

Report to Cabinet
13 July 2016
Report of Executive head of regeneration and development
Subject Phone masts on council buildings

Item

11

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To review the council's moratorium on the placing of phone masts on council owned land and buildings.

Recommendations

To adopt a policy of allowing mobile phone masts on council land and buildings that are consistent with established precautionary measures and subject to:

- a. 21 day public consultation to include all residents and businesses living or located within 50 metres of the proposal;
- b. Applicants indemnifying the council and arranging independent checks and audits of their equipment;
- c. Application and checking costs to be born by the applicant;
- d. Contracts making provision to terminate the contract if adverse health effects relating to masts are confirmed by future Government research;
- e. Any consents including planning consents

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority of a prosperous and vibrant city and the service plan priority to deliver the council's asset management strategy.

Financial implications

Whilst the review itself does not have any direct financial consequences, there is an income generation opportunity from the positioning of masts on Council owned land or buildings. Existing aerials generate £78,681 p.a.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Stonard - Resources and income generation

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

1. The executive reviewed the council's policy as landowner in respect of applications to site mobile phone masts (more properly described as mobile phone base stations) on council land and buildings in September 2002. It confirmed the council's previously informal practice of resisting proposals to locate such masts on council property on health grounds.
2. Prior to 1999 when such practice emerged the council had made agreements for eight mobile phone masts. These masts are still in place and provide income of £78,681p.a. (see table below). Rent reviews are shortly to be concluded which will increase the rental income £89,181.

ASSET ADDRESS	TENANT	CURRENT RENT
ASHBOURNE TOWER	EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE LIMITED (T-MOBILE (UK) LTD)	£13,500
AYLMER TOWER	TELEFONICA UK LTD	£9,000
GERTRUDE ROAD	ARQIVA LTD	£6,500
NORMANDIE TOWER	EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE LIMITED (T-MOBILE (UK) LTD)	£17,299
SEAMAN TOWER	ARQIVA LTD	£17,299
WINCHESTER TOWER	ORANGE PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS LTD	£8,000
ANSON ROAD	ORANGE PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS LTD	£7,082
		£78,681

3. During 2011 the planning committee twice considered proposals for a mobile phone mast on Bowers Avenue. On both occasions the original proposal and subsequent amended proposal were refused on grounds of visual impact. In coming to this conclusion, members of the committee observed that there were potentially preferable sites on council owned land and given technological advances since implementation of the present policy.
4. The council, or its non-housing tenants, are from time to time approached by mobile communication companies with a view to placing base stations on council property. These approaches have to be turned down and hence a potential income source is lost.
5. In recent years other councils have reviewed their policies on the placing of phone masts on council land and buildings. These include Newport City Council, Portsmouth City Council and the London Borough of Hillingdon. Such councils also had a moratorium on placing mobile phone masts on council land and buildings. As a consequence of the review the councils proposed to re-permit mobile phone masts on council property, albeit subject to a number of controls. The following discussion is largely based on the reviews carried out by these councils.

Health evidence

6. The council's present policy reflects the public health concerns that surrounded mobile phone technology in the 1990s. Since then, there have been numerous scientific reviews to establish the health impact of mobile telecommunications equipment.

The Stewart Report

7. In April 1999 the Government requested the Chairman of the National Radiological Protection Board to set up an Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones. On the basis of the evidence available, the group concluded that there is no general risk to health for people living near to mobile phone masts given that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guideline values. In contrast the group noted that "for the general population, the levels of exposure arising from phones held near the head or other parts of the body are substantially greater [by a factor in the region of 10,000] than the whole-body exposures arising from base stations".
8. However, the report also concluded that the possibility of harm could not be ruled out with complete confidence. Therefore a precautionary approach was recommended and this was accepted by Government and remains current advice from the Health Protection Agency.
9. The precautionary measures are as follows:
 - a) Emissions from masts should not exceed the International Commission on Non Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines.
 - b) A national database should be set up giving information on base stations (or mobile phone masts) and their emissions.
 - c) An independent audit of all base stations should be established.
 - d) Clear exclusion zones should be placed around all base station antennae, relating to the area directly in front of and at the height of the antennae. This is usually achieved by mounting the antenna on a tall mast or at the top of tall building.
 - e) A substantial research programme should be undertaken by an independent panel to continually review the effects of mobile phone technology on health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO)

10. The World Health Organisation published a fact sheet on the health effect of mobile phone masts in May 2006. Whilst noting public concern about the impact of mobile phones, WHO report that "Considering the very low exposure levels and research results collected to date, there is no scientific evidence that the weak radio frequency signals from base stations and wireless networks cause adverse health effects"

Guidelines to protect exposure from radio waves

11. The ICNIRP is an independent international scientific organisation formally recognised by the World Health Organisation. ICNIRP reviews the science relating

to exposure to electromagnetic fields and produces guidelines for limiting people's exposure. The Stewart Report recommended that the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure be adopted for use in the UK and stated that there is no evidence of adverse health effects from exposure below these guidelines. The guidelines have been adopted across the European Union including the UK.

12. The Control of Electromagnetic Fields at Work Regulations 2016 have recently come into law. The legislation formalises occupational limits of exposure to non-ionizing radiation.

Emission surveys from mobile phone masts

13. The Health Protection Agency's website reports the results of a number of emissions surveys that have been undertaken at over 100 publically accessible locations with large (macrocell) base stations having a typical output of tens of watts. This work found that exposures were small fractions of the ICNIRP guidelines.
14. The highest measured public exposure from all sources of radiofrequency signals combined was 0.2% of the ICNIRP guidelines, whilst typical average exposure levels were 0.002% of the guidelines. The results did not indicate any particular decrease in the exposure as the distance increases from the mast. Similarly, the World Health Organisation report that surveys have shown that exposures from base stations range from 0.002% to 2% of the levels of the international exposure guidelines.

Other background emissions

15. In addition to emissions from mobile phone masts, the public are exposed to a variety of other radio frequency emissions, in particular radio and television signals which because they are a lower frequency are more readily absorbed by human beings. As with mobile phone research but over a longer period, that studies on those working in the television and radio industry have provided no consistent or convincing evidence of a casual relationship between radio frequency exposure and any adverse health effect.
16. It is also worth bearing in mind that the council's moratorium has no influence on non-council owned land or phone masts located on adopted public highway.

Summary

- a) The health protection agency has undertaken surveys which indicate that emissions from mobile phone base stations are a small percentage of ICNIRP limits.
- b) Scientific studies have been unable to identify an adverse health impact from the emissions from mobile phone base stations.
- c) Emissions from phone base stations are amongst a variety of radio frequency emissions, such as radio and television signals and including emissions from mobile phones. The latter held close to one's head are typically 10,000 times higher than from a mobile phone mast.

Future roll-out

17. The above paragraphs relate generally to larger macrocell phone masts which have the greatest power output. However, operators are now also introducing less powerful base stations or microcells to provide infill radio coverage or additional capacity. The antennas for microcells are mounted at street level, typically on the external walls of existing structures, lamp posts and other street furniture. They have lower outputs than macrocells, usually a few watts, i.e. the power output of say a couple of mobile phones. With lower power the level of emissions is reduced.

Public concerns

18. Despite evidence to the contrary many members of the public have concerns about the health effects of mobile phone masts.

Way forward

19. In 2002, the council, acting to protect residents, decided that a precautionary approach should be taken until more was known about the health implications of mobile phone masts. However, scientific studies have been unable to identify an adverse health impact from the emissions from mobile phone base stations.
20. In the absence of such effects it would be appropriate to adopt a more flexible approach to location of mobile phone masts on council owned land and property. Whilst placing a base station on council land or buildings may not always be either practical or desirable, there are circumstances where it could help to reduce visual intrusion. In doing so it may help provide an element of greater control to the council and also assist in a constructive dialogue with operators.
21. In respect to the public sensitivity to such proposals it is recommended that any relaxation be accompanied by comprehensive consultation requirements, member involvement in decision making and other checks to protect both the public's and council's interests. Should cabinet wish to relax the existing policy the following is recommended as a successor policy:

Consultation

22. The council will undertake a 21 day public consultation on proposals for mobile phone masts at new sites on council land and buildings via:
- a) A notice on the council's website; and
 - b) Writing to all residents and businesses living or located within 50 metres of the proposal.

Indemnity clause

23. The applicant must indemnify the council in respect of any claims which may arise in respect of the installation of the apparatus and its subsequent use.

Independent check

24. An independent check is made to confirm the installation conforms to the original specification and that these are repeated following any equipment renewals.

Annual radiation audit

25. The applicant carries out an annual radiation safety check through an independent body to ensure that the equipment functions at the lowest practicable power level and within the range of values found in health protection agency surveys.

Contract

26. Any contract makes provision to terminate the contract if adverse health effects relating to masts are confirmed by future Government research.

Costs

27. The cost of independent checks, radiation audits and reasonable consultation costs to be born by the applicant

Consents

28. Any permission in subject to any consents being obtained as required, including planning consent if relevant.

Decision making

29. Decisions for siting at new locations to be made by the executive head of regeneration and development in consultation with the portfolio holder for resources and income generation and local ward members.

Integrated impact assessment



NORWICH
City Council

The IIA should assess **the impact of the recommendation** being made by the report

Detailed guidance to help with completing the assessment can be found [here](#). Delete this row after completion

Report author to complete

Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	14 November 2012
Head of service:	Head of city development services
Report subject:	Phone masts on council buildings
Date assessed:	25 September 2012
Description:	To allow mobile phone masts to be placed on council land or buildings

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional phone masts would provide modest additional income to the council
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional phone masts would facilitate the roll-out of mobile broadband services
Financial inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific studies have been unable to identify an adverse health impact from the emissions from mobile phone base stations

	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Natural and built environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enabling mobile phone masts to be located on council land and buildings will help to provide additional sites for such facilities helping to reduce visual intrusion that might be created due to a more limited number of sites otherwise being available
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emissions from mobile phone masts must not exceed ICNIRP guidelines. Surveys suggest that public exposure is considerably less than this
Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Impact			
Energy and climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendations from impact assessment				
Positive				
In the absence of any demonstrable adverse health effects and in view of the benefits it would be appropriate to allow mobile phone masts to be placed on council land subject to certain conditions being met.				
Negative				
Neutral				
Issues				