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| Ditton Ditton | 571580 158296 | 28.06.2005 | TM/05/01996/TEPN56 |
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| Proposal: | Prior Notification submission in respect of installation of one no. 9.7m high freestanding monopole with three antenna, Radio equipment housing and ancillary development |
| Location: | Land Fronting TA Centre London Road Ditton Aylesford Kent |
| Applicant: | T-Mobile (UK) Limited |

1. Description:

1.1 This is a Prior Notification of telecommunications development under the GPDO in relation to a 9.7m high street tower style monopole and associated equipment cabinet. The proposal is permitted development, but notification is required so that the LPA may consider (a) whether prior approval is required for the siting and appearance of the proposed development and, if so, (b) whether to grant or refuse such prior approval. In support of the proposal, the applicants state:

- *T-Mobile (UK) Ltd has in place much of the second generation (2G) network but there are still some areas of poor coverage or lack of capacity. The purpose of the 2G equipment on the proposed structure is to address these infilling and capacity issues.*
- *T-Mobile (UK) Ltd has been granted a third generation (3G) mobile licence. This licence requires the telecommunications service to cover an area where at least 80% of the population of the UK live by 31 December 2007. 3G mobile telecommunications systems operate at a higher frequency than that currently used by 2G networks and so have shorter wave propagation distances. This means that the coverage area is smaller which results in the requirement for a greater number of installations..*
- *A number of alternative sites have been investigated and these include site sharing on an existing mast at Ditton Wastewater Treatment works. This was outside the coverage area required. There are no suitable buildings in the area to mount the mast on. Alternative locations for streetworks installations have also been considered on Station Road, Medina Road and Woodlands Road but have been discounted for operational reasons.*
- *The site will operate significantly within ICNIRP guidelines which at the highest level of intensity will still be 1262 times less than the ICNIRP reference level.*

2. The Site:

2.1 The site is within the grass verge on highway land to the south side of London Road outside the TA Centre. The mast is proposed to be approximately 15m east of the bus stop on the south side of London Road. To the south is the evergreen tree screen to the front of the TA Centre. The nearest residential properties are 35m to the north, 70m to the east and 45m to the west.

3. Planning History:

3.1 None directly relevant to current proposal.

4. Consultees:

4.1 PC: Comments awaited.

4.2 KCC(Highways): No objection subject to an informative.

4.3 Private Reps: 24/0X/4R/0S + site notice. The following issues have been raised:

- Possible health risks;
- Impact on character of area;
- Devaluation of property values;
- Loss of view.

5. Determining Issues:

5.1 Given the particular statutory form of this application (see para 1.1) the LPA's consideration is limited to matters of siting and appearance.

5.2 The mast itself is proposed to be sited on the grass verge on the south side of London Road adjacent to the boundary with TA centre. The supporting information states that it would not be possible to mast share due to the fact that existing installations are outside the desired coverage area. The design of the installation is similar in appearance to a lamp post. The siting is considered appropriate as it is positioned as far away from nearby dwellings as possible and in a position where it would blend in with the existing street furniture. The applicant has amended the siting of the monopole and the proposed cabinets by positioning them on the other side of the footway, closer to the TA centre rather than adjacent to the carriageway in order to minimise visual intrusion.

5.3 The mast would not significantly add to clutter in the area. There are a number of items of street furniture in the vicinity such as lamp posts, and a bus stop and it is all viewed against the tree screening at the front of the TA Centre. Given the

proximity of this tree screening to the equipment cabinets it is therefore considered appropriate to request that they be painted a dark green or brown to have less of an impact in the street scene.

- 5.4 PPG8 in paragraph 77 advises that the telecommunications industry is encouraged to continue to develop innovative design solutions, in terms not only of the structure of the masts but also materials and colouring. A number of different design solutions are available and include masts designed to look like trees and street furniture. In this instance the mast is designed to look like a lamp post which I consider would blend in with the general character of the area and not result in an incongruous feature when viewed in the street scene.
- 5.5 With regard to the effects on public health from microwave radiation, it is acknowledged in PPG8 that health considerations and public concern can, in principle, be material considerations in determining applications for planning permission and prior approval. Paragraphs 98 and 99 of PPG8, amongst other things, advise that, in the Government's view, if a proposed mobile phone base station meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for an LPA to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them.
- 5.6 Furthermore all new telecommunication base stations are expected to meet the ICNIRP guidelines and all applicants are now expected to include a statement that self-certifies to the effect that the telecommunication base station when operational will meet the guidelines. In this case the applicants have submitted such self-certification therefore there is no health issue for the LPA to consider.
- 5.7 In conclusion I am satisfied that in terms of justification, design and siting the proposal meets the appropriate technical standards while its visual impact on the locality is acceptable and can be approved.

6. Recommendation:

- 6.1 **Prior Approval Not Required** to the siting and appearance of the proposed development as detailed in letters dated 13.07.2005 and the 27.06.2005, supporting statement received 28.06.2005, drawing nos. 51343/010B, 012B, 013B and photomontage received 28.06.2005.

Informatives:

- 1 The applicants are requested to paint the equipment cabinets a dark brown or green colour to reduce the impact on the character of the street scene.
- 2 With regard to works within the limits of the highway, the applicant is asked to consult The Highway Manager, Engineering Services, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4LZ. Tel: (01732) 844522. (Q006)

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