

4.4.41 Further design guidance will be available in emerging Design Guidance for Residential Extensions SPD (anticipated to be published by the Council in draft form in 2014).

Policy DH(c) Telecommunications Development

Planning applications for telecommunications development will be only be considered where:

- i. regard has been given to locating a site which causes minimal visual impact subject to operational needs;
- ii. any proposal is sited, designed, coloured and landscaped so as to minimise visual impact on its setting and local environment;
- iii. the special character and appearance of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, the Borough's Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Historic Landscapes are preserved or enhanced;
- iv. the possibility of sharing facilities, such as site, masts, and erecting antennae on existing buildings or other structures has been fully explored and demonstrated;
- v. technologies to camouflage telecommunications apparatus have been fully explored; and
- vi. any proposal meets International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for public exposure.

4.4.42 Modern telecommunications are an essential and beneficial element in the life of Greenwich's residents and workforce. Telecommunications have the potential to contribute to sustainable development by enabling more people to work and carry out other functions from home, thus reducing the need to travel, traffic levels and pollution. However, the Council, and the Government, are concerned about the impact of telecommunications on the environment and the Council will seek to ensure that the townscape will not suffer an unnecessary proliferation of telecommunications structures and thus, a lowering of environmental quality.

4.4.43 Much minor telecommunications development is covered by permitted development rights and therefore does not require planning permission, although is subject to prior notification procedures. Such procedures allow the local planning authority to consider, within 56 days, the siting and appearance of the proposed development.

4.4.44 The Council realises that there are concerns about the health risks telecommunication masts may pose. The Stewart Report (2000), considered concerns about the health effects from the use of mobile phones, base stations and transmitters. It concluded that "the balance of evidence does not suggest that mobile phone technologies put the health of the general population at risk." However, while finding that the balance of evidence suggested no health risk, the group did recommend tightening planning control over mast erection. The report also states the possibility of harm cannot be ruled out with confidence and that the gaps in knowledge are sufficient to justify a precautionary approach to mobile phone technologies. It recommends compliance with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for public exposure. Emissions from mobile phone base stations should meet ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure. Proposals from telecommunications masts will be required to demonstrate compliance with these guidelines. However, as a result of the Stewart Report, there are no grounds for additional planning controls on telecommunications masts on health grounds.

4.4.45 The benefit that telecommunications developments can bring are recognised and this policy seeks to allow such developments subject to criteria that aim to minimise the visual and environmental impact and to encourage the shared use of facilities.