

KEY INFORMATION

Ward Fairmuir

Proposal

Installation of 12.5m high telecommunications monopole supporting 6 No antennas with associated ground based equipment cabinets and ancillary equipment

Address

Telephone Exchange
Fairfield Road
Dundee DD3 8HR

Applicant

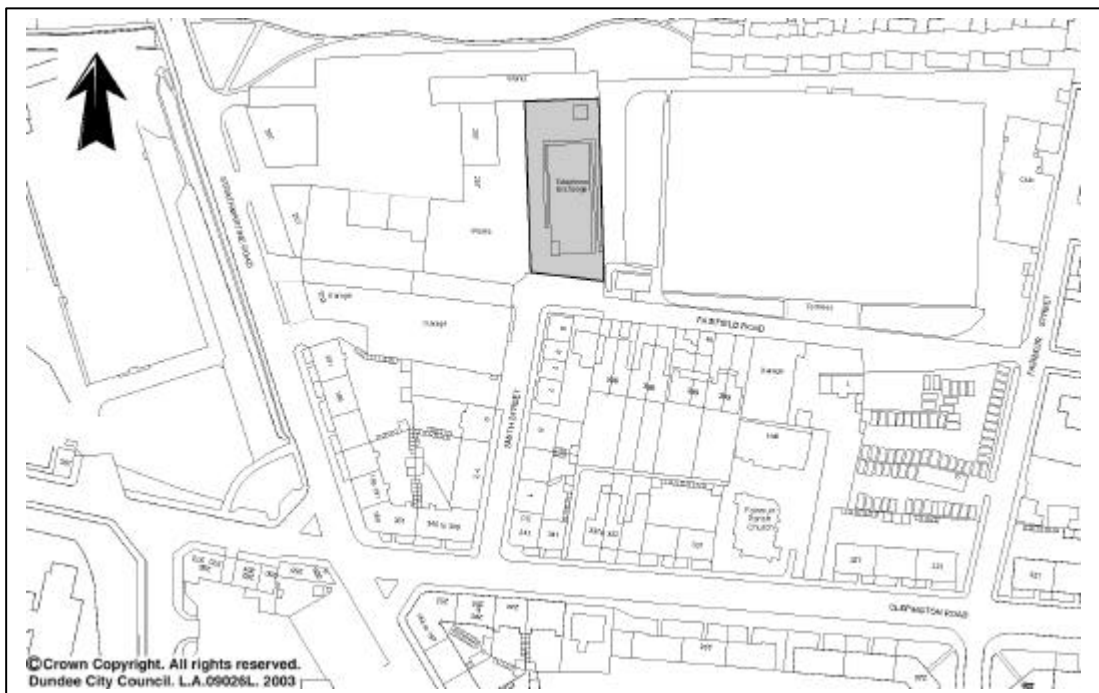
Vodafone in Partnership with
Crown Castle (UK)
c/o Stappard Howes
122 Dundyvan Road
Coatbridge ML5 1DE

Agent

Stappard Howes
122 Dundyvan Road
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Registered 8 Dec 2005

Case Officer C Walker



Proposed Mobile Phone Mast at Fairfield Road

The installation of a telecommunications monopole is **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** subject to conditions. Report by Director of Planning and Transportation

RECOMMENDATION

The proposal complies with the relevant policies in the Dundee Local Plan 1998, Finalised Local Plan Review and National Policy. Although an objection was received on health and traffic grounds, it is considered that it does not carry sufficient weight to justify refusal of the application. The application is therefore recommended for **APPROVAL**.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- Planning permission is sought to erect a 12.5 metres high telecommunications monopole supporting 6 antennas at Fairmuir Telephone Exchange. The proposed monopole will serve Vodafone and provide for both second and third generation coverage.
- There are a number of telecommunications antennas within the site including 2 monopoles and a rooftop satellite dish operated by BT and a lattice mast of 15 metres high operated by O2.
- The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character and zoned for employment uses in both the adopted and finalised Local Plans. The closest residential buildings to the site are some 72 metres from the compound for the proposed mast at the nearest point.
- A letter of objection was received from the occupier of a flat on Smith Street stating concerns about the health risk from the mast and the amount of traffic using Smith Street.
- The proposal complies with Polices BE31 and EU1 of the adopted Local Plan, Policy 26 and Policy 78 of Finalised Dundee Local Plan Review, the Council's Non Statutory Policies on Telecommunications Masts and Government Guidance on this subject.
- The applicant has submitted the appropriate ICNIRP certificate and therefore insufficient weight can be placed on the concerns about health matters in this case. There are no significant traffic implications as a result of the proposed development.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought to erect a 12.5 metres high telecommunications monopole supporting 6 antennas along with ground based equipment cabinets on the site. The proposed monopole will serve Vodaphone and provide for both second and third generation coverage. It is proposed to site the monopole in the north west corner of the site against the backdrop of adjacent industrial buildings.

The applicants have submitted a letter in support of their proposals which states that the development will comply with Local Plan and Government guidance on telecommunications apparatus. It points out the benefits of mobile phone technology and points out that an ICNIRP certificate has been submitted indicating that the existing and proposed antennae will comply with the requirements of the radio frequency public exposure guidelines.

Their coverage plans show that the proposed monopole will provide adequate coverage in an area running approximately from Coldside in the south to Kirkton in the north and from the Kingsway West Retail Park to the west to Old Glamis Road to the east.

Their search for alternative sites included the North End premises immediately to the east of the site, Day International premises much further to the east on Balgray Street, Fairmuir Church and various small industrial units in Fairfield Road, Fairfield Street and Fairmuir Street. These sites were rejected for a number of reasons including a lack of interest from the owners, but principally because they were considered to be less suitable than the current application site due to their closer proximity to houses and the fact that there are existing telecommunications equipment at the application site. The possibility of sharing an existing mast at the application site as opposed to erecting a new mast was rejected because a mast share would involve a much more obtrusive structure. Having chosen the current application site the applicants consulted 70 local residential properties but received no response.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site comprises the Fairmuir Telephone Exchange. The telephone exchange is a modern functional building with a flat roof. There are a number of telecommunications antennas within the site including 2 monopoles (one of 12 metres and one of 15 metres) and a rooftop satellite dish operated by BT to service the exchange and a lattice mast of 15 metres high in the north east corner of the site operated by O2.

The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character and zoned for employment uses in both the adopted and finalised Local Plans. To the east of the site is the Northend FC ground separated from the site by a brick wall. To the north is a high corrugated iron



clad industrial building. Further to the north is Fairmuir Park and although the tops of the existing poles and antennae are visible from the park, they do not form a prominent feature on the landscape due to the screening by the industrial building. To the west are brick industrial buildings. To the south is Fairfield Road and directly opposite is a modern block of flats. These flats are the closest residential buildings to the site and are some 72 metres from the compound for the proposed mast at the nearest point. There are also dwellings on the south site of Fairfield Road and the east side of Smith Street.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Dundee and Angus Structure Plan 2001-2016

There are no policies relevant to the determination of this application.

Application No 04/01027/FUL

Dundee Local Plan 1998

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy BE31

Proposals for telecommunications developments will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a Proposals will be assumed to carry an operational justification, but in cases where there is good reason to anticipate a general proliferation and resultant clutter in the local landscape, the planning authority retains discretion to explore this justification.
- b There are no satisfactory alternative sites available.
- c There is no reasonable prospect of sharing existing facilities.
- d For radio masts there is no reasonable possibility of erecting antennae on an existing building or other structure
- e The development should avoid conflict with other policies or proposals of the Local Plan, Structure Plan etc.

Policy EU1: the establishment and retention of industrial and business uses are encouraged in this area.

Dundee Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan 1995

There are no policies relevant to the determination of this application.

Finalised Dundee Local Plan Review

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy 26: General Economic Development Areas. Proposals for Class 4,5 and 6 uses will be supported.

Policy 78: Location of Telecommunications Equipment. In general, operators are encouraged to consider industrial areas in the first instance and to share existing masts in order to minimise the environmental impact on the city. This development is for site sharing (although not mast

sharing) as the antennas are to be located on a mast in an existing site for telecommunications equipment.

Policy 78 also states that the Council's supplementary policies ("Non Statutory Planning Policies in Relation to Telecommunications and Other Apparatus") will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for telecommunications developments. These policies are referred to below in the section on "Non Statutory Statements of Council Policy".

Scottish Planning Policies, Planning Advice Notes and Circulars

The following are of relevance:

National Planning Policy Guidance 19: Radio Telecommunications

This national guidance emphasises the importance of establishing good communication and trust between operators and planning authorities and encourages pre-application discussions to determine the most appropriate siting and design approaches. It acknowledges the benefits of modern telecommunications and seeks to encourage such development as being essential to a modern economy and contributing to sustainable objectives. It states that health issues are covered by other legislation. It gives advice on the siting and design of masts (referring to PAN62).

Planning Advice Note 62: Radio Telecommunications

This provides best practice advice on the process of site selection and design and illustrates how the equipment can be sensitively installed.

Non Statutory Statements of Council Policy

"Non Statutory Planning Policies in Relation to Telecommunications and Other Apparatus".

The following are of particular relevance:

Policy 1: there should be an operational justification for the location and design of the proposal including an assessment of the cumulative impact of individual proposals where other telecommunications developments are present nearby.

Policy 3: There will be a general presumption in favour of the location of masts within areas allocated for industrial development in the Local Plan.

LOCAL AGENDA 21

Key Theme 7 requires access to facilities, services, goods and people is not achieved at the expense of the environment and are accessible to all.

SITE HISTORY

The existing masts and antennae at this site were erected under permitted development rights.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Statutory neighbour notification was carried out and a letter of objection was received from the occupier of a flat on Smith Street. The neighbour is concerned about the increased health risk taking into account the existing O2 antennas on the site and the amount of traffic using Smith Street. A copy of this letter is available for inspection in the Members Lounges and the concerns raised are considered in the Observations section of this Report.

CONSULTATIONS

No adverse comment on the proposal was received from Statutory Consultees.

OBSERVATIONS

In accordance with the provisions of Section 25 of the Act the Committee is required to consider:

- a whether the proposals are consistent with the provisions of the development plan; and if not
- b whether an exception to the provisions of the development plan is justified by other material considerations.

The Development Plan

The provisions of the development plan relevant to the determination of this application are specified in the Policy background section above.

The criteria set out in Policy BE31 focus on visual amenity matters. In this case it is considered that it would be difficult to find a less obtrusive site. The site is within an area allocated for

industrial development in the adopted Local Plan and on a site already used for telecommunications development. The proposed mast would be located in the north west corner of the telephone exchange site against the backdrop of 2 substantial buildings. It would be lower than 2 of the 3 existing poles on the site. The nearest residential properties are 72 metres distant and the visual impact would be lessened by the existing telephone exchange, the masts to the west of this building and the backdrop of the industrial buildings to the north and west.

In terms of the details of Policy BE31, the proposal has an operational justification and alternative sites have been considered and rejected by the applicants. This analysis by the applicants has been assessed by the Planning and Transportation Department and is considered to be sound. By using an existing site with telecommunications equipment the proposal can be seen as a form of site sharing. Whilst the applicants could share 1 of the existing masts, the resulting structure would have to be so high that it would be much more obtrusive than putting up an additional mast on the site.

The proposal does not adversely affect the designation of the site for business and industrial uses under Policy EU1 of the Plan.

It is concluded from the foregoing that the proposal complies with Policies BE31 and EU1 of the adopted Local Plan.

Other Material Considerations

The other material considerations to be taken into account are as follows:

Finalised Dundee Local Plan Review

Policy 26 reiterates the advice in Policy EU1 of the Adopted Local Plan and it is considered that the proposal complies with this Policy for the same reasons.

Policy 78 encourages the use of industrial areas and mast sharing. The site is allocated for industry in both the adopted and Finalised Local Plans. In addition the mast is to be located in a site currently used for telecommunications with 3 other masts and the current proposals can be considered as site sharing. The applicants do not have a difficulty with

sharing an existing mast but point out that the increase in height involved would be much more obtrusive than the erection of the proposed mast. The Policy also says that alternative locations and design should be investigated. The applicants considered other locations as discussed in the "description of the proposal" and these were ruled out either due to resistance from the site owners or because they would be more obtrusive than the current proposals.

The proposal was assessed in terms of the Council's Non Statutory Policies, which are a material consideration in terms of Policy 78. The proposal complies with Policy 1 as the applicant has provided a justification for the location and design of the proposal, alternative sites were assessed and the visual impact is minimal. The proposal also complies with the presumption in Policy 3 which favours the location of masts within areas allocated for industrial development in the Local Plan.

It is concluded that the proposal complies with Policies 1 and 78 of the Finalised Dundee Local Plan Review.

NPPG 19 and PAN 62

These documents give good general advice on the siting and design of masts and the Council's own Non Statutory Policies have similar themes. The documents advise that the siting and design of telecommunications development are the key issues to be addressed through the planning system. The proposal is located on a site where there are already a number of telecommunications masts, 2 of which are higher than the current proposal. It is set against a backdrop of 2 high industrial buildings and is as far as possible from dwellings.

The two documents also set out a series of options for operators to consider when locating apparatus. It is considered that the proposal has taken all these on board to present the most viable and less visually intrusive solution for the location of this structure.

Objections

The letter submitted in connection with the proposed development relates to concerns about health matters and traffic on Smith Street. The objector points out that there are other antennas on the site.

Government and other bodies have considered concerns about the health implications of telecommunications antennae. The Scottish Executive published a report in early July 2004 entitled "Evaluation of Revised Planning Controls over Telecommunications Development". The report acknowledges that the issue of health concerns would inevitably arise, but specified that the research should not be directed into an extensive discussion of health issues. Whilst the Scottish Executive supports research into the subject of health impacts of mobile telecommunications and recognises the need for more research into the matter, the current position is that there is insufficient evidence that mobile telecommunication development causes a health risk.

It is for this reason that NPPG 19 advises that it is not necessary for planning authorities to treat radio frequency emissions as a material consideration. To demonstrate to planning authorities that the known health effects have been properly addressed, applications for planning permission involving antennas must be accompanied by a declaration that the equipment and installation is designed to be in full compliance with the appropriate ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to radio frequency radiation. The applicant has submitted the appropriate certificate in these circumstances. Therefore insufficient weight can be placed on the concerns about health matters in this case.

In terms of traffic, other than a short period when the proposed mast is constructed, there should be little or no traffic associated with the proposed development. The applicants state that the facility will be unmanned with periodic visits typically every 2 to 3 months for routine maintenance. They state that an engineer using a four wheel drive light vehicle will carry this out.

It is concluded from the foregoing that insufficient weight can be accorded to the grounds of objection such as to justify the refusal of planning permission contrary to the provisions of the development plan. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted with conditions.

Design

The design of the proposed mast is a slim monopole similar to 2 existing nearby poles and less obtrusive than the higher O2 lattice mast further to the east. The relatively secluded location of the application site results in a development that is the most visually acceptable solution for this location.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the proposal complies with the relevant policies in the Dundee Local Plan 1998, Finalised Local Plan Review and National Policy. Although an objection was received on health and traffic grounds, it is considered that it does not carry sufficient weight to justify refusal of the application.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within five years from the date of this permission.
- 2 In the event that equipment becomes obsolete or redundant it must be removed to the satisfaction of the planning authority within 6 months.

Reasons

- 1 To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
- 2 To reinstate the site to a satisfactory condition in the interests of visual amenity.