

MEDWAY TECHNICAL GUIDE FOR THE INSTALLATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

1.0	INTRODUCTION	2
2.0	BACKGROUND	2
3.0	PLANNING POLICY	2
4.0	THE NEED FOR PLANNING PERMISSION OR PRIOR APPROVAL	3
5.0	OPERATIONAL NEED AND COMPETITION	4
6.0	PRE APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS AND CONSULTATION	4
	Site proposals on or near a school or college	4
7.0	SUPPORTING INFORMATION	5
8.0	THE ROLE OF MEDWAY COUNCIL AS LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY	5
9.0	ISSUES TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DECIDING AN APPLICATION	5
	Location	6
	Existing Mast Sites.....	6
	Placing Masts or Apparatus on an Existing Building or Structure	7
	New Mast Sites	7
	Residential Areas	8
	Environmentally Sensitive Sites	8
	General Considerations	10
10.0	LAND AND / OR PROPERTY OWNED OR OCCUPIED BY MEDWAY	
COUNCIL		10
11.0	DESIGN AND APPEARANCE	11
	Mast Design	11
	Antennas.....	12
	Equipment Cabins.....	12
	Colour and Finish of Equipment.....	12
	Fencing	12
	Landscaping.....	12
	Highway Considerations	12
12.0	HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS	13
	APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS PERMITTED	
	DEVELOPMENT AS AMENDED AUGUST 2001	15
	APPENDIX 2 – INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR PRIOR APPROVAL AND FULL	
	PLANNING APPLICATIONS	16
	APPENDIX 3 – TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK OPERATORS	
	COMMITMENTS	17
	APPENDIX 4 – OPERATOR ENQUIRY POINTS	18
	APPENDIX 5 – USEFUL WEBSITES	18
	APPENDIX 6 – GLOSSARY	19
	APPENDIX 7 – CONTACT DETAILS	20
	APPENDIX 8 – BRIEFING ON THE STEWART REPORT	21

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is a technical guide to influence service providers, inform local people and assist the Development Control Committee in determining applications.

This guide is supplementary to Policy CF14 of the Medway Local Plan and should be considered by operators before making submissions for the determination of prior approval or formal planning applications for the erection of telecommunication masts, installation of antenna and related control equipment. This Guidance will primarily assist in understanding the requirements of the Council. It will also advise the residents of the decision making process behind the installation of telecommunications equipment.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Council recognises that modern telecommunications are an essential and beneficial element of the economy and that the industry is continuing to develop rapidly. Government policy is to facilitate the growth of telecommunications whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The Government also has a responsibility for protecting public health.

Since the introduction of the Telecommunications Act 1984 the telecommunications industry has grown exponentially reflecting an increasing demand for a greater network coverage area, the need to increase capacity, competition between rival operators and technological innovation. Changes from analogue to digital cellular networks have enabled improvements in the quality and number of mobile transmissions at much reduced power levels. However, the digital system can only operate using shorter transmission distances that require many more base stations to be provided close to where users make calls.

The Council recognises that each of the licensed operators that provide a separate network must comply with the terms of the Government licence:

- to provide services in an area covering 90% of the population, and;
- to ensure that all reasonable demands on services are capable of being satisfied.

These factors have increased the pressures for telecommunications development.

The Council also recognises that applications relating to telecommunication development can generate significant public concern primarily centred on issues of health and visual intrusion.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 Telecommunications (PPG8), published in April 2001, sets out the Government's planning guidance on the siting and design of telecommunication systems and installations. The Government wishes to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunication systems whilst recognising its responsibilities to environmental objectives. PPG 8 offers guidance on environmental and health issues and consultation procedures and states that telecommunications are an essential and beneficial element of the local community and the national economy. The guidance can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, and in the prior approval process and appeals.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in November 2002 published a revised Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development. This code was produced jointly by representatives of central and local government and the telecommunications industry. It provides advice on procedures, siting and design. It brings up to date best practice guidance and provides practical advice to facilitate improved communication and consultation between local operators, local authorities and local people. It aims to standardise practice thereby promoting greater consistency of approach and aid the transparency of the process for all concerned.

The Medway Local Plan contains one main policy that specifically relates to telecommunication development. Policy CF14 states;

Telecommunications development will be permitted subject to:

- (i) the applicant for a new mast showing evidence that sharing existing masts and sites, buildings and structures have been explored and found to be unsuitable due to legal, technical or environmental reasons; and*
- (ii) the site being the best available in environmental terms within technical and legal constraints and mitigation measures have been taken to minimise visual intrusion/environmental impact and amenity considerations; and*
- (iii) new high masts being of a design that allows the sharing of aerial space with other operators at critical sites.*

4.0 THE NEED FOR PLANNING PERMISSION OR PRIOR APPROVAL

Under the current legislation there are three distinct types of telecommunication proposal.

(a) **No Permissions Required** - Operators can undertake works without requiring planning permission or Prior Approval from the Council as they are granted permission under the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended. Until 2001, operators were required to provide 28 days notification for any proposed equipment installation, except when submitting an application for prior approval or planning permission. Although 'licence notification' is no longer a statutory requirement, paragraph 67 of the Revised Code of Best Practice indicates that operators should continue to notify local authorities with regard to the installation of mobile phone antennas.

(b) **Prior Approval** - Before installing certain telecommunication apparatus under "permitted development rights", an Operator must apply to the Local Planning Authority for a "Determination" as to whether or not the siting and appearance of the development is acceptable. Under the 'Prior Approval' procedure, the local planning authority has the opportunity to decide within 56 days whether they wish to approve details of the siting and appearance of a proposal. The authority is able to refuse approval where they consider that the development will pose a serious threat to amenity. If the Council does not make the decision within 56 days the development can proceed as submitted.

(c) **Planning Permission** - An application for planning permission is needed for telecommunication installations that exceed the permitted development criteria.

All planning and prior approval applications are assessed in accordance with policies contained within the Local Plan and the details within this technical guide.

5.0 OPERATIONAL NEED AND COMPETITION

PPG 8 states that local authorities should not 'seek to prevent competition between different operators and should not question the need for the telecommunications system (i.e. the individual network) which the proposed development is to support'. However PPG 8 considers it appropriate for planning authorities to request evidence from operators regarding the need for a specific proposal forming part of the overall network.

Prior Approval and Full Planning Applications should be accompanied by evidence of the need for the development in terms of the network coverage and/or network capacity. If an operator is seeking to increase capacity, a demonstration of existing traffic levels and evidence of the need for extra capacity (for example overloading circuits), would need to accompany the application as justification for the proposal. Similarly when seeking to increase network coverage, an operator would need to supply similar suitable evidence with the application.

6.0 PRE APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS AND CONSULTATION

In accordance with the advice in PPG 8, the Council will endeavour to undertake pre-rollout and pre-application discussions with operators. Similarly in line with PPG 8 and the Code of Best Practice, operators are encouraged to provide the Council with their annual rollout plans and to inform the Council of changes as they become available.

Operators are also encouraged to consult the Council before the submission of prior notification or full planning applications in order to ensure that the optimum solution for each case is achieved. At the pre-submission consultation stage, operators should provide basic information for proposal sites including site maps, outline plans, photographs and details of the type of installation. Operators should demonstrate that the proposed installation is the minimum possible size and that the output is commensurate with effective service provision.

At the time of notification or submission of an application, operators should be able to show the level of community consultation and discussions with other stakeholders, which may have already taken place.

In accordance with the Code of Best Practice, telecommunications operators are encouraged to use the 'Traffic Light Model' developed by the Federation of Electronic Industries (FEI) and telecommunications operators. This model takes into account community, environmental and planning issues in relation to site selection.

Site proposals on or near a school or college

Where a proposal is on or near a school or college, the operator, in accordance with PPG 8 should consult with the appropriate educational bodies. Paragraph 60 of the Code of Best Practice states the following factors should be taken into account when determining whether a school or college should be consulted:

- the proposed site is on school/college grounds;
- the proposed development would be seen from the school/college grounds;
- the site is on a main access point used by pupils/students to the school/college;
- there is a history of concern about base stations within the local community;
- the local planning authority has requested consultation with the school/college;
- the school/college has requested that it be included in any consultation.

The Council will expect the network operators to provide evidence of all consultations undertaken and will undertake any further publicity as may be considered necessary.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has issued advice for schools and local education authorities on mobile phones and base stations. This is available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/m/mobilephonesandbasestations

7.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Code of Best Practice states that; 'the quality of information submitted as part of an application ...should always be clear and complete. Good quality submissions can help explain to local people and consultees as well as officers and elected members exactly what is being proposed and its likely impact ... and result in speedier decisions'. The Code of Best Practice Annexes F, G and H, derived from PPG 8, identify the information that should accompany both prior approval and full planning applications

8.0 THE ROLE OF MEDWAY COUNCIL AS LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

As the local planning authority Medway Council regulates development within the borough in the public interest. In determining planning applications it is required to take into consideration any relevant views expressed by neighbours, local residents and any other third parties, along with all other material planning considerations.

This guidance outlines those matters that are usually regarded as material in respect of telecommunications development. There is clear government policy for this set out in the Planning Acts as well as in Planning Policy Guidance Notes. These make it clear that local opposition or support for a proposal is not usually, in itself, a ground for refusing or granting planning permission, unless that opposition or support is founded upon valid planning grounds that can be substantiated.

When considering proposals for telecommunications development it is common for public concern to focus on matters such as the visual appearance of the proposal, the effect of the value of property or fears about the potential impact on health.

The planning system does not recognise the alleged effect on property values as a material consideration. While health considerations and public concern can, in principle, be material considerations in determining planning applications, the government has made clear its position. If a mobile phone base station meets the international guidelines for public exposure it is not necessary for the local planning authority to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them. So far, all telecommunications proposals have met the international guidelines for public exposure and in these circumstances, notwithstanding substantial public concern in some cases, the Council is prevented from resisting development proposals on this basis.

9.0 ISSUES TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DECIDING AN APPLICATION

When assessing an application for telecommunications development, be it for prior approval or for planning permission, there will be two main areas of

assessment: location and design and appearance. The main aim is to minimize the environmental intrusion of telecommunications development. The Council will have to determine whether the need to fill in the deficiency in a network outweighs any harm to the landscape or the environment. Protection from visual intrusion will be an important consideration in determining applications. The sensitivity of the location of the proposed site for the telecommunications mast is a material consideration.

Location

Existing Mast Sites

A long-standing Government policy objective has been to encourage telecommunication operators, wherever practicable, to share masts and sites as a means to reduce overall mast numbers. Having regard to this, operators should demonstrate that the site they have chosen is the most environmentally suitable for the proposed development. The Council will expect all possible options to have been considered before new sites are proposed. Operators will be expected to provide evidence of alternative site considerations and will be required to demonstrate that existing structures are unsuitable.

Where additional antennae share one mast/site the cumulative impact on the environment will need to be assessed. Operators require a minimum one metre vertical separation between the antennas of different networks. The attachment of further antenna onto an existing mast will normally result in placing apparatus at a much higher level where it may be more conspicuous. In certain locations where the height of additional apparatus might be a particular concern, it may be preferable to provide a further mast on the site, rather than share a mast.

The Council are aware that there may be technical limitations that prevent the installation of additional equipment on existing sites/structures. However operators should consider the potential for upgrading such sites where it would provide an optimum environmental solution whilst meeting network operator needs.

Where mast/site sharing does take place, an increase in the number of antenna and/or an increase in antenna strength will most probably increase the electromagnetic field strength from the site. The Council will therefore expect operators to provide certification that the combined output from the site (rather than the proposed development output) including the output of equipment used by other operators complies with ICNIRP EMF exposure guidelines.

The Government maintains a national database of mobile phone base stations and their emissions. This is maintained by the Radio communications Agency. The database contains information on all operational, externally sited cellular radio transmitters in England, Scotland and Wales. Further information can be found at www.sitefinder.radio.gov.uk.

Where appropriate the Council may seek to ensure that new telecommunications development can support mast sharing in the future. Such a scheme will be the product of a legal agreement process involving the Council, the landowner and the network/mast operator.

Placing Masts or Apparatus on an Existing Building or Structure

Although there may be many man made structures that might provide a satisfactory location to site apparatus, this will largely depend on the design and character of the building or structure. Existing open structures such as electricity pylons may particularly lend themselves to such a use. However, buildings of distinct architectural quality may be adversely affected by the attachment of incongruous elements.

Extensive apparatus such as a mast or an array of antennas can be highly visible when placed on top of the roof of a building and may not be acceptable if it is one which has a particularly prominent or distinctive roofline such as a tower or church spire which forms a local landmark that is visually important to the character of an area. The build up of equipment on a roof is also discouraged where this will have an adverse impact.

Antenna placed below the roofline or directly attached to existing vertical surfaces in the form of panels, such as on a chimney stack, can often provide a less obtrusive solution, particularly when coloured to blend in with the building fabric.

Fixing apparatus onto an historic building or structure can detract from its appearance and may cause damage to its historic fabric. Separate consent will normally be required for placing apparatus on Statutory Listed Buildings or within the curtilage of such buildings, which is unlikely to be acceptable if it adversely affects their character, appearance or setting.

New Mast Sites

Where it is not possible to utilise an existing mast site or structure, the principal aim for any new installation is to minimise its visual impact on the environmental quality of the Borough, in accordance with criteria (iii) of policy CF14. There are a number of ways this can be achieved:

- sites within, or close to, existing mature woodland are preferred as they will have significantly reduced visual impact, even though the equipment used will usually be higher than the existing tree line.
- within the more built up areas of towns and villages, enclosed sites within commercial areas are preferred such as within industrial estates, business estates or operational land such as that associated with the railway where masts will be less conspicuous against a background of other buildings and structures.
- where possible large masts should not be sited in open areas of the countryside, particularly on open raised ground which will accentuate any visual intrusion caused by the installation and in particular should avoid elevated sites where their profile will have a significant impact on the skyline such as on a ridgeline or escarpment.
- where it is not possible to avoid open or conspicuous location applicants must include sufficient land within the site to achieve a satisfactory level of tree planting or other method of screening the apparatus. Although individual circumstances will vary, the depth of tree screening and the mature height of selected species will need to be in scale with the height of the mast.
- where a new mast or site is being granted permission the Council may require the operator to enter a legal agreement (Section 106) to ensure that another operator can site further antenna (or where appropriate to erect a further mast) on the same site which they are obliged to do under the terms of their operators licence.

Residential Areas

When considering the location of masts in or adjoining residential areas, operators should demonstrate that nearby industrial or other areas are unsuitable and that the need for the development outweighs the harm to the visual amenities. Mast sites within close proximity of existing residential areas may not be permitted where their siting and appearance would be detrimental to the character or amenity of residential properties, particularly where the height of equipment is incongruous in relation to the scale of domestic properties.

New mast installations will not be permitted in residential areas, where their proximity and incongruous appearance would impinge on the amenity, character and or appearance of the residential area. However, were the installation of masts or antenna is unavoidable in these areas due to the proven need for the development, particular care will be required on the detailed siting and design of installations to provide a sensitive solution which may require non standard equipment.

Environmentally Sensitive Sites

Proposals for new masts in the vicinity of the following environmentally sensitive locations will require approval of siting and appearance and are unlikely to be acceptable if they result in any adverse impact in accordance with criteria (ii) of policy CF14.

Countryside, Metropolitan Green Belt and Strategic Gap Areas

The Countryside is that land outside the urban and rural settlement boundaries defined on the proposals map to the Local Plan. It is Government policy that as a valuable resource the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake. The countryside is a significant resource that makes a profound contribution to the quality of life and its landscape provides a visual amenity for visitors and residents alike.

Medway's environment benefits from significant sections of Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. The visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by proposals for development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt which, although they would not prejudice the purposes of including land in Green Belts, might be visually detrimental by reason of their siting, materials or design. PPG 8 considers that telecommunications development in Green Belts is likely to be inappropriate unless it maintains openness. The applicant will need to demonstrate very special circumstances that would outweigh any harm to the Green Belt.

The boundaries of the Strategic Gap are defined in the proposals map to the Local Plan. Free standing development that erodes the open character of the gap and undermines the Strategic Gap's function of maintaining the separation of existing settlements should be prevented.

New mast installations will not be permitted if they will have an adverse visual impact on the open character of the Countryside, the Green Belt, or the Strategic Gap. The general guidance concerning new mast sites suggests the type of location, such as within well-treed areas, where it should be possible to site equipment without affecting the open character of an area. Particular care will be required on the detailed siting and design of installations to provide a sensitive solution that may require non standard equipment.

Areas of Landscape Significance

The physical landscape of Medway is very varied and large areas have protective designations which are identified in the Local Plan. A hierarchy of particular attractions and important landscaped areas can be identified.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are recognised as areas of national landscape significance. Attractive landscapes of countywide significance are classified as Special Landscape Areas (SLAS). There are also several areas of landscape that enhance local amenity and environmental quality – Areas of Local Landscape Importance (ALLIs).

New mast installations will not be permitted where they would be visually incongruous from publicly accessible areas or detract from the landscape character of designated areas.

The general guidance concerning new mast sites sets out how to deal with these issues. Particular care will be required on the detailed siting and design of installations to provide a sensitive solution that may require non standard equipment. It is recommended that operators should consult with the Council at the earliest possible stage where a proposal is sited within a protected landscape.

Areas of Nature Conservation Importance

Medway contains an outstanding wildlife resource that has an important role to play in maintaining biodiversity. There are sites of International Nature Conservation Importance, sites of National Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. Details of the nature conservation sites are in the Medway Local Plan. It is clearly desirable that development should avoid causing damage to these recognised nature conservation sites.

New mast installations will not be permitted where they would result in a loss or disturbance of habitat or that of the associated flora and fauna. These are very discreet areas of the Borough where it should be possible to avoid locating equipment.

Buildings and Areas of Architectural or Historic Significance

There are 72 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and in the region of 1400 Listed Buildings in Medway. Development should aim to ensure that the setting and character of these buildings and structures is not harmed, that any scheme is both well designed and sympathetic and that the works are justified. Any application involving a Listed Building will require Listed Building Consent. English Heritage will also be consulted where appropriate.

There are 26 conservation areas in Medway. The unique character of these areas means that special attention will be paid to their preservation and enhancement and in particular any harm caused by new development.

In exceptional circumstances where apparatus is permitted on a Listed Building or within its grounds or within a Conservation Area, the benefits of funding restoration or other environmental improvements may help to mitigate the visual intrusion caused by the installation.

New mast installations will not be permitted where their proximity and incongruous appearance would impinge on the character, appearance or setting of historic buildings, conservation areas, these are mostly small areas of the Borough where it should be possible to avoid locating installations and still provide a good telecommunication network. However, where the installation of masts or antenna are unavoidable in these areas, particular care will be required on the detailed siting and design of installations to provide a sensitive solution which may require non standard equipment. It is recommended that operators should consult with the Council at the earliest possible stage where a proposal is sited within a conservation area or involves a listed building or scheduled ancient environment.

General Considerations

In addition to the issues arising from sensitive sites, key site considerations also include:

- height of site in relation to surrounding area
- existence of topographical features/natural vegetation/ archaeological features
- site prominence from any side/vista
- site in relation to existing mast/ structures / buildings. Need to avoid clutter
- landscaping and screening

10.0 LAND AND / OR PROPERTY OWNED OR OCCUPIED BY MEDWAY COUNCIL

Full Council on the 15 September 2005, passed the following motion on telecommunications masts:

“The council recognises the continued growth in the number of mobile telephone users and the huge expansion in the infrastructure necessary to serve the networks and the new third generation technology. Council agrees the following process for matters referred to it.

That where a mobile phone company applies for permission to install telecommunications equipment on land or property owned or occupied by Medway Council which is not part of the highway or a school property, that permission to install the equipment may be granted by Medway Council acting as landowner or occupier, provided that:

- (i) the applicant for the new equipment has satisfactorily demonstrated that sharing existing masts and sites, buildings and structures has been thoroughly investigated and found to be unsuitable due to environmental, legal or technical reasons; and
- (ii) the site is the best available in environmental, strategic, operational and planning terms and mitigation measures have been taken to minimise visual intrusion/environmental impact and amenity considerations; and
- (iii) if a new high mast is proposed it is of a design that allows the sharing of aerial space with other operators; and
- (iv) the terms for the grant of any agreement allowing the installation of equipment are agreed in accordance with the constitution on a case-by-case basis.

In agreeing to this motion council recognises that this does not mean that any other consents required will necessarily be granted”.

11.0 DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

In determining telecommunication proposals, the Council will balance the need for a modern communication system with the impact on the local townscape/landscape and amenity. Protection from visual intrusion and the implications for network development will be material considerations.

PPG 8 emphasises the importance of good design. The Code of Best Practice states that 'Good siting and design should not only be respected in environmentally sensitive areas but also be applied to all telecommunications development.'

In finding the best solution for an individual site, the design of the development should be sympathetic to the surrounding area, so as to minimise the impact on the environment. Proliferation of multiple masts and installations in one area will be resisted if it is considered to harm the visual amenities of the locality.

As the safe operation of telecommunication technology may be dependent on appropriate shielding and safety areas, particular consideration should be made, where appropriate, to the provision of satisfactory enclosures and perimeter security, exclusion zones and relevant signage, to help ensure a safe and secure operation.

Mast Design

Operators should, bear in mind the environmental implications of telecommunications technology and consider the use of sympathetic materials, colours and design to limit the visual impact of the scheme. Applicants would be expected to justify the height of any proposal. Open latticework structures are normally used for large masts as they have strength and rigidity with limited wind resistance. However, older style triangular framed masts, particularly those associated with analogue systems, have an industrial appearance that can look incongruous in open countryside and many urban areas. Wherever possible modern slimline lattice towers should be used in circumstances where a high mast is required unless there are overriding technical reasons for not doing so. Operators are also encouraged to use this type of equipment to replace older style masts.

Generally slim line poles are less intrusive but they may restrict mast-sharing opportunities. Masts capable of sharing may, depending on site, be more appropriate.

Alternative mast designs should be considered which resemble trees or telegraph poles (may be more appropriate in open space areas of the Borough) or street furniture. In some cases it may be possible to incorporate a mast within an existing building or structure and these options should be explored before external structures are considered.

In the last few years, operators have made great strides in developing their techniques for camouflaging and disguising their equipment. This can be seen in the newer more modern masts that are frequently able to blend into their surroundings far more effectively in contrast to some of the older larger, and often unsightly, first-generation masts. The innovative use of colours and shapes by operators has been successful in disguising the equipment. The Council strongly encourages operators to continue with this practice and to adopt more innovative designs.

Antennas

Large numbers of antennas and support structures on a building will be resisted. Although this may be an efficient engineering solution, such development can have a cluttering effect and could potentially harm the visual qualities of the skyline/townscape. Instead operators will be encouraged, where technically feasible, to install wall mounted camouflaged antenna or antenna hidden in appropriate architectural forms such as chimneys and towers. Antenna should be positioned, where possible, beside roof structures such as lift housings thereby helping to limit any harm to the visual amenities.

Equipment Cabins

The dimensions of these structures should be appropriate for the location. Materials and colours selected for equipment cabins, cable boxes and other equipment should blend in with the surrounding area. On rooftop locations equipment cabins should be located inside buildings or be concealed by existing structures.

Colour and Finish of Equipment

Apparatus should have a matt (non reflective) finish. In sensitive locations natural, bare metal finishes will not be acceptable and the use of permanent coloured coatings such as by anodising or polyester powder coating are suggested.

Colour finishes should be suitable for the individual location and should be used to help camouflage the presence of the apparatus.

- i) Pale colours such as light grey are best used for equipment which is normally viewed against the open sky.
- ii) Darker hues of grey or brown will suit most other urban locations, or where appropriate a colour should be chosen which is similar to the fabric of the building on which it is located.
- iii) Mid brown or drab olive will suit most rural locations, but brighter greens should be avoided.

Fencing

Fencing for equipment compounds should not detract from the visual amenities of the area. Steel palisade fencing will not normally be acceptable unless the site is within an industrial environment. All fencing should be colour treated through powder coating during manufacture in a colour which is appropriate for the site locality.

Landscaping

Site selection should consider the use of vegetation, both in terms of existing cover and additional planting. Appropriately designed planting can reduce the visual impact of telecommunication installations. Operators should define the extent of proposed planting with a longer-term management support plan.

Highway Considerations

When considering telecommunication Installations on or adjacent to the Highway special attention should be given to:

- effect on sightlines;
- access for maintenance;

- effect on pedestrians/cyclists;
- effect on other utilities;
- relationship and distance from adjacent carriageway;
- relationship to street furniture;
- need for protection during construction;
- need for licences;

12.0 HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

The expansion of the mobile telephone network has been accompanied by growing concerns regarding the potential health risk from exposure to the electromagnetic fields (EMF) generated by mobile phone usage, base stations and transmitters.

The Government has responsibility for protecting public health. In 1999 the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (IEGMP) was set up to examine the health effects of mobile phone use, base stations and transmitters under the chairmanship of Sir William Stewart. In 2000 the findings of the group were published as the Stewart Report and concluded that 'the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of the guidelines. However there can be indirect adverse effects in some cases.' To this end the Government has adopted the ICNIRP EMF safety guidelines.

The ongoing research has resulted in Professor Swerdlow's Report (January 2004) on the Health Effects From Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields concluding that the exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and that the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health.

In PPG 8, the Government has accepted the Stewart Report's specific 'precautionary approach' recommendation in respect of emission controlling and monitoring and transmitter safety zones. The Radio communications Agency (RA) is conducting an audit of base stations and has already found that of the first 100 sites located near schools which have been tested, the electromagnetic emissions were significantly below the ICNIRP guidelines.

Based on the findings of the Stewart Report, the Government has adopted a precautionary approach to mobile telecommunication installations. Due to these actions the Government has taken the view that local planning authorities should not implement their own precautionary policies i.e. introducing a ban or moratorium on telecommunication development.

Furthermore PPG 8 establishes that the planning system should not duplicate existing controls under other legislation and is not the place to determine health safeguards.

Public perception of risk to health from a proposed development can in principle be a material consideration in determining planning applications. This needs to be supported by evidence of likely harm. However it is for the local planning authority in the first instance (and ultimately the courts), having regard to the Stewart Report and Government guidance, to determine what weight to attach to such considerations on an individual case basis. It is the Government's view that if a proposed development conforms to International Compliance for Public Exposure Guidelines for Public Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields established by the

International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), further consideration of this issue should not be necessary by the local planning authority. These standards are monitored by the Radio communications Agency. The Council will therefore expect all applications for prior approval or planning permission to include confirmation that the proposal would comply with ICNIRP guidelines.

The Government has issued two publications explaining the position with regard to health –
“Mobile Phone Base Stations & Health” and “Mobile Phones & Health”.

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT AS AMENDED AUGUST 2001

All network infrastructure required by the code system operators may be installed in, on, over and under land (including on buildings and other structures), or altered or replaced, are subject to a number of restrictions.

A mast or tower being installed on the ground must not be greater than 15m, or the apparatus which it replaces, whichever is the greater. This limit does not apply to antennas installed on a mast.

Apparatus located on a building or other structure should not itself exceed 15m in height, if the building (or structure) is 30m or more in height, or exceed 10m if the building (or structure) is less than 30m in height. The height of 15m does not include antenna on top.

Furthermore such apparatus must not add to the overall maximum height of the building by more than 10m for buildings of 30m or more; 8m for buildings between 15m and 30m and 6m for buildings of less than 15m.

Antenna may be installed on a building other than a dwellinghouse, 15m or more in height, or on a mast located on such a building subject to limitations to the size of the antenna and would not exceed three antenna systems.

A dish antenna is permitted development up to a size of 1.3m or in the case of a number of dishes the aggregate size of all dishes on a building, structure or mast should not exceed 3.5m, when measured in any dimension.

Radio equipment housing, including ancillary works such as fencing, may be installed provided that it is ancillary to a telecommunication installation. This should not exceed 30 cubic metres on a roof or 90 cubic metres elsewhere.

Before it is possible to use permitted development rights in respect of telecommunication apparatus with a volume greater than 2.5 cubic metres or a public call box, a code operator must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required with regard to the details and siting and appearance of the apparatus. The local planning authority will have 56 days to make a decision. If no decision is made, or the local planning authority fails to notify the developer of its decision within 56 days, permission is deemed to have been granted.

There are no permitted development rights for the installation of an antenna, a radio mast or radio equipment housing with a volume in excess of 2.5 cubic metres on any Article 1(5) land (Conservation Areas) unless in an emergency (and then for only a period of up to 6 months).

When apparatus for telecommunication purposes is no longer required, it should be removed as soon as reasonable and the land returned to its pre-development condition.

Any antenna located on a building should, as far as reasonable be sited so as to minimize its visual effect.

APPENDIX 2 – INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR PRIOR APPROVAL AND FULL PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following list, based on PPG 8 and the Code of Best Practice, shows the type of information expected to accompany all telecommunications applications submitted to Medway Council. The information should be clear and all maps should be plotted to a recognised metric scale.

A written description of the proposal.

Evidence of owner or agricultural tenant notification.

The appropriate fee.

A location plan. This should be at a scale of 1:1250

Site layout and elevation plans. Site layout plans should be at a minimum scale of 1:500. Elevation/roof layout plans should be at a scale of 1:100 or 1:50.

Plans showing proposed landscaping.

Evidence that the use of existing masts, buildings or structures has been considered.

Information in respect of the need and purpose of the proposal.

Evidence of network coverage/network capacity in locality.

A statement that a base station or other equipment will meet ICNIRP guidelines.

Details of the proposed antenna, power output, frequencies used and level of modulation.

Justification of mast/antenna height and location.

Use of the 'traffic light model' for determining the appropriate level of community consultation.

Details of discussions and consultations which have occurred including where appropriate schools and colleges, statutory undertakers, community groups, Council Members, etc.

Where appropriate, evidence of physical trials in addition to computer modelling.

The use of photomontages.

APPENDIX 3 – TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK OPERATORS 10 COMMITMENTS

Develop with other stakeholders; clear standards and procedures to deliver significantly improved consultation with local communities.

Participate in obligatory pre-rollout and pre-application consultation with local planning authorities.

Publish clear, transparent and accountable criteria and cross-industry agreement on site sharing, against which progress will be published regularly.

Establish professional development workshops on technological developments within telecommunications for local authority officers and elected members.

Deliver, with the Government, a database of information available to the public on radio base stations.

Assess all radio base stations for international (ICNIRP) compliance for public exposure, and produce a programme for ICNIRP compliance for all radio base stations as recommended by the Independent Expert group on Mobile Phones.

Provide, as part of planning applications for radio base stations, a certification of compliance with ICNIRP public exposure guidelines.

Provide specific staff resources to respond to complaints and enquiries about base stations, within ten working days.

Begin financially supporting the Government's independent scientific research programme on mobile communications health issues.

Develop standard supporting documentation for all planning submissions whether full planning or prior approval.

APPENDIX 4 – OPERATOR ENQUIRY POINTS

Hutchinson 3G UK
0845 604 3000
www.three.co.uk

O₂ UK
0113 388 6780
cellsnationalhelpdesk@o2.com
www.o2.com

O₂ Airwave
contact@airwaveservice.co.uk
www.airwaveservice.co.uk

Orange
0800 783 5021
site.information@orange.co.uk
web.orange.co.uk

T-Mobile UK Ltd
0870 321 6047
networkinfo@t-mobile.co.uk
www.t-mobile.co.uk

Vodafone
01635 677706
environment.planning@vodafone.co.uk
www.vodafone.co.uk

APPENDIX 5 – USEFUL WEBSITES

For planning information the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is at www.planning.odpm.gov.uk

For Medway Council planning information visit www.medway.gov.uk

For health information visit the Department of Health at www.doh.gov.uk/mobile.htm

The Stewart Report (Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones Report) can be found at www.iegmp.org.uk/report/text.htm

The Swerdlow Report (Health Effects from Radio Frequency Electronic Fields) can be found at www.nrp.org/publications/documents_of_nrp/pdfs/doc_14_2.pdf

For the audit of mobile phone base station emissions is at the Radio communications Agency website at www.radio.gov.uk

For specific mast sites consult www.sitefinder.radio.gov.uk

For an independent view on mobile phone masts and associated EMF issues Powerwatch have a website at www.powerwatch.org.uk

APPENDIX 6 – GLOSSARY

2G	The second generation or GSM is the technology currently used in the operation of mobile phones at 900MHz and 1800MHz.
3G	Third generation is the generic term used for the next generation of mobile communication systems. The high-speed data handling capacity of these new systems will offer advanced services (such as video streaming).
Aerial/antenna	A passive device which transmits and receives radio waves. There are different designs including Omni-directional, Sectored and dual/tri-band antennas.
Article 4 direction	Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (As amended) allows the use of a direction withdrawing permitted development rights in certain circumstances.
Base Station	A base station is a macrocell, microcell or picocell site and consists of the radio transmitters and receivers in a cabin or cabinet connected to antennas by feeder cables.
Cabin/Cabinet	A structure which protects radio transmitters and receivers from the elements often air conditioned.
Cell	A geographic area within which a radio base station transmits and receives radio signals to and from mobile phones.
Code System Operator	A telecommunications network operator as defined under schedule 2 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 (Known as the Telecommunications Code).
Compound	Normally fenced off, compounds are the area surrounding a mast and ancillary equipment.
Dish Antenna	Operating on a line of site basis, these transmit and receive highly focused radio waves in one direction. These are often used to link base stations to the wider network.
Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)	EMFs are emitted by many natural and man made sources. EMFs are used to transmit and receive signals from mobile phones. These are called radio/frequency (RF) waves/fields.
Federation of Electronic Industries (FEI)	This organisation has recently merged with the Computing Services and Software Association to form Intellect.
Feeder Cable	A co-axial cable which connects an antenna to a base station receiver or transmitter.
Frequency	This is the number of times per second an electronic wave oscillates and is measured in Hertz (Hz). 1 MHz is one million oscillations per second and 1 GHz is a thousand million. 2G systems operate at 900MHz and 1800MHz. 3G will operate at 2GHz.
GSM	Global System for Mobile Communications is the international, pan-European standard for the second generation of mobile phones.
International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP)	Set up as an independent scientific body, the ICNIRP has produced a set of guidelines for public exposure to radio frequency waves. These guidelines were recommended by the Stewart Report and subsequently adopted by

	Government.
Macrocells	The largest area of coverage within a mobile phone network. Macrocells provide radio coverage over varying distances depending on the terrain, frequency and volume of calls. Cell radius can range from 500m to 35km.
Mast	A ground-based or rooftop structure that supports antennas at a height where they can satisfactorily send and receive radio waves. These can appear as lattice steel or tubular monopole construction. There are a wide range of mast types.
Microcell	These provide additional coverage and capacity where there are high numbers of users within urban and suburban areas. Antennas are normally mounted at street level and can be blended into building features. These provide coverage of between 100m and 1000m distances.
Modulation	This is the process of adding information such as text or speech to a carrier wave.
Network Capacity	The limit to the volume of calls a network can handle.
Photomontages	These are photographs which have been overlaid with scaled images of the proposed development.
Picocell	These provide more localised coverage than microcells and are normally found in buildings where coverage is poor or there are large numbers of users such as airport terminals and shopping malls.
Power Output	Measured in Watts this is the power of the radio waves transmitted from the base station.
SMS	Short Message Service commonly known as texting. Can be use to send written messages and images.
Traffic Light Model	This is a guide to ascertain the amount and type of public consultation required for a proposed site. By rating planning, environmental and community issues sites according to green, amber and red, the appropriate level of public consultation can be carried out.
Transmitter	Electronic equipment that generates radio waves to convey information and is connected to an antenna via a feeder cable.
UMTS	Universal Mobile Telecommunication System (UMTS) is an international 3G standard which the UK network operators have adopted.

APPENDIX 7 – CONTACT DETAILS

For further details contact:

Development and Transport Division
Regeneration and Development Directorate
Medway Council
Chatham Maritime
Compass Centre
Chatham
Kent
ME4 4YH

APPENDIX 8 – BRIEFING ON THE STEWART REPORT

The following briefing was prepared by the Federation of the Electronics Industry (FEI) in May 2000. The FEI is now part of Intellect (www.intellectuk.org) a new association created to give a single powerful voice for the information technology, telecommunications and electronics industries in the UK.

Introduction

The Independent Expert Group on mobile phones, chaired by Professor Sir William Stewart, was set up in 1999 by the government to conduct a rigorous assessment of existing research into mobile phones and health, to give advice based on the present state of knowledge and also to make recommendations on further work that should be carried out to improve the basis for sound advice.

The Expert Group published its report on 11 May 2000 and made conclusions and recommendations for action by government, the mobile phone industry and others.

Key conclusions and recommendations

The expert group concluded that:

- the balance of scientific evidence suggests that exposures to radio frequency (RF) radiation below National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) and International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines do not cause adverse health effects (para 1.17);
- the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guidelines, although the Expert Group pointed to indirect adverse effects on people's well-being in some cases (para 1.33);
- there is some evidence suggesting that there may be biological effects at exposures below the guidelines (para 1.18);
- a substantial UK research programme should be established and operate under the aegis of a demonstrably independent panel (para 1.58);
- drivers should be dissuaded from using either hand-held or hands-free phones whilst on the move (para 1.22).

Given the gaps in scientific knowledge, the Expert Group recommended the adoption of a precautionary approach and advised that:

- ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure be adopted for use in the UK in place of the NRPB guidelines (para 1.27);
- all base stations be subject to the normal planning process (para 1.36);
- information on the energy emissions (specific absorption rate (SAR) values) of mobile phones be readily accessible to consumers (para 1.52);
- children's use of mobile phones for non-essential calls be discouraged and that the mobile phone industry refrains from promoting their use by children (para 1.53).

The government's response

The government welcomed the report and signalled its intention to seek to implement most if not all of its recommendations. It said it would refer the report to the Chief Medical Officer for his view on the recommendations relating to mobile phone use by children and information on phone energy emissions. The government said it would

also consult with key stakeholders on progressing further policy-making in this area.

Industry's response

The UK mobile phone industry also welcomed the report, saying that it was comprehensive and balanced and that it addressed public concerns on mobile phones and health very effectively.

Specifically, industry said it would:

- continue to support scientific research internationally and financially support the research programme recommended by the report;
- build all new base stations to comply with ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure and check and modify, if necessary, all existing base stations as soon as practicable;
- review, with government, planning regulations relating to telecommunications development to ensure planning policy is balanced between community concerns and the need for the UK to have world-leading telecommunications networks;
- work with government on identifying the most effective way to present information relating to phone energy emissions.

In addition, industry said it would:

- support the development of new technology to help improve base station design and continue to share sites and masts where practicable;
- locate, as far as possible, new base stations on sites that minimise their social impact on the local community while ensuring the public's expectation of good quality of service is met;
- increase the provision of information to planners on network design strategies and give them access to base site location databases;
- set up appropriate training packages on working with the community in network roll-out and help ensure that local communities are better informed about applications made for new base station sites and have appropriate opportunity to make their views known;
- review the implications of the report in respect of its marketing strategies and information literature;
- continue to recommend that hand-held mobile phones should never be used while driving and that hands-free kits should only be used when it is safe to do so.