly peoples homes.
e) Detrimental effect on house values

Development Plan Policies:-

Central Government Guidance

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 Delivering Sustainable Development- Outlines the Governments role for the planning system in delivering sustainable development and creating inclusive and well designed neighbourhoods.

Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 8 Telecommunications gives guidance on planning for telecommunications development - including radio masts and towers, antennas of all kinds, radio equipment housing, public call boxes, cabinets, poles and overhead wires.

Local Plan Policy

The site falls within the Burbage Settlement Boundary as defined by the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan.

Policy BE1 seeks to safeguard and enhance the existing environment by permitting development that complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area.

Other material policy guidance

Burbage Village Design Statement- sets out the principles design features and quality standards that should be adopted by those seeking permission to undertake development in Burbage.

Appraisal:-

The main issues for consideration are the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed mast and antenna on the street scene and the local area.

PPG 8 states that it is the Government's policy to facilitate growth of new and existing telecommunications to ensure people have a choice and range of services and service providers, whilst keeping the environmental impact a minimum.

The applicant has provided information demonstrating a lack of 3G coverage in the centre of Burbage and a list of other sites that have been investigated along with the reasons why they were discarded. It is accepted that there is a requirement for additional mobile coverage in the area. However, PPG 8 also considers that protection from visual intrusion on the surrounding environment is a material consideration.

The area around the application site consists of two storey semi detached dwellings set slightly back from the road with grass verges separating the private amenity areas from the public highway. The commercial units are higher but still maintain the overall impression of a low density residential estate. There is very little vegetation in the area to break up the urban form and little street furniture. The proposed mast would be very visible and prominent within the landscape. Its siting, at the end of the run of gardens in full view of a number of properties is considered intrusive to those properties and therefore the proposal fails to safeguard or enhance the character of the surrounding area require by policy BE1 of the Hinckley and Bosworth adopted Local Plan.

Whilst the area is not of special importance it does have a character derived from the form and scale of development and it is considered that the mast would appear incongruous within the landscape due to

its prominence. Although the area is of limited architectural merit it does not justify approving a mast in this location.

An application in 2005 for a single 15m telecommunication mast on land off Normandy Way, Hinckley was refused and subsequently granted planning permission at appeal. The Inspector within his report considered the repetitive pattern created by the lamp posts and the position of the mast in relation to these would continue this rhythm. However, the Inspector did have regard to the proximity of the nearest dwellings, located 65 metres from the mast with vegetation between the mast and the dwellings.

The mast, now under consideration is lower than that approved at the appeal, however the character of the area is significantly different. The street lamps are shorter than those on Normandy Way and the mast would not be evenly spaced between them resulting in a break in the rhythm they create. Whilst there are other street structures such as the sign to the pub, a post with a floodlight on it and telegraph poles further up the street. Residential properties are located significantly closer, the nearest sited 26m away with no vegetation or features which would obstruct the view of the mast from neighbouring properties. Having regard to the Inspectors reasons and decision, on the previous application, it is considered that the current application would have a significant worse affect on the character and appearance of Boyslade Road especially when viewed from surrounding residential properties.

Objections have been received on the grounds of harm to the health of nearby residents. A ICNIRP declaration has been submitted and therefore in accordance with Guidance from Central Government, it is not the role of the Local Planning Authority to assess the potential harm to public health when determining application for telecommunication masts.

Whilst consideration has been given to the need for coverage in this area, in this instance this does not outweigh the harm the siting and appearance of the mast would have on the street scene in this location and therefore it is recommended that the application be refused.

RECOMMENDATION :- REFUSE, for the following reasons :-

Reasons :-

1 In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposed telecommunications mast and equipment is considered out of character with the street scene and therefore will have a detrimental effect on the appearance of the area generally. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policy BE1 of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan, and the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance Note 8.

Notes to Applicant :-

1 List of plans used in the determination of this application:-
35755/F/001, 35755/F/002, and 35755/F/003, 35755/F/04

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