

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2005

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/2550/04/PNT - Landbeach**

**Erection of 8 Metre High Telecommunications Monopole and Associated Development, Land opposite Cambridge Research Park for Vodafone Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. The proposed mast is to be sited on land adjacent to the A10, opposite the entrance to the Cambridge Research Park. At present a small area of grassland surrounds the eastern rim of the Cambridge Research Park roundabout upon which a small plantation of sapling trees has been planted. A ditch defining the Landbeach and Waterbeach Parish boundary runs adjacent to the site. This ditch is lined with mature trees. A modest sized electrical cabinet is at present sited adjacent to the cluster of trees.
2. This prior notification application, received on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2004 seeks prior approval for the siting and appearance of a 8 metre high monopole mast, (10 metres to top of antenna), and telecommunications cabinet, both of which are to be sited on an area of hard standing. The mast is a slim line monopole, which is the same height as the adjacent street lamps. The mast and cabinet are to be sited within the existing cluster of trees, set 11 metres back from the edge of the A10. No vehicular access is to be provided to the site.

### **Planning History**

3. Planning permission was granted in 1997 for the construction of a roundabout and junction with associated land reclamation and landscaping, reference **S/0271/97/RM**.

### **Planning Policy**

4. **Policy CS8 ‘Telecommunications’** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (“The Local Plan”) lists the criteria against which applications for telecommunication development should be considered.
5. **Policy 6/5 ‘Telecommunications’** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (“The Structure Plan”) states that the growth of new and existing telecommunications system will be encouraged to ensure people have equitable access to a wide range of services and the latest technologies as they become available.
6. **Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (PPG8) ‘Telecommunications’** 2001 provides guidance on the assessment of applications for telecommunication facilities.

## **Consultations**

7. **Councillor Hockey** has requested that this application be presented at Committee. No specific comments regarding this application had however been received at the time of writing this report.
8. **Landbeach Parish Council**- No comments received at the time of writing this report. Any comments raised will be reported verbally to the Committee.
9. **Waterbeach Parish Council, (neighbouring Parish Council)** - No comments received at the time of writing this report. Any comments raised will be reported verbally to the Committee.
10. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** - No comments received at the time of writing this report. Any comments raised will be reported verbally to the Committee.
11. **Ministry of Defence** - No comments received at the time of writing this report. Any comments raised will be reported verbally to the Committee.
12. **Waterbeach Level Internal Drainage Board** - No comment.
13. **County Highways Authority** - "I note that the original proposal to have direct vehicular access off the A10 has now been omitted from the scheme. I now am unable to sustain an objection to this proposal."

## **Representations**

14. No representations have been received at the time of writing this report. The consultation period does not expire until the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2005. Any comments received will be reported verbally to the Committee.

## **Planning Comments - Key Issues**

15. As this is a Prior Notification Application, (PNT), the Council can only comment on the siting and appearance of this proposal. In this location it is considered that the main points of consideration are the impact of the mast on the character and appearance of the area and the impact on Highway Safety.

### ***Character and appearance of area***

16. The proposed mast is a slim line design and will in part be screened from view by the cluster of young trees sited adjacent to the mast and the more mature trees situated along the bank of the ditch, located to the east. When viewed in conjunction with the existing streetlights, which also measure 10 metres in height, it is considered that this structure will not form an alien feature within the landscape, nor will the mast unduly impinge on the openness of the surrounding countryside.
17. As the mast is to be sited within the cluster of young trees, this development may result in the removal of some of the lower level screening currently provided on site. These trees however are no longer protected by the landscaping condition for the roundabout and junction improvements approved in 1997, (application reference S/0271/97/RM), nor are they worthy of a Tree Preservation Order. It is therefore considered that an objection to the removal of some of these trees could not be sustained. Irrespective of the above, the agent has confirmed that the footings of this

development can be hand dug to minimise any disturbance while supplementary planting can be carried out. This could be secured by a condition.

18. The siting of the mast in relation to the adjacent Research Park and settlement of Landbeach is considered acceptable. Whilst only sited on the opposite side of the road to the Research Park, sufficient separation is provided to ensure a mast of this height will not appear overly dominating. The mast will also be sited more than 2 km from the village of Landbeach.

#### ***Highway Safety***

19. This PNT application was the subject of lengthy pre-application discussions. Initially it was proposed that vehicular access be provided to the mast for maintenance purposes. Strong objections were raised to the creation of an additional access onto the A10 and this has now been excluded from this proposal. Whilst access to the mast is still required for maintenance purposes, Vodafone has stated that service staff will park in the lay-by sited 480 metres further north along the A10 and walk to the site.
20. Members should note that Vodafone is a Statutory Undertaker for the purposes of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1914 by virtue of being a Telecommunications Code System Operator. The agent has therefore advised that this proposal is not dissimilar to maintenance works of other Statutory Undertakers being carried out in the area, i.e the maintenance and repair of street lights. The agent has also confirmed that should any maintenance work be required for the mast, (which is very unlikely) this will be undertaken in the same manner as that undertaken by those maintaining the street lamps at this location. Normal traffic management applications and consultations will be undertaken.
21. The County Highways Authority have stated that as Vodafone are a Statutory Undertaker, no objections can be raised on Highway grounds.

#### ***Other issues***

22. The site is located within 3km of the Waterbeach Barracks airfield. The details of this application have therefore been forwarded to the Ministry of Defence for comment. As stated previously if any safeguarding issues are raised these will be reported verbally to the Committee.
23. During the consultation period of this application concerns have been raised verbally by residents of Landbeach village, 2 km distant, on health grounds. While health concerns can in principle be a material consideration to this application, as stated in PPG8, it is the Government's firm view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. In the Government's view, if a proposed mobile phone station meets the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for a Local Planning Authority, in processing an application for prior approval, to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them.
24. This proposal meets with the ICNIRP public Exposure Guidelines. As stated previously, the proposed mast will be sited more than 2km away from the village of Landbeach. While some isolated residential properties are located adjacent to the A10, the nearest property, Landbeach Lakes Chalet, is sited approximately 345 metres south west of the site. To the north, the nearest residential property, Denny

Croft is sited approximately 670 metres away. Given the above, no objections are raised on the grounds of Health.

25. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore no objections are raised to this proposal on the grounds of flooding. The lower land located on the opposite side of the ditch however is categorised Flood Zone 2 and 3, and is a high-risk flood area. It is advised that a covering letter be sent to the agent informing them of this if, Members are minded to approve this application.

### **Recommendation**

26. Approval of siting and appearance subject to no objections being raised from the Ministry of Defence and Chief Environmental Health Officer and subject to a condition securing the hand digging of footings.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning file Ref S/2550/04/PNT
- Planning Policy Guidance 8: "Telecommunications"

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