

# RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE'S *Review of Mitigating the Environmental Effects of Telecommunication Masts and Cabinets in the London Borough of Hillingdon and beyond*

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Keith Burrows
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Planning, Transportation and Recycling
<b>Officer Contact</b>	Natasha Dogra / Nadia Williams, Central Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Residents' & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee's final report on Mitigating the Environmental Effects of Telecommunication Masts and Cabinets in the London Borough of Hillingdon and beyond.

## HEADLINE INFORMATION

<b>Purpose of report</b>	To receive the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee's report providing recommendations which seek to help Hillingdon mitigate the environmental effects of telecommunication masts and cabinets.
<b>Contribution to our plans and strategies</b>	This report contributes to the Council's priorities for a safe borough.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	No direct costs are associated with the recommendations of this report.
<b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>	Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	All

## RECOMMENDATION:

That Cabinet welcome the report from the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee and agree the local and national recommendations to help Hillingdon mitigate the environmental effects of telecommunication masts and cabinets.

## INFORMATION

### **Reasons for recommendations**

The recommendations are aimed at allowing Cabinet to take forward the Policy Overview Committee's recommendations made in the final report.

### **Alternative options considered / risk management**

The Cabinet could decide to reject or amend the Committee's recommendations.

## **Supporting Information**

Although the demand for mobile and wireless products and services is increasing as technology develops and consumer demand increases, Hillingdon residents are increasingly concerned as to the escalating number of planning applications being received for larger masts and ancillary equipment and the effect these are having on the environment and landscape.

The aim of the review was to look into the future growth of mobile telephone masts and ancillary equipment and the effects on the residents and environment of Hillingdon and beyond. It is hoped that the recommendations will propose a better balance of regulation / control of mobile phone masts within local environments with the overwhelming public demand for such services, which will only grow into the future.

## **Recommendations**

The review proposed the following recommendations.

### **i. Future Demand:**

That the London Borough of Hillingdon Planning Service Officers monitor the development of wireless technology and industry updates and recommend to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation & Recycling how the Council's planning policies may need to be adapted;

### **ii. Technical**

That the London Borough of Hillingdon's Highways Department undertake periodic checks to ensure that masts and cabinets are sited where agreed/specified in original application.

That the London Borough of Hillingdon's Planning department works with Utility Operators to ensure that telecommunication and broadband cabinets are more secure;

That the London Borough of Hillingdon Planning Service requests that when Operators are asked to remove redundant masts and cabinet, they report such activity to the Local Authority Planning Department;

That the Head of Planning requests that operators, as part of their annual roll out plans, identify any obsolete equipment and a timescale for its removal;

That Hillingdon Planning department add a condition to mast approvals requiring obsolete equipment to be removed within one month. The Head of Planning has advised a condition wording which would ensure equipment is removed within one calendar month, thus removing the ambiguity: *"All equipment not required for telecommunication purposes shall be removed from the site in its entirety and the site returned to its former state either within one calendar month of the equipment no longer being required or as soon as is reasonably practical, whichever is the sooner."*

### **iii. Planning**

That the Head of Planning requests that all agents submitting applications on behalf of mobile phone operators be required to ensure that all planning proposal coverage maps submitted with proposals tally with the operators most up to date coverage charts;

That Hillingdon's Corporate Property and Construction Service adopt a more flexible approach to the siting of masts and cabinets on Council owned land, with the Corporate Director for Planning, Environment, Education & Community Services arbitrating when a conflict of opinion

is created between the Planning department and the Corporate Property and Construction Service;

That the telecommunications policy in the Development Management Document (DMD) which is being prepared as part of the Local Development Framework reflects the Committee's recommendations;

That the department of Communities and Local Government is asked to provide more guidance to Local Planning Authorities on dealing with telecommunications infrastructure, taking into account the recommendations of this report;

The telecommunications operators submit with their International Commission on non-ionizing radiation protection (ICNIRP) certificates the signal strength and exclusion zone parameters with each planning application;

#### **iv. Regulation**

That Office for Communications (OFCOM) communicate their responsibilities under the Communications Act Section 73(3) to Local Authorities nationwide;

That the London Borough of Hillingdon Planning Department request OFCOM's support in ensuring the sharing of telecommunication equipment;

#### **v. Design**

That the results of the 'Street Art' research exercise using funding from the Hillingdon Champion for the Arts be reported back to the Committee and act as a model for future design of telecommunications cabinets exercises;

That Local Authorities ask operators to prepare a catalogue of designs for masts and cabinets from which Local Authority Planning Department's can choose a design appropriate to an area, particularly conservation and historic areas;

#### **vi. Health**

That the London Borough of Hillingdon use Freedom of Information (FOI) powers to require ICNIRP monitoring reports of a sample of existing masts in Hillingdon (from a limited sample of sites identified from the planning database) and to report back their findings to the RESPOC committee;

That OFCOM assume responsibility to independently verify that telecommunications operators are complying with ICNIRP health standard.

### **EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

#### **What will be the effect of the recommendations?**

The Committee's recommendations will provide a springboard for the Council to help Hillingdon mitigate the environmental effects of telecommunication masts and cabinets.

#### **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

The Committee took evidence from residents, officers and experts as described in the attached report.

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Finance**

There are no direct financial implications from the outcome of this report. However, it is possible that income streams from planning applications could be affected in the future due to the more stringent rules and procedures.

### **Legal Implications**

The power to implement action plans such as those suggested in this report can be found in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which includes a 'general power of competence'. It gives local authorities the legal capacity to do anything that an individual can do that is not specifically prohibited. These powers are not tied to the benefit of the local authority's area or its residents, and enable innovative responses to local needs.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

As set out in the Review