

**Item** 10/00938/FUL

**Case Officer** Mr Matthew Birkinshaw

**Ward** Clayton-le-Woods North

**Proposal** Erection of a 20m high telecommunications monopole

**Location** 40M South West Of Sagar Premier Indian Restaurant Clayton Brook Road Bamber Bridge Lancashire

**Applicant** Vodafone Ltd

**Consultation expiry: 17 November 2010**

**Application expiry: 13 December 2010**

**Proposal** Erection of a 20m high telecommunications monopole at the junction of Clayton Brook Road and Tramway Road, Clayton Brook, Chorley.

#### **Recommendation**

1. It is recommended that full planning permission is granted.

#### **Proposal**

2. The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 20m high telecommunications mast and ancillary cabinets. The larger of the two cabinets would measure 1.9m across by 1.6m high, with the smaller box measuring 0.7m by 1.2m high.
3. The mast would have a diameter of 0.4m (similar to that of the adjacent lamp post) up to a height of 16m. Above this the final 4m of the mast would be larger where the communication equipment is located. A larger antenna at the top of the mast is required as the proposal will be used by both 'Telefonica O2' and 'Vodafone UK Ltd' for shared services, removing the need for two separate masts in the area.

#### **Application Site and Surroundings**

4. The mast will be sited on the corner of Clayton Brook Road and Tramway Lane opposite the 'Sagar Premier Indian Restaurant'. The Brow Hey apartment block contains the nearest residential properties approximately 30m to the south separated by a line of trees and grassed area along Tramway Lane. The final 4m of the mast where the antenna is situated would extend above the tree line.

#### **Main Issues**

5. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:
  - *Appearance and Impact on Streetscene*
  - *Impact on Residential Amenity;*
  - *Health and Safety Considerations; and*
  - *Other Material Planning Considerations.*

#### **Representations**

6. One letter of objection has been received from a neighbouring property at Brow Hey making the following comments:
  - The mast would be a 'blot on the landscape';
  - The mast would be sited too close to residential properties at Brow Hey;
  - There would be a detrimental impact highway safety;
  - The mast is unnecessary; and

- It would have a detrimental impact on trees.

## Consultations

7. **Chorley Borough Council Environmental Protection** – No objections.
8. **Lancashire County Council Highways** – No objections. The cabinet would allow for 1.5m of footpath to remain which is of a sufficient width not to force pedestrians into the road.
9. **National Grid UK Transmission** – No comments received.
10. **Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council** – Consider that the siting is inappropriate as it appears to be blocking the pavement, with the suggestion to site the monopole further back onto the grass.

## Assessment

### Appearance and Impact on Streetscene

11. Local Plan Policy PS12 permits utility services development subject to there been no detrimental impact on the townscape or landscape character of an area. Criterion (c) of Policy PS12 also requires the applicant to demonstrate there are no other operationally suitable sites which would be preferable in terms of visual impact. This follows national guidance in PPG8 which encourages developers and local authorities to explore different sites within the immediate area to find the most appropriate location.
12. The objection received from a neighbouring resident states that the mast in this location will have a detrimental visual impact, appearing out of character and a “blot” on the landscape.
13. In terms of finding an appropriate location for the mast the applicant carried out a sequential assessment of alternative locations at the pre-application stage in accordance with guidance contained in PPG8 and the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development. The application site was the preferred location due to the mature landscaping along Tramway Lane which would screen the mast from Clayton Brook Road and the majority of properties in the area. The existing BT cabinets, lamp posts and pylons will also help the mast integrate more easily into the streetscene viewed against this infrastructure.
14. As part of the sequential site assessment the applicant looked into the possibility of using land opposite the site within the ‘Sagar Premier Indian Restaurant’. This location was discounted due to the proximity of the overhead power lines which prevents siting of a telecommunications mast. This is due to the electric current which would cause interference with a free-standing mast. There are also health and safety issues with the construction process in terms of using cranes to erect the mast in close proximity to the cables, and for future maintenance requirements. For these reasons sites further north along Clayton Brook Road to the north were also discounted as the cables cross the road. In addition to the restrictions caused by the proximity of power cables a mast here would also be more visible and have a greater impact on the streetscene and wider residential amenity.
15. The pavement directly opposite the application site was also looked at and discounted. Investigative work at the pre-application stage identified a number of underground services and cables which would require moving. The cost of re-directing underground services would prove insurmountable and would not be a viable solution. In addition to this the location was also discounted due to the visual impact this would have. Situated on the opposite corner the mast would be more prominent viewed against the backdrop of smaller boundary planting, and against the stark contrast of the skyline beyond.
16. Based on these alternative sites not been available or viable for the mast it is concluded that the application site is the most suitable location. The visual impact of the mast will be reduced in this location given proximity of the existing landscaping. Where the mast will be seen this will be viewed against other urban infrastructure including pylons, a BT cabinet,

lamp posts, and the M65.

17. The applicant has therefore demonstrated flexibility in finding other suitable sites in the area, culminating in an application which is considered to be sited in the most appropriate location. This complies with the requirements set out in Local Plan Policy PS12 and PPG8, and ensures the wider townscape qualities of the area will be maintained, and impact minimised.

#### Impact on Residential Amenity

18. In terms of the impact on residential amenity the objector to the scheme from the apartments at Brow Hey have commented that the mast would be sited too close to their property, affecting amenity.
19. The mast would be sited approximately 30m from the apartments at Brow Hey, separated by mature trees acting as a landscape buffer. Whilst interrupted views of the upper elements of the mast could be visible from Brow Hey this would only be the case for the upper floors who would see the mast in the context of the pylons and other lamp posts. Taking into account this degree of separation, line of trees, and other urban features such as the pylons it is not considered that the impact of the mast on the amenity of residents at Brow Hey would be so severe to warrant refusal of this planning application.
20. Whilst other locations would be preferable in terms of reducing the impact on residential amenity for residents at Brow Hey, for example in the restaurant car park, these locations have been identified as unsuitable and unfeasible as demonstrated by the applicant.

#### Health and Safety Considerations

21. In terms of the health to surrounding resident's national guidance in PPG8 states that the planning system is not the place for establishing health safeguards. If a proposed phone mast meets the Government's guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for a local planning authority to consider further the health aspects and concerns regarding them.
22. PPG8 is based on a national report entitled "*mobile phones and health*" and at paragraph 31 makes a clear recommendation that planning authorities should not seek to impose a ban or moratorium on telecommunications development, or insisting on minimum distances between new telecommunications and existing development on health grounds. With the relevant health and safety considerations met by national guidelines which control development, it is not necessary for any other precautionary measures or conditions.
23. In terms of the health and safety of the general public using the footpath the Parish Council have recommended that the cabinet be re-sited off the pavement and onto the grass behind. In response to this the applicant has confirmed that at the initial design stage the option to site the cabinet on the grass was looked at, however this could not be possible to existing underground services from the BT cabinet, which would have prevented construction of the mast. Constructing the mast to one edge of the footpath will also ensure it has no impact on the trees or root structures.
24. In terms of the size of footpath which will remain there will be a gap left of 1.5m following construction of the cabinets. LCC Highways have confirmed that this is acceptable and greater than the minimum width of 1.2m required for footpaths. The proposal will therefore not result in pedestrians being forced into the road and will not give rise to any issues over pedestrian safety.

#### Overall Conclusion

25. The proposal meets all the requirements of Local Plan Policy PS12. It forms part of a planned expansion by both O2 and Vodafone to offer 3G coverage, removing the need for two separate antennas, which cumulatively would have a greater impact on the character of

the area.

26. The applicant has demonstrated a sequential approach to site selection and the location and siting of the mast is considered to be the most appropriate, screened by mature landscaping next to other equipment, reducing the mast's visual impact and maintaining the townscape qualities of the area.
27. Whilst the antenna will be seen from the upper floors of Brow Hey above the tree line, this is not considered to have a detrimental impact on residential amenity at a distance of 30m behind the tree line, viewed against the backdrop of electricity pylons.
28. The applicant has demonstrated compliance with Local Plan Policy PS12 and PPG8 it is therefore recommended that full planning permission is granted.

### **Planning Policies**

#### National Planning Policies:

PPG8

#### Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review

Policies: PS12

### **Planning History**

There is no planning history relating to the application site.

### **Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission Conditions**

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.  
*Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*
2. This consent relates to the following plans:

Plan Ref.	Received On:	Title:
200	10 October 2010	Proposed Site Plan
300	10 October 2010	Proposed NE Elevation
400	10 October 2010	Proposed Antenna Equipment

*Reason: To define the consent and to ensure all works are carried out in a satisfactory manner.*