Cornerstone Community Information Sheet

Planning for a better network

We sometimes need to upgrade existing sites or develop new sites to maintain and improve network quality. This factsheets explains how we do this within the town and country planning system.

Base stations use radio signals to connect mobile devices and phones to the network, enabling people to send and receive calls, texts, emails, pictures, web, TV and downloads. Without base stations mobiles and devices will not work.

To keep up with growing demand from mobile phone users we need to upgrade existing base stations or build new base stations. An upgrade can be done in a number of ways, often by redeveloping the site to enable an increase in the number of technologies, or increasing the number or height of the antennas.

However, even after these upgrades, in some busy areas the demand for services can still exceed the capability of the local base stations. There are also some parts of the country where we do not have adequate coverage. In these situations we need to look into developing a new base station. This would improve the network coverage, resulting in improved network experiences for local customers.

There are three types of planning permission for mobile phone base stations. The type required by Cornerstone depends on the size of the proposed base station or upgrade as well as where in the UK the development is planned. In England, Wales and Scotland Cornerstone can apply for full planning permission, for prior approval through the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) or send a notification to the local planning authority. In Northern Ireland Cornerstone can apply for full planning permission or send a notification only.

When full planning permission is required a planning application will be submitted by Cornerstone, this will be published on the local planning authority's website. Cornerstone and the local planning authority will consult with the local community. The level of consultation Cornerstone engage in is dependent on several factors including the history of telecommunications development locally. Consultation is the process by which Cornerstone and the local planning authority seek advice, information and opinions about the proposed development. Cornerstone generally undertakes consultation before submission of any application whilst the local planning authority consults once the application is submitted.

Development within the GPDO category must follow the prior approval procedure. The Council is given the opportunity to say whether it wishes to approve details of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation. These are the only factors that can be considered under an application for prior approval. Cornerstone and the local planning authority will consult with the local community in the same way as with full planning permission.

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Registered in England & Wales No. 08087551.
VAT No. GB142 8555 06

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Written notifications are for proposals which do not need planning permission or prior approval from the local planning authority. Cornerstone will notify the local planning authority in writing of the intention to install telecommunications apparatus. The development however, is permitted in advance by law. Cornerstone does not need to produce an application for this type of development. Consultation, both by Cornerstone and the local planning authority, is generally limited due to the minor nature of these works.

For further information please contact:

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