

Application No: 11/1469N

Location: LAND IN FRONT OF THE CHESHIRE CHEESE, CREWE ROAD,  
SHAVINGTON CUM GREYSTY, CREWE

Proposal: Proposed Vodafone Installation at Crewe Road, Crewe

Applicant: Vodafone (UK) Limited

Expiry Date: 07-Jun-2011

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

That details of siting design are approved

**MAIN ISSUES:**

- The design, siting and external appearance
- The exploration of alternative sites
- Health & Safety considerations

**1. REASON FOR REFERRAL**

This application has been called-in to the Southern Planning Committee by Councillor Brickhill for the following reasons:

- Cause loss of amenity to residents and passers by;
- Have health implications for residents exposed to very high frequency electromagnetic waves similar to radar;
- Be an eyesore and not fit in with its surroundings. It will stand out like a sore thumb;
- That it will provide an additional and unnecessary danger and distraction to traffic on a very dangerous bend.

**2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site is located on the eastern side of Crewe Road adjacent to the access to the Cheshire Cheese public house. The site forms part of the public footpath. It is within open countryside, however there is a ribbon of development along Crewe Road consisting mainly of residential properties, the nearest of which is 330 Crewe Road approximately 21 metres away from the proposed installation.

**3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This is an application for prior approval of the siting and appearance of a 12.5 metre telecommunications installation and 1 associated equipment cabinet with attached meter pillar. The equipment cabinet would be 1898mm wide by 798mm deep and 1648mm high. The mast would be a replica telegraph column in brown. The radio equipment cabinet would be green.

This application is a resubmission following the withdrawal of a previous proposal for a 15 metre high mast in this location.

#### **4. RELEVANT HISTORY**

11/0014N - Proposed Vodafone Installation at Crewe Rd, Crewe, Withdrawn 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011.

#### **5. POLICIES**

##### **Local Plan Policy**

NE.2 (Open Countryside)  
NE.18 (Telecommunications Development)  
BE.1 (Amenity)  
BE.2 (Design Standards)  
BE.3 (Access and Parking)

##### **Government Planning Policy**

PPG8: Telecommunications

#### **6. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

##### **Environmental Health**

None received at the time of writing the report. If a consultation response is received this will be provided by update

##### **Highways**

None received at the time of writing the report. If a consultation response is received this will be provided by update

#### **7. VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

None received at the time of writing the report. If a consultation response is received this will be provided by update

#### **8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:**

None received at the time of writing the report. If any are received they will be provided by update.

## **9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines;
- General Background Information on Radio Network Development for Planning Applications;
- Site-specific Supplementary Information;
- Supporting Technical Information for O2 and Vodafone showing coverage plots;

## **10. OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of Development**

This is an application for prior-approval under Part 24 of the General Permitted Development Order. The Local Planning Authority has 56 days beginning with the date on which it receives a valid application, in which to make and notify its determination on whether prior approval is required to the siting and appearance and to notify the applicant of the decision to grant or refuse such approval. There is no power to extend the 56 day period. If no decision is made, or the Local Authority fails to notify the developer of its decision within the 56 days, permission is deemed to have been granted.

### **Alternative Sites**

Government guidance aims to facilitate new telecommunications development, and consideration needs to be given as to whether all suitable alternative locations have been explored. The search area contains mainly residential properties and agricultural land and it is likely that any location in this area will be in close proximity to residential properties.

As part of this application an exploration of alternative sites has looked into the options of siting the equipment on the following sites; Gresty Green Farm, Alexandra Soccer Centre, Oxion National Rail (Gresty Lane), The Cheshire Cheese, and Crewe Cold Store. These options were discounted for various reasons, including the site provider is not interested, location on the edge of the coverage area would not provide optimum coverage, limited space next to the railway preventing required distance from track being achieved, and unable to agree a deal on rates.

Given that the site selection process has explored the suitability of alternative sites the erection of a new street works mast is not wholly objectionable in this case.

On this basis it is accepted that the operator has complied with guidance and explored suitable alternative sites within this search area.

### **Siting, Design and Streetscene**

Policy NE.18 of the Local Plan and PPG8 encourages operators to mitigate the impact of development by using innovative design solutions. PPG8 states 'operators should use sympathetic design and camouflage to minimise the impact of development on the environment.' The proposed mast is designed as a replica telegraph pole finished in brown wood effect GRP. Within the immediate area there are a number of telegraph poles of varying heights with a row of streetlights being located on the opposite side of Crewe Road.

This area is particularly characterised by street furniture and the design solution proposed would allow the mast to blend in with the existing furniture.

The mast would be 12.5 metres in height and whilst this would be higher than the surrounding telegraph poles and street lighting columns there is nothing in planning policy to suggest telecommunications masts must be the same height as other street furniture. However the visual impact of the mast within the local landscape and streetscene must be carefully considered. At 12.5 metres the proposed mast would not be unduly tall and prominent and given that this section of designated open countryside is defined by ribbon development along Crewe Road and there are a number of existing telegraph poles and street lights, it is not considered the siting of a mast in this location would be contrary to policies which seek to protect the openness of the countryside.

## **Health and Safety**

With regard to any perceived health risks, PPG8 states:

*‘...it is the Government's firm view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. It remains central Government's responsibility to decide what measures are necessary to protect public health.’*

The advice offered by the Government's advisors, the National Radiological Protection Board is that “the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near base stations”. It is the Government's view that if a proposed development meets the ICNIRP guidelines as recommended by the Stewart Report, it should not be necessary for a local planning authority to consider health effects further. It is confirmed that the installation complies with the requirements of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) for public exposure and that the Certificate produced by the operator takes into account the cumulative effect of the emissions from proposed installation and all radio base stations at or near the proposed site. It is not considered therefore, that health considerations could form the basis of a substantial reason for refusal.

## **Highways**

The mast and associated equipment cabinet would be located adjacent to the entrance to the Cheshire Cheese public house, however given that it will be 5 metres back from the kerb line and at the back of the footway it would not obstruct visibility at this access. It is therefore not considered this proposal will result in a detrimental impact on highway safety.

## **11. CONCLUSIONS**

The siting of telecommunications equipment is a highly emotive area of planning and is dictated largely by the need to provide coverage to populated areas. It is rare for such development to be sufficiently remote that no objections are raised from residents. Alternative sites have been considered as part of the selection process and have been rejected for the reasons outlined in Section 10 above.

Moreover whilst the proposed mast would be higher than the surrounding telegraph poles and street lighting its design as a replica telegraph pole would allow it to blend in to the

streetscene and it would not appear overly prominent or incongruous in this location. It is considered that the benefits of extending the telecommunications network in the area, in line with government policy stated in PPG8, outweigh the limited visual impact of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

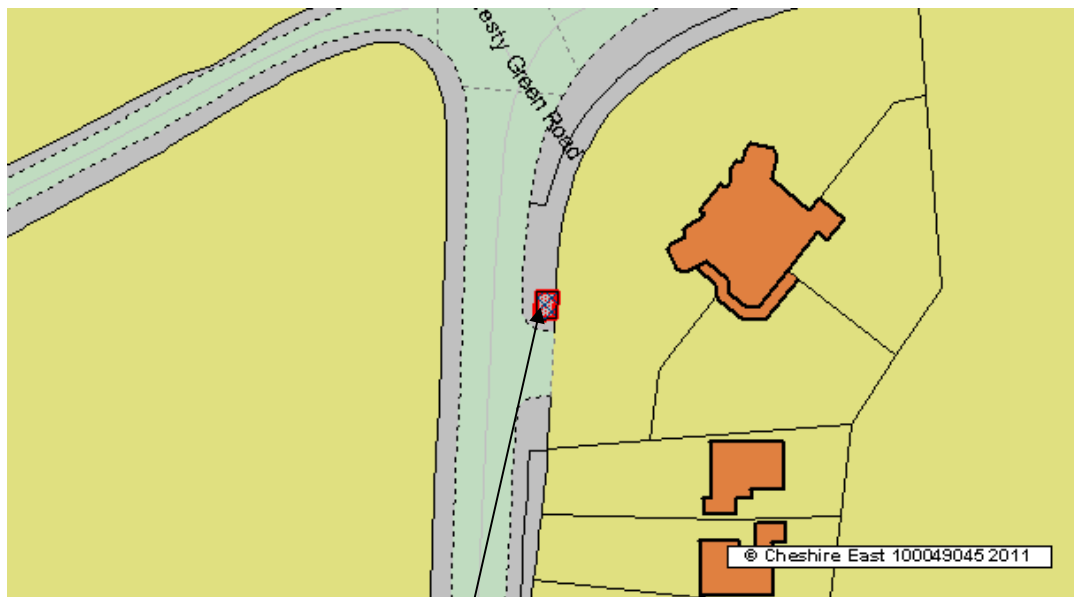
## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That details of siting and design are required and that these details are approved

### **Conditions:**

1. Standard – 3 years
2. Development to be completed in accordance with the approved plans

## Location Plan



The Site