

Application No: 11/1151N

Location: LAND IN FRONT OF 613, CREWE ROAD, WISTASTON

Proposal: 14.8m High Joint Operator Street Furniture Type Telecommunications Tower, 1No. Equipment Cabinet and 1No. Meter Pillar

Applicant: O2/Vodafone

Expiry Date: 16-May-2011

Ward Rope

Date Report Prepared: 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011

#### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

##### **MAIN ISSUES**

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

##### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

**That details of siting design are approved subject to the colour and finish of the proposed pole and equipment cabinets being agreed**

#### **REASON FOR REFERRAL**

This application was to be dealt with under the Council's delegation scheme. However Cllr Simon and Cllr Silvester have requested it to be referred to Committee for the following reasons;

*'Our reasons for call-in are primarily on the height of the mast and visual impact grounds together with concerns regarding highway safety at this location which is immediately adjacent to the shared entrance/exit for the Tesco Express, Kwikfit and Grocott's Garage site'*

#### **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The site is located on the northern side of Crewe Road within the Crewe Settlement Boundary. The site is currently a grassed verge with a footpath between the site and the buildings to the north. This stretch of Crewe Road includes 10 metre high lighting columns. To the north of the site

are a Tesco Store, a Kwik Fit Garage and a Petrol Filling Station. The rest of the surrounding area is predominantly residential and includes a mix of house types including both single and two storey detached and semi-detached properties. The nearest residential property would be 607 Crewe Road which stands a distance of 28 metres away from the proposed installation.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This is an application for prior approval for the siting and appearance of a 14.7 metre telecommunications installation with 3 antennas and 1 associated equipment cabinet. The equipment cabinet would be 0.798 metres in width, 1.898 metres in length and 1.647 metres in height.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

The site has no relevant planning history

## **POLICIES**

The relevant development plan policies are:

### **Policies in the Local Plan**

NE.18 – Telecommunications Development

BE.1 – Amenity

BE.2 – Design Standards

BE.3 – Access and Parking

### **Government Guidance**

PPG8 – Telecommunications

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

**Highways:** No comments received at the time of writing this report

**Environmental Health:** No comments received at the time of writing this report

## **VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

No comments received at the time of writing this report

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:**

No representations received at the time of writing this report

## **APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Supporting Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement**

- The proposed installation is needed to provide a 3G site sharing solution, providing additional capacity for both O2 and Vodafone

- With the rapid growth and advances in mobile telecommunications comes the need for additional infrastructure to cope with an ever increasing volume of network traffic and to provide efficiency of service that today's modern society has come to expect
- Whilst the proposed apparatus will be visible from a number of localised viewpoints it will benefit from a context and backdrop of existing lighting columns, telegraph poles, mature vegetation and other urban development all of which will help to minimise any potential impact
- The main tower element will protrude above that of existing streetscape features. However neither local or national planning policy requires that any telecommunications development should be of commensurate height to such features but rather suggests that the difference between the two be limited to a minimum operational requirement.
- Alternative sites considered and not chosen are;
  - BT Exchange, Crewe Road – Would not provide suitable coverage and no sharing rights with Vodafone
  - Tesco, Crewe Road – The company have a moratorium against telecoms operators
  - Church of Jesus Christ of the Later Day Saints, Crewe Road – Low level of the building would not provide suitable coverage
  - Spar, Rope Lane – Single storey building with fibre glass roof. Not suitable for installation.
  - Wells Green Methodist Church - Low level of the building would not provide suitable coverage.
  - Wistaston Hall, Oblate Retreat Centre, Church Lane - Would not provide suitable coverage.
  - Hyde Park Tiles, Crewe Road – Would not provide suitable coverage.
  - Streetworks along Church Lane - Would not provide suitable coverage.
  - Any development south of Crewe Road – The topography of the area falls in a southerly direction and a taller mast would be required. This location would be overlooked by residential properties and would raise a greater level of concern.
  - Street furniture along Crewe Road West - The topography of the area falls and a taller mast would be required. This location would be overlooked by residential properties and would raise a greater level of concern.
  - Street furniture along Crewe Road East - This location would be overlooked by residential properties and would raise a greater level of concern.
  - Any development north of Crewe Road – Limited pavement/verge widths and the presence of underground services would place serious limitations on any development. Those that are available offer little screening or back drop. This location would be overlooked by residential properties and would raise a greater level of concern.
  - Brookland House, Crewe Road - Would offer limited potential due to its height compared with the surrounding clutter.
  - Shell Garage, Crewe Road – The owner does not wish to enter leasing negotiations.
  - Kwik Fit, Crewe Road – Lower topography and a taller mast will be required. This is a less appropriate solution to the one proposed.

### **ICNIRP Declaration**

This is a signed declaration that the equipment and installation has been designed to be in full accordance with the requirements of the radio frequency public exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection.

## **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 siting and appearance and to notify the applicant of the decision to give 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 is predominantly residential and it is likely that any location within this search area would be in close proximity to residential properties. The sites listed in the supporting information section of this report have already been considered and discounted, and on this basis it is accepted that the operator has complied with guidance and explored suitable alternative sites.

### **Siting, Design and Street Scene**

The proposed installation has been designed as a slim line pole designed to mimic a lighting column. The pole and equipment cabinet would be located within the existing grass verge. The mast would be 14.8 metres in height which would make it taller than the surrounding lighting columns which are 10 metres in height.

Policy NE.18 (Telecommunications Development) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 and PPG8 will be used to assess this proposed development.

In terms of the policy guidance in relation to telecommunications development, PPG8 states that the government policy is to;

*'facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The Government also has a responsibility for protecting public health. The aim of telecommunications policy is to ensure that people have a choice as to who provides their telecommunications service, a wider range of services from which to choose and equitable access to the latest technologies as they become available'*

The proposed installation at 14.8 metres in height would be taller than the existing street lighting columns in the area which are approximately 10 metres in height. The mast would mainly be viewed by vehicles and pedestrians travelling along Crewe Road and when visiting the Tesco Store, Kwik Fit and Shell Garage.

The proposed mast would sit taller than the existing telegraph poles and lighting columns in the vicinity by approximately 5 metres. However, this is not considered to be significant in this location

given that the site would be seen in relation to the adjacent commercial units and the backdrop of mature trees which are located to the rear of the commercial premises and within the front gardens of the properties along Crewe Road. It should also be noted that the land level rises to the west and the lighting columns appear taller in this direction. The proposal would successfully assimilate with existing street furniture and as a result would not appear as an alien or incongruous feature or out of scale within the locality.

Furthermore it is considered that the benefits of extending the telecommunications network in the area outweigh the limited visual impact of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

## **Health and Safety**

Concern has been expressed nationally with regard to the effect of mobile phone base stations to human health. The Stewart Report (2001) concluded that there are gaps in the knowledge to justify a *'precautionary approach'* in regard to the siting of base stations. There have been various High Court judgements which have ruled either way on the issue of whether health considerations can be material in determining an application for planning permission or prior approval.

The perceived risk is acknowledged and consideration should be given to any long-term effect to the quality of life and well-being of local residents. Due to the design of the proposal mimicking a street lighting column, its siting and the surrounding vegetation the proposal would not register as an enduring reminder of a source of radio frequency radiation and would therefore have little effect on the well-being and amenity of local residents.

Paragraph 98 of PPG8 states that *'In the Governments, if a proposed mobile phone base station meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for a Local Planning Authority, in processing an application for planning permission or prior approval, to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them'*. In this instance an ICNIRP certificate has been provided.

## **Highways**

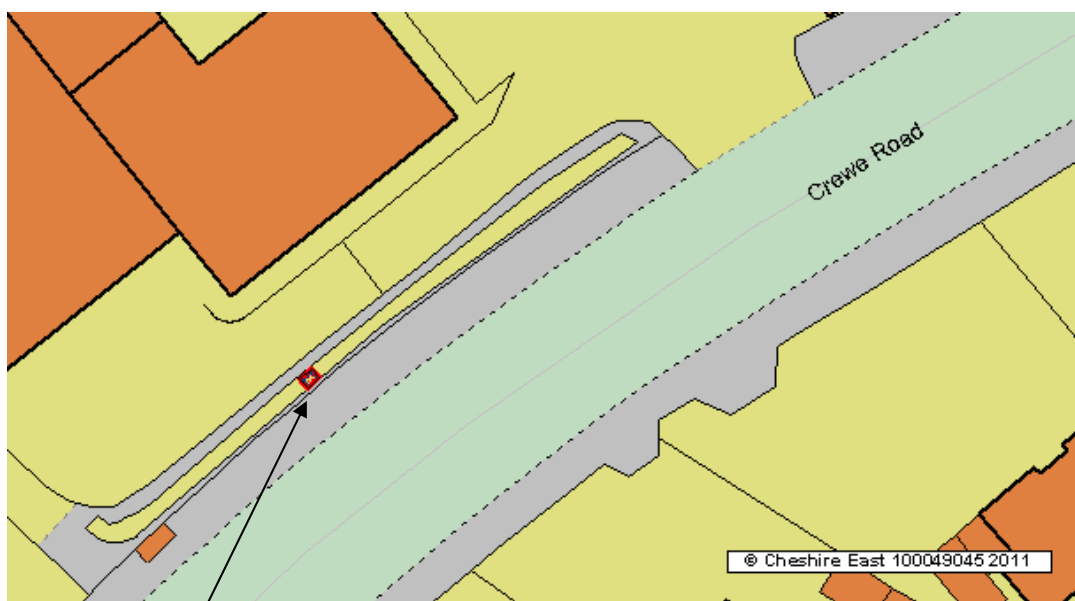
The comments of the Strategic Highways Manager have not been received at the time of this report and an update will be provided as part of the late report.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The siting of base stations 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 a number of reasons including technical coverage requirements, the proximity to residential properties and also the unwillingness of site owners to allow development on their land. Accordingly the proposal is not considered to appear as an alien or incongruous feature within the locality. It is considered that in this instance the proposed development is compliant with local and national policy.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That details of siting and design are required and that these details are approved subject to the colour and finish of the proposed pole and equipment cabinets being agreed

1. Standard – 3 years
2. Monopole and antenna to be grey in colour, equipment cabinet to be green
3. Development to be completed in accordance with the approved plans



The Site