

## **PLANS BOARD**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Tuesday, 10 January 2012 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

**PRESENT:** Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), A J Eade (as substitute for Councillor N A Dugmore), K R Guy, A S Jhawar, R T Kiernan, A A Meredith, L A Murray (as substitute for Councillor C R Turley), S A W Reynolds, and B J Thompson (as substitute for Councillor J Loveridge).

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor I T W Fletcher

#### **PB-068      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 14 December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **PB-069      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors N A Dugmore, J Loveridge and C R Turley

#### **PB-070      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **PB-071      DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **PB-072      SITE VISITS**

None.

#### **PB-073      PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION**

(a)      TWC/2011/1026 Highway Verge, Castle Farm Way, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire

Members had received a report setting out the details of this application which sought determination as to whether prior approval was required in relation to the siting and appearance of a 12.5 metre high slim line telecommunications monopole along Castle Farm Way in Priorslee. The application was submitted to seek to find an alternative location following the refusal of a 14.8 metre high monopole mast on Priorslee Avenue (planning application reference TWC/2010/0745) earlier in 2011. The applicants had submitted additional information in support of their application which was detailed in the report.

Councillor I T W Fletcher had requested that the determination should be considered by the Plans Board. He had submitted objections to the proposal which were outlined in the report together with details of the Parish Council's objections, 67 letters of objection and a 174 signature petition which had also been received. The update report, tabled at the meeting detailed a further 24 objections received.

Councillor B Richards representing St Georges and Priorslee Parish Council spoke to oppose the application on the grounds that the location would be a safety hazard to motorists and would have an adverse visual impact. The Parish Council also considered that

the mast was in too close proximity to Redhill Primary School and had concerns regarding the potential impact upon the health of local residents. Councillor Richards also expressed concern about the limited consultation afforded to the Parish Council.

Councillor I T W Fletcher, Ward Member, spoke against the application and highlighted disagreements regarding the grid reference used and the distance of the proposed mast from the school grounds, nearby residences and footpath. He had submitted a photograph to illustrate the short distance to the closest residence. He further expressed the concerns of local residents that the proposed mast would be a visually intrusive structure which would impact upon residents amenity. Councillor Fletcher also considered that the application site was in contravention of PPG8 guidelines due to its proximity to nearby school grounds. Whilst Councillor Fletcher accepted that the Plans Board was restricted by government guidance relating to health concerns, he drew attention to Dutch studies which concluded that possible risks to health posed by radio frequencies could not be ruled out.

Mr M Hood, a local resident, spoke against the application, reiterating the comments of the Parish Council and Borough Ward Councillor. In addition, he lamented the potential loss of amenity to local residents and questioned whether there was a need for the mast in this area.

In response, the Planning Officer explained the purpose of the grid reference as a behind the scenes tool only, explained the consultation process, advised that the authority's own measurements did not show that the school buildings fell within the requisite 200m distance from the mast, and indicated an understanding that the need for the mast was presented by changing mobile technology and usage.

Whilst there was much public concern concerning the possible adverse health impacts of telecommunication development, Members were advised that consideration of this application should follow the advice given in PPG8, paragraph 98, which detailed the Government's view that the planning system was not the place for determining health safeguards. Subsequent to this, the main report confirmed that the requisite ICNIRP certificate had been submitted with the application which confirmed that the site and the proposed emissions would comply with the appropriate guidelines.

Members were also reminded that the decision whether to give or refuse prior approval had to be based on the siting and appearance of the installation. The Head of Housing & Planning advised Members that they needed to decide if the proposed site was suitable and whether the design was appropriate. He reminded Members that if they did not make a decision at the meeting, the application would automatically succeed. However, if they decided to reject the application, the applicant had the choice of either going to appeal again or submitting an alternative proposal.

Members expressed concerns that the Plans Board was unable to consider the results of other studies regarding the health implications of telecommunications developments in their decision making and agreed that the Council should write to the relevant Government minister appealing for local authorities to be released from such restraints.

During their deliberations, Members considered the visual intrusion presented by the proposals in the context of the street furniture already in place and the surrounding trees, the disputed distances provided particularly regarding the proximity of Redhill Primary School, the possibility of proliferation and other masts in the local area and the level of consultation afforded by the applicant over the festive period. Members also raised the possibility of appeal and associated costs but were advised that such considerations should not form part of their deliberation.

Following the debate on the application, a majority of Members were minded to support the officer recommendation that prior approval be given.

**DETERMINATION:**

**Prior approval is given** for the proposed 12.5 metre high slim line telecommunications installation and its permitted development rights are hereby confirmed.

The meeting ended at 6.48pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....