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<b>Aylesford</b> Blue Bell Hill And Walderslade	<b>575532 162467</b>	<b>03.05.2005</b>	<b>TM/05/01369/TEPN56</b>
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Proposal:	Prior Notification submission in respect of installation of 7.7m high slimline monopole with three antenna, equipment house and ancillary development
Location:	Fostington Way Chatham Kent
Applicant:	T-Mobile (UK) Limited

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## **1. Description:**

- 1.1 This is a prior notification for the erection of a 7.7m high slimline monopole incorporating three antennae contained within a shroud and the installation of two small equipment cabinets. The proposed monopole will be sited on highway verge to the southwest of the junction of Fernbank Close and Fostington Way.
- 1.2 The applicant has submitted signal coverage maps showing the existing coverage, the proposed coverage of this individual cell and the proposed composite coverage for this locality. The applicant has made a declaration of compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. The applicant has also submitted a detailed supporting statement, which is available for Members' inspection.

## **2. The Site:**

- 2.1 The application site lies within the urban confines of Walderslade and on an Important Green Space as identified on the Proposals Map of the TMBLP 1998. The site lies on the western side of Fostington Way, just to the south of its junction with Fernbank Close. The site is a grassed verge adjacent to the carriageway and a footpath. To the southwest and the west stand trees and bushes.
- 2.2 The relevant TMBLP policies are P4/10 and P7/16.

## **3. Planning History:**

- 3.1 None.

## **4. Consultees:**

- 4.1 PC: Objection. This is a prominent position in the grass verge behind Fernbank Close and would detract from the street scene. The proposed site is immediately opposite a toddler and children's play area.
- 4.2 KCC (Highways): The submitted details show proposals to install new telecommunications equipment on the highway verge, between the footway fronting Fostington Way. No details are provided of where vehicles needing to service the installation will park. Although it is likely that once installed only routine

maintenance visits are likely to take place and service vehicles are likely to park on street, similar to other maintenance vehicles. Details state that all equipment will comply with current ICNIRP safety levels and guidelines. I raise no objections to this proposal.

4.3 Private Reps: 18/0X/0S/6R. Six letters and a 50 signature petition have been received objecting on the following grounds:

- Highway hazard;
- Mast should be sited on the eastern side of Fostington Way adjacent to the playing field;
- Visual intrusion;
- Impede visibility for vehicles leaving Fernbank Close;
- Should look at other alternative sites, such as Walderslade Woods road;
- Health and Safety concerns over a mast and too close to school and nearby playing fields;

4.4 A8 Site Notice: No response.

## **5. Determining Issues:**

5.1 As this submission is made under Prior Notification procedures, the Borough Council's control is limited to matters of siting and design. The principal issues associated with this proposal are whether it is acceptable in policy terms, the impact on the locality and any potential health risks to the general public.

5.2 The revised PPG8 sets out the Government's policy to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. It offers advice to LPAs dealing with such proposals and makes it clear that regard should be had to any technical constraints on the location of the proposed development. Authorities should not question the need for the telecommunications system, which the proposed development is to support.

5.3 In addition, policy P7/16 of the TMBLP applies to telecommunications facilities. This has detailed criteria for assessing development, although this is subject to the Borough Council also having full regard to the licence obligations and technical and operational constraints faced by telecommunications operators.

5.4 The applicant has provided signal coverage maps, which clearly indicate that there is currently a gap in the 3G coverage in the South Walderslade area, centred on Fostington Way. The proposed monopole would meet this need and improve the signal coverage in this locality. The applicant has indicated that they have carried out an assessment and a survey of possible mast sharing opportunities, use of

other suitable tall structures, as well as looking at alternative sites. There are no existing masts in close proximity or tall buildings to utilise. With alternative sites, they have considered and rejected the following sites: Tunbury County Primary School; Medway Crematorium; Impton Wood; Taddington Wood; Blue Bell Hill Car Park; and Walderslade Woods roundabout. I note local residents consider that the Walderslade Woods roundabout location would be a more suitable location. However, in order to meet technical requirements, a 15m high mast would be required, which would, I consider, be visually harmful in that location, particularly as it is also within an Important Green Space. Therefore, it would appear that this Licence Operator has a valid technical case for this mast in this location, as there are no other suitable locations to meet the coverage for South Walderslade area in the locality.

- 5.5 The proposed monopole will be sited on a highway grass verge and will stand 7.7m high above ground level. The proposed monopole is a slimline structure with a width of approximately 200mm. The use of a shroud also reduces the visual impact of the antennae. The proposed equipment cabinets are 1.2m high and relatively small and compact. The proposal is sited on a similar line to an 8m high lamppost to the southwest. There are a number of other streetlights and other street furniture along Fostington Way. The proposed monopole is similar in form, height and appearance to existing streetlights and will be partially screened by existing landscaping to the south and west. The proposal will not result in excessive street clutter and will not detract from the visual amenity of the locality.
- 5.6 In terms of the impact on the Important Green Space, policy P4/10 seeks to protect such spaces. The proposal has a negligible impact on the Important Green Space, as the area it covers is minimal and as indicated above the applicant has established that there is a technical requirement for a mast in this location.
- 5.7 I note the concerns raised by local residents and Tunbury County Primary School regarding the potential health risks associated with telecommunications equipment. The revised PPG8 clearly states that if a mobile phone base station meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure, it should not be necessary for a LPA to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them. In the accompanying evidence, the applicant has submitted a declaration of conformity with the ICNIRP public exposure guidelines.
- 5.8 In highway terms, the proposed mast is to be sited on highway verge and local residents have raised concerns that it will result in hazardous highway conditions, such as restricting visibility. KCC (Highways) is satisfied that the siting of the mast and its equipment cabinets will not harm visibility for vehicles exiting Fernbank Close. With regard to the lack of a parking area serving the mast, KCC (Highways) is satisfied that given that any visits are likely to be for routine maintenance, vehicles can park on the public highway, in the same way as

vehicles servicing the other street furniture along Fostington Way. The proposal will not constitute a highway hazard.

5.9 In light of the above considerations, I am satisfied that adequate information has been submitted of the need for this monopole to be sited in this location and that the design of the proposed monopole will not harm the visual amenity of the locality or the Important Green Space, therefore I support this proposal.

**6. Recommendation:**

6.1 **Prior Approval of Details Not Required** as detailed by letter dated the 28 April 2005 and by plans 51240/010A, 51240/012A and 51240/013A and supporting statement received on the 4 May 2005.

Contact: Aaron Hill