

# Scrutiny Review - Mobile Phone Masts

**February 2006**

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page No.</b>
Executive Summary and Recommendations	3
Introduction	6

National Policy and Guidance	7
Planning Processes and Demand	9
Planning Considerations	10
Planning Consultation	11
Siting and Appearance	16
Monitoring	18

## Appendices

A – List of Base Stations on a Ward by Ward basis

B – Documentary Evidence

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This Executive Summary outlines the key findings and recommendations contained in the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Review of Mobile phone masts.
- 1.2 On 22 November 2004 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on mobile phone base stations. Following this the Committee recommended that current planning consultation procedures should be reviewed and subsequently it was decided to make it the subject of a scrutiny review.

- 1.3 When commissioning the review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was adamant that the Terms of Reference would not cover health issues, in relation to mobile phone base stations. In taking this decision it recognised that it would disappoint a group of local residents, who were raised health concerns.
- 1.4 The reasoning behind this decision was clear,
- The Government accepts that it has a responsibility for public health and it does not regard the planning process as the place for determining health safeguards. If a proposed base station meets the national guidelines for public exposure, it should not be necessary for a local planning authority to consider health aspects. Nor, in the Government's view, should local authorities implement their own precautionary policies by, for instance, imposing a ban on new telecommunications developments or insisting on minimum distances between base stations, or implementing exclusion or near exclusion areas.
  - Overview and Scrutiny does not have the resource or expertise, to be in a position to adjudicate on the complex legal and medical issues arising. It would be foolish to attempt to pre-empt the further research commissioned by the Government or any further guidance.
  - A relatively small number of people have expressed their concerns on this issue, compared to the number of mobile phones in common and everyday use in Haringey, Under current government legislation the Council does not have the powers to necessary to address these concerns and to attempt to do so could provoke a far greater public outcry, from mobile phone providers and users.
- 1.5 It was thought that the most beneficial way to use Scrutiny resources, was to focus on the planning process and in particular consultation, in order try and ensure that the council could exert a greater influence over the location of Mobile Phone Base Stations, away from sensitive sites.
- 1.6 The methodology used by the Scrutiny Review Panel was to:-
- Meet to receive a presentation from the Environment Service on the current planning and consultation process
  - Meet to receive evidence from local residents and interest groups on the planning and consultation process
  - Meet with the Mobile Operators Association and some operators on consultation processes.

- Look at other council's consultation processes
- To consider other relevant documentary evidence as listed at Appendix B

Review meetings were well advertised in advance and there was an article in the Journal Group of local newspapers. All local tenant associations and residents groups received invitations to participate.

## **Recommendations**

### **To Government**

- 7. That the Government be urged to reconsider the recommendations contained in the Stewart Report and adopt in particular the recommendation that full planning permission be required in respect of all new applications for base stations.**

### **To Operators**

- 1. That operators be requested to supply evidence to Haringey Council in terms of cell coverage, network demand etc sufficient to justify the need for any additional base stations in the borough.**
- 9. That operators be requested to produce maps (TELSTRA plot) showing the area overlaid with the beam and information on the direction and strength of the beam for all mobile phone base stations (present and planned) and such information to be publicly available.**
- 10. That operators be encouraged to develop better visual screening of antennae.**

### **To both the Operators and the Executive**

- 2. That Annual Roll out meetings be held between the operators and the Local Planning Authority at the earliest possible opportunity after the publication of the roll out plans (refer to Para 6.5 for benefits including site sharing)**
- 3. That following the roll out meeting an Annual meeting be held with interested groups and residents organisations to enable early notification and consultation on potential site locations.**

### **To the Executive**

5. That site notices be put up advertising all applications for Mobile phone base stations.
6. That a consultation radius of 100m be introduced for all Mobile phone base station applications.
8. That the Planning Service responses with respect to applications considered under prior approval be delivered to the operators by fax and by post by the 56<sup>th</sup> day.
11. That the Director of Environment's views be sought on the need for an "in principle" decision as to whether to approve of 'lamp-post swap' types of installation.
12. That the Mast Register be maintained and made available on the Council's Website, together with the Certificates of compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines.
13. That the Radiocommunications Agency be requested to monitor emissions in the borough in sensitive areas where there are mobile phone base stations in close proximity to each other or/and in areas where local residents have expressed significant concerns regarding emissions in a sensitive area e.g. a local school.
14. That the District Valuer be requested to ensure that all existing mobile phone base stations and future installations are assessed for Business Rates.
15. That the appropriate income collection sections in the Finance Service, ensure that all rent and rates, in relation to mobile phone base stations, are collected.
4. That the Council notes the operators' commitment to fully comply with their ten commitments launched in 2001 to supplement Government planning regulations.
2. INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

- 2.1 It is generally acknowledged that a modern telecommunications system is essential, both economically and socially. Today there are nearly 60 million mobile phone subscribers compared to 9 million seven years ago. This increase in customer demand has necessitated the upgrading of the technology, with operators having to continually expand their networks to accommodate services and improve quality.

- 2.2 The government has encouraged the development of mobile phone technology and has licensed five competing mobile phone networks (Orange, Vodafone, 02, T-mobile, and Hutchison (also known as '3')), In order for a mobile phone to transmit/receive data it must link to a fixed installation called a base station, of the same network. Mobile phone base stations are often called masts. Technically there is a difference between the two terms, although they are used interchangeably. A mast is freestanding and supports antennas at a suitable height. The mast itself is inert- it plays no part in radio wave propagation: this is the purpose of the antennas. A mobile phone base station is characterised by a cabinet connected to antennas which are mounted on a mast. These cabinets contain both transmitters and receivers. When a call is made, the radio wave is transmitted from the mobile phone handset to the nearest mobile phone base station. Once a signal reaches the base station, it is then transmitted on to the main network where it is transferred to the network of the person receiving the call.
- 2.3 Each operator has established national base station networks to achieve wide coverage. As a condition of their operating license operators are obliged to allow most subscribers access to the network via a base station, most of the time. The number of base stations required in a given locality, is determined by the demand on the network. The call capacity of each base station varies, but the larger free standing stations can support up to 120 calls simultaneously. It follows that there is likely to be a need for more base stations in more densely populated areas. Many people in Haringey have mobile phones and they are essential to modern business organisations.
- 2.4 In order to regulate the location of base stations the Government decided they would be subject to Planning Regulations. The Government drew up new planning policy directly relating to mobile phone base stations and issued formal guidance to all planning authorities. The guidance is contained in an advisory document called Planning Policy Guidance (PPG8). Some local authorities have chosen to issue their own supplementary local planning policy. In some cases this amounts to no more than a readily understandable interpretation of the guidance given to Planning Authorities in PPG8. In other cases the local authority has chosen to adopt local policy that implements higher standards than those in the Government guidelines. This does, however leave these authorities more vulnerable to challenge by appeal, where their policy deviates from the Government guidance.

### **3. NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

#### **Stewart Report**

- 3.1 Since it was suggested that radio wave emissions could affect health, the Government established an independent expert group, under the Chairmanship of Sir William Stewart to look at this issue. The Group examined the possible effects of mobile phones, base stations and transmitters. The Stewart Report was published in May 2000 and it concluded that, for the general population, the levels of exposure arising from phones held near to the head were substantially greater than whole-body exposures arising from base stations. It stated that the balance of evidence indicated that there was no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations or those regularly exposed to emissions from base stations, on the basis that exposures were a small fraction of national guidelines. However, it was not possible to say that exposure to radio frequency radiation, even at levels below national guidelines, was totally without potential adverse health effects and gaps in knowledge were sufficient to justify a precautionary approach.
- 3.2 One of the reactions by the Government to the Stewart Report was to issue the guidance (PPG8) in respect of mobile phone base stations. While the guidance included many of the recommendations of the Stewart Report, not all of its recommendations were included in the Government guidance. The Government has commissioned further substantial research, overseen by a demonstrably independent panel, jointly financed by the mobile phone companies and Government. It is currently carrying out research into the potential effects of mobile phone technology on health and it is expected to report later in 2006.

### **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG8)**

- 3.3 Government policy is to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems, whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. Local Authorities are, therefore, encouraged to make suitable property available for locating base stations. **The Government accepts that it has a responsibility for public health and it does not regard the planning process as the place for determining health safeguards. If a proposed base station meets the national guidelines for public exposure, it should not be necessary for a local planning authority to consider health aspects. Nor, in the Government's view, should local authorities implement their own precautionary policies by, for instance, imposing a ban on new telecommunications developments or insisting on minimum distances between base stations, or implementing exclusion or near exclusion zones.**
- 3.4 PPG8 emphasises the need for pre-application discussions between applicants, planners and other groups, e.g. residents, on specific development proposals. Mast and site sharing is encouraged, and the guidance recognises the importance of keeping the numbers of base stations, and sites for such installations, to the minimum consistent

with the effective operation of the network. It also sets out guidelines for design and environmental considerations.

- 3.5 The Government produced a “Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development” (2002), which was drawn up and agreed by representatives of central government, local government, and the mobile phone industry. It encourages greater consultation between mobile phone operators, local authorities, and local communities and seeks to provide a better understanding of the mobile phone industry. It provides best practice guidance on the siting and design of telecommunications development.

### **Commissioning the Scrutiny Review**

- 3.6 When commissioning the review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was adamant that the terms of reference would not cover health issues in relation to mobile phone base stations. In taking this decision it recognised that it would disappoint a group of local residents, who were pressing this issue. Therefore in respect of health issues, Government advice should be accepted and continue to be followed.
- 3.7 As part of its investigation, the Scrutiny Panel did recognise the concerns of some local residents in respect of health issues. It therefore fully endorsed the motion passed by the Council at its meeting on 14 November 2005 which stated, “ Councils like Haringey should be able to take health concerns into account when considering grounds for rejecting mobile phone mast applications.” Further the Council wrote to the Government, pressing for health issues to be deemed relevant as part of the planning process. This would require a change in the guidance.

### **Terms of Reference**

- 3.8 Against this background the terms of reference for the review were agreed and specifically excluded consideration of health issues. The terms of reference were: “To review existing consultation processes for mobile phone base stations in Haringey to ensure they complied with the Government’s planning policy guidance”

### **Membership of Panel**

- 3.9 Initially the membership of the Panel was Councillors Bull (Chair), Basu and Hoban. Subsequently Councillor Bull advised that his employing company had been taken over by a company with business interests in the mobile phone market, although they were not one of the five operating companies. Upon receiving legal advice he stepped down as Chair. Councillor Bevan was subsequently appointed as Chair for the remainder of the review.

## 4. PLANNING PROCESSES AND DEMAND

4.1 Planning permission is required for any kind of development and all base stations require some form of planning permission. Telecommunications development normally falls into one of three categories. These are:-

- Permitted development
- Prior Approval
- Full Planning Permission

4.2 Permitted Development is for minor works including alterations to existing masts and the erection of additional antennae, which are permitted development. They do not require planning permission or “prior approval” although operators are required to notify the Council of their intention to carry out works in some instances. Where the exercise of permitted development right is determined to have a serious impact on amenity, a Planning Authority may withdraw this right by serving a direction under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO). Such a direction requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

4.3 Prior Approval is for the majority of ground based masts below 15m and smaller rooftop installations are permitted development but require prior approval from the Council, for details of siting and appearance. In such cases the Council must issue a formal decision within 56 days or the application is deemed to be approved. Within the prior approval application operators must demonstrate that they have considered alternative sites and that the site selection is the only or most reasonable site available. If other more suitable sites can be found then residents or other objectors may have grounds for appeal. The consultation process for an application under prior approval and full planning permission is the same, in that there is pre application consultation, carried out under the traffic light model (see below) and formal consultation. Site notices are posted in respect of applications in Conservation Areas.

4.4 Full Planning permission is for ground based masts over 15m and larger rooftop installations and for all installations in Conservation Areas. Again there must be pre-application consultation by the operator and formal consultation by the Council.

### **Demand for mobile phone base stations in Haringey**

4.5 The operators provide the Planning Service details of their network roll-out every October, for the year ahead. Significant investment is required to acquire and build a mobile phone base station site and operators will only undertake such investment if there is a real requirement for the service. The requirement may be to provide

coverage, provide capacity, improve the quality of the service, or to replace or upgrade an existing site.

- 4.6 At present there are 105 base stations in the Borough (full list set out in Appendix A) 29 of these are on Council owned buildings or streets. The current “roll-out” plans of the operators suggest the intention to provide another 30 to 45 base stations. It is not known over what timescale, but presumably, in the light of the time taken to secure a site (i.e. often after several refusals/withdrawals, and then there are the often-protracted negotiations with the landowner), it is for the next 1 to 2 years. The Panel considered that operators should supply direct evidence of the need for a mast in a particular area.

### **Decisions on Applications**

- 4.7 In Haringey the rate of refusal of planning applications, has increased in recent years; in 2004, 5 out of 11 applications were approved; in 2005, 4 out of 19 have been granted (with 2 still pending). In 2002 and 2003, 11 out of 16 and 8 out of 9 were approved respectively. Very few of the refusals have been taken to appeal, although there are two outstanding, at the time of writing. The Council has just lost one appeal for a 15m mast at Great Cambridge Road N17.

#### **Recommendation One**

**That operators be requested to supply evidence to Haringey Council in terms of cell coverage, network demand etc. sufficient to justify the need for any additional base stations in the borough.**

## **5. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 The Planning Application process is a sub judicial process. When considering a proposed development the Council must have regard to any public concerns raised and in addition take into account the different antenna types, siting needs and other characteristics appertaining to each telecoms system. Planning applications can only be refused on sound planning grounds.

### **Perceived Health Concerns**

- 5.2 The Panel heard from six representatives (from Muswell Hill Against the Masts, the Highgate Society and Open Minds), who were concerned about possible health risks from base stations. They wished the Council to take perceived health risk into account as a material planning consideration, when deciding prior approval and full planning applications. They wished the Council to draw up supplementary planning policy, using the precautionary principle to create near exclusion zones around schools nurseries, hospitals

nursing homes and homes. Additionally they wished for there to be wider consultation and maps (TELSTRA plot) of the area overlaid with the beam and information on the direction and strength of the beam and for site notices for every prior approval.

- 5.3 It is clear that considerations relating to alleged health effects are material planning considerations. This is case law. Although the subject of much discussion, there is at present no generally accepted evidence of adverse health effects from telecommunications installations. The balance to date indicates that there is no general risk to health, though it was recognised that fears expressed by some local residents whom feel that they have suffered a “loss of amenity” following the installation of a base station on a sensitive site may have some validity.
- 5.4 Operators have responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation; however the Government has made it clear that it is not for the local planning authority to replicate controls, through the planning process. Whilst perceived health considerations and public concern can be material considerations in determining planning applications, it is the Governments firm view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards.

### **Supplementary Planning Policy**

- 5.5 Some local authorities have agreed supplementary planning guidance for base stations. Those that have agreed local planning guidance, tend to duplicate the Governments Guidance. It was the Panel’s view that the development of supplementary guidance was unnecessary and it would not alleviate residents concerns, whilst adding to bureaucracy. None of our immediately neighbouring boroughs have introduced supplementary planning policy.

## **6. PLANNING CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Demand for mobile phone network coverage is naturally greater in areas of high population, so the need for base stations in these areas will also be high. They are also likely to be in sensitive areas.
- 6.2 The Panel accepted that demand was unlikely to drop, although the rate of growth may slow. Using its current powers, the Council is unable to halt the development of base stations in sensitive areas. The Panel therefore considered that they could add most value, if they considered and made recommendations that would influence the location of base stations and ensure that the public consultation process was adequate. The aim being to ensure that the least sensitive locations were adopted by operators and that local residents were fully informed and consulted. The Panel wished to focus on the consultation process to ensure it was meaningful, as this might allay some of the concerns raised.

The Panel considered that consultation could take the following forms:

### **Annual Roll out meetings**

- 6.3 Operators and local planning authorities are encouraged to carry out annual discussions about rollout plans for the area. These meetings provide an opportunity for operators to share information about their plans for the forthcoming year and for local authorities to provide feedback and general advice.
- 6.4 There was support from both the operators and some residents for a public meeting to be held shortly after any annual discussions between the operators and the Council. None of the other neighbouring Borough's that were contacted held public consultation meetings specifically to consider applications for mobile phone base stations. The Panel nevertheless thought it was a good idea.
- 6.5 The benefits from such meetings would be:
- For operators to provide a strategic overview of their future needs
  - To ensure that residents have early warning of future need and potential site locations to be considered.
  - To give operators an opportunity to discuss the sharing of sites and/or base station masts and for the Council to be provided with information, about where different operators' site search areas overlap.
  - To allow consideration of new sites identified, to determine if they were suitable and that if they were, where risks would be minimised. i.e. being pro-active. The Council and local residents could provide guidance to operators on preferred locations.
- 6.6 The results of the annual roll out meeting could be reported to the Planning Applications Sub -Committee so as to ensure maximum public awareness and early knowledge, in advance of receiving a planning application.

### **Recommendation Two**

**That Annual Roll out meetings be held between the operators and the Local Planning Authority, at the earliest possible opportunity after the publication of the roll out plans.**

### **Recommendation Three**

**That following the roll out meeting, an Annual meeting be held with interested groups and residents organisations to enable early notification and consultation on potential site locations.**

### **Pre Application Consultation**

- 6.7 Pre –application discussion is important in helping to identify the most appropriate solution for any development. It gives the Council the opportunity to comment on the siting and design of the proposal. Additionally operators have a commitment to carry out consultation with local residents, in accordance with the rating determined under the Traffic Light model. This model provides the method by which operators judge how much and what type of public consultation is needed, before they formally apply to build a new site. The colours of green, amber and red assess whether additional community consultation will be needed and if so to what degree. The operators advised that consultation can be anything from letters, public notices or detailed briefings.
- 6.8 The six local residents who attended the Panel’s review meetings, suggested that their experience of consultation that was carried out, was meaningless, in that the process was one way. They felt that they were presented with a “fait accompli”. The Panel heard that one operator had commenced preparatory works in advance of planning approval. However no planning approval was sought or obtained here, as the prospective installers of the mast had already been advised by the Planning Service that a proposal would not be sympathetically viewed. Thus any works carried out by contractors on the highway was at operators own risk and proved to be abortive. This would be taken up with the operators and with Highways Section to ensure that it did not reoccur. The Panel considered that the creation of an annual meeting involving residents would improve the present situation.

### **The Ten Commitments**

- 6.9 The Mobile Operators Association commented on the importance of consultation. They referred to the 10 commitments that they had produced in 2001, the aims of which were to ensure transparency in building mobile phone networks, to provide more information to the public and local planners and to boost the community's role in the siting of mobile phone base stations. All operators stated that they were committed to improving consultation with local communities. The ten pledges of best practice are as follows:-
- Improved consultation with communities
  - Detailed consultation with planners
  - Site sharing

- Workshops for Council's
- Database of base station sites
- Compliance with ICNIRP public exposure levels guidance
- ICNIRP certification
- Prompt response to Enquiries
- Support research into health and mobile phones
- Standard documentation for planning submissions

Note : ICNIRP is the International Commission on Non- Ionising Radiation Protection, a body which provides emission safety guidelines for electro –magnetic fields.

#### **Recommendation Four**

**That the Council notes the operators' commitment to fully comply with their ten commitments launched in 2001 to supplement Government planning regulations.**

#### **Formal Consultation**

- 6.10 When the formal planning application is submitted to the Planning Service, the Operators enclose copies of their consultation letters and a list of all those they have consulted, together with any response and an analysis responses. The Planning Service indicated that the operators did not get much response from those they consult.
- 6.11 Consultation is also undertaken by the Planning Service. Once a formal application is submitted, the Planning Department notify residents in the vicinity of the proposals. Typically this will run to between 40 and 60 addresses, more where there are blocks of flats involved, less where site is 'open'.
- 6.12 Where local residents were organised, the response could be substantially greater than the number of consultees, particularly if the base station was near a school and parents were petitioned.
- 6.13 The Panel was of the view that the current consultation process in Haringey, compared favourably with other authorities. However in order to draw wider attention to applications to install mobile phone base stations, site notices should be put up for all applications. Site Notices are currently only put up where the proposal is in Conservation Area. It was considered that a radius of 100m be introduced for consultation purposes on all mobile phone base station applications, to ensure a wider consultation area. These proposals would go some way to improving the current consultation process and goes further than most of our neighbouring Boroughs.
- 6.14 The Panel heard from residents attending the review meetings, that the siting of base stations in residential areas near to sensitive sites caused them concern and distress. The concern related, in part, to

the fact that base stations up to 15m could be installed in residential areas without full planning permission. The Panel considered that all new base stations should be subject to formal and full planning permission as recommended by the Stewart Report. This would go some way to allay resident's fears of base stations being erected in default under the 56 day rule. It may also help to alter the public feeling that the prior approval system unduly favored the operators over public interest. The Panel recognised that a change in Government policy would be required in order to achieve this. The Panel wished the Executive to urge the Government to make this change. In the meantime the Planning Department would continue to respond in a timely way, by post and fax, to applications considered under prior approval, by the 56<sup>th</sup> day deadline.

**Recommendation Five**

**That site notices be put up advertising all applications for Mobile Phone Base Stations.**

**Recommendation Six**

**That a consultation radius of 100m be introduced for all Mobile Phone Base Station applications.**

**Recommendation Seven**

**That the Government be urged to reconsider the recommendations contained in the Stewart Report and adopt in particular the recommendation that full planning permission be required for all new applications for base stations.**

**Recommendation Eight**

**That the Planning Service responses with respect to applications considered under prior approval be delivered to the operators' by fax and by post by the 56<sup>th</sup> day.**

### **Consultation with schools and colleges**

- 6.15 The Panel's attention was drawn to Local Education Authority Guidance, which recommended that the beam of greatest intensity should not be permitted to fall on school sites/grounds without permission from the school and parents. This supports the view of the Stewart report.
- 6.16 However the Government in PPG8 did not go this far. It advised that where a base station is to be installed on or near a school or college, it is important that operators discuss the proposed development with the education establishment, before submitting an application and that the local planning authority should also consult the education establishment. It was suggested that operators did not always comply with this and the Council was urged to adopt the recommendations contained in the Stewart Report.

- 6.17 Some residents alleged that operators had not always supplied schools with details of where the beam of greatest density falls. The Panel considered that such information should be available at the annual roll out meeting. The operators did not indicate any objections to this information being provided at that stage.

**Recommendation Nine**

**That operators produce maps (TELSTRA plot) showing the area overlaid with the beam and information on the direction and strength of the beam for all mobile phone base stations (present and planned) and such information to be publicly available.**

**7. SITING AND APPEARANCE**

**Siting of Mobile phone base stations**

- 7.1 The Panel heard from the residents who attended, that they considered that the siting of a MPBS near or on schools or nurseries was an issue for them. They felt that in order to comply with the precautionary approach, the Authority should draw up a supplementary planning policy, which would in effect create near exclusion zones around sensitive sites such as schools, nurseries, hospitals.
- 7.2 Any action taken leading to an exclusion or near exclusion zone would have consequences for residents and businesses in the area particularly where there was a concentration of education establishments. Such action would be contrary to government guidance. Also if suitable Council owned sites were not available for Base Stations, operators would switch to private property and the Council would then have less control over the location chosen. It would also make it more difficult to agree and implement a overarching strategy on the siting of base stations with the operators. What is more a policy of removing existing base stations from council owned land property would be almost impossible to implement, as the sites are let on long licenses and subject to the terms of the Landlord and Tenant Act, which gives rights for renewal.
- 7.3 However the Panel were of the view that the Annual Rollout meetings with operators and the subsequent meeting with local residents would enable all parties to discuss at the earliest opportunity possible site selection and enable the least sensitive locations to be chosen.
- 7.4 The Council recently wrote to its two MP's requesting that they lobby Ministers for a moratorium on masts near schools, hospitals and residential properties. It requested that the two MP's support any bills which would mean safer siting of base stations, including giving

Councils' clear authority to reject mast applications on local public health grounds.

### **Visual and Environmental Amenity**

- 7.5 PPG8 emphasis the importance of design and appearance. Local Planning Authorities need to consider whether the mast blends into the surrounding landscape, whether the mast affects the skyline or horizon and whether other more suitable designs are available.
- 7.6 In Haringey visual and environmental amenity is commonly the grounds for refusal of planning permission. However it can lead to operators reapplying with a revised scheme, which is visually improved. It is difficult in these circumstances for the Council to again refuse the application. To be considered, objections must relate to planning matters. The sheer numbers of objectors, whilst giving an indication of local feeling, cannot be the sole reason for rejecting an application. The Planning Department did try to explain the factors that could be taken into account as a material consideration in their consultation letter. The Council had refused the majority of large free-standing mast proposals. It was suggested that the views of Streetscene, be sought on designs to ensure that they blend in well with the environment. e.g. disguised as a lamp-post.

#### **Recommendation Ten**

**That the operators be encouraged to develop better visual screening of antennae.**

#### **Recommendation Eleven**

**That the Director of Environment's views be sought the need for an "in principle" decision, as to whether to approve of 'lamp-post swap' types of installation.**

### **Mast Register**

- 7.7 The Panel were pleased to hear, that arising from the review, a draft mast register has already been produced.
- 7.8 The next stage for the Mast Register, will be adding those sites where there have been refusals of consent or applications withdrawn; this will be gleaned from records of applications submitted.

#### **Recommendation Twelve**

**That the Mast Register be maintained and made available on the Council's Website, together with copies of the Certificates of compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines.**

### **Operators sharing facilities**

- 7.9 Site sharing is when two or more operators agree to put their base station antennas on the same structure. This is often referred to as “co-location” as two or more base stations are closely placed on the same site. Mast sharing is when two or more operators put their base station antennas on the same ground based mast or tower.
- 7.10 Under Government guidance operators are encouraged to explore the possibility of using an existing mast or structure before seeking to put up a new one. If they cannot share they must demonstrate why.
- 7.11 Whilst site and mast sharing will remain a priority for operators, it can also have adverse environmental impacts. There will be more than one set of telecommunications equipment and antennae on a mast, often making the structure taller, more robust and therefore more visually intrusive. In other cases site and mast sharing may not be possible because the existing site is not in the best place for the oncoming sharer’s coverage needs.

### **TETRA (Terrestrial Trunk Radio System) Masts**

- 7.12 TETRA is an advanced digital technology standard, promoted by Europe. They are licensed to MMO2 a subsidiary of O2. They are used by the emergency services. TETRA base stations operate in a similar way to mobile phone base stations, in that they can be configured in cellular patterns and operate with similar powers and calling patterns. Three TETRA sites exist in Haringey at Highgate Police station Archway Road, at Clarendon Road N8, and at West Road N17 on an industrial estate. Normal planning regulations apply for TETRA base stations.

## **8. Monitoring**

- 8.1 All applications for planning permission or prior approval should be accompanied by a signed declaration that confirms that equipment and installation were in full compliance with the requirements of the radio frequency public exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non- Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). The emission from all mobile phone operators’ equipment on the site is taken into account when determining compliance.
- 8.2 The Mobile Operators Association advised that in 2002 and 2004 the industry commissioned two reviews of operators’ adherence to the 10 commitments. Also last year the Government commissioned a review of it’s Code of best Practice. The findings of this review are expected shortly.
- 8.3 The Government has set up a National database of all stations and their emissions run by (OFCOM). Additionally they have implemented a national emission measurement programme, carried out by the

Radiocommunication Agency (RA). Its objective is to conduct a sample audit of base stations sited in different environments, to ensure that emissions from base stations do not exceed guidelines. Priority is given to audit of schools and other sensitive sites such as hospitals, residential and commercial areas. It was suggested that base stations located in sensitive areas in Haringey be checked. However it would not be cost effective to undertake this monitoring ourselves, therefore the Panel wish to invite the RA to do some monitoring in Haringey.

**Recommendation Thirteen**

**That the Radiocommunication Agency be requested to monitor emissions in the borough in sensitive areas where there are mobile phone base stations in close proximity to each other and/or where local residents have expressed significant concerns regarding emissions in a sensitive area e.g. a local school.**

**Rent and Rates**

- 8.4 S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the best consideration to be achieved on any disposal of land or an interest in land (other than a short tenancy) unless the consent of the Secretary of State is obtained. That principle is applied to all base stations and no abatement from market rent is applied to Haringey. A copy of the draft Mast register has been sent to the Valuation Office to ensure that all masts have been assessed for business rates.

**Recommendation Fourteen**

**That the District Valuer be requested to ensure that all existing mobile phone base stations and future installations are assessed for Business Rates.**

**Recommendation Fifteen**

**That the appropriate income collection sections in the Finance Service, ensure that all rent and rates in relation to mobile phone base stations are collected.**