

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADBAND

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| SOC154 | <p><u>Broadband</u> New development (residential, employment and commercial) will be expected to contribute towards the provision of infrastructure suitable to enable the delivery of high speed broadband services across the South Worcestershire area. As a minimum, suitable ducting should be provided to the public highway that can accept fibre optic cabling. Other forms of infrastructure, such as facilities supporting mobile broadband and Wi-Fi, should be included where possible and viable. Major infrastructure development must also provide ducting that is available for strategic fibre deployment.</p> <p><u>Telecommunications</u> When considering notifications, planning applications and prior approval applications, regard will be had to the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operational needs of telecommunications operators • any technical constraints on location of telecommunications apparatus • the potential for sharing sites • the impact of development on its surroundings • the sensitivity of the environment • the design and external appearance of telecommunications apparatus • proposed provision of landscaping • the ICNIRP Guidelines for safe emissions can be met • any mast is at a distance of at least twice its height from the nearest residential properties <p>Development in or adjacent to sensitive locations (residential areas, education and health institutions, all heritage assets and their settings, features characteristic of the South Worcestershire landscape, sites of ecological and geological importance, open space and the Green Belt) will be permitted only if there is no other technically suitable location that meets operational requirements and causes less environmental harm. Telecommunications equipment that has become obsolete or that is no longer in use</p> |

To ensure that the SWDP demonstrates that it has been positively prepared, is justified and in accordance with national policy it needs to be amended.

- The reasons for introducing this new policy all flow from the explanation of the new Infrastructure Policy.
- The policy gives positive expression to a key element of infrastructure provision which will be important to the development of the South Worcestershire area.
- The new policy accords with national policy and in particular paragraphs 42 & 44 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The new policy picks up from representations which have been made and the importance attached to this issue by members from all three Councils.

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| | <p>should be removed as soon as practicable and the site restored to its former condition.</p> <p><u>Written justification</u></p> <p>Communication infrastructure includes telephone systems (both wired and mobile) and broadband. The benefits of having a modern and accessible system of telecommunications, wireless and electronic methods of communication to the South Worcestershire area will be significant.</p> <p>A digitally accessible South Worcestershire will allow people enhanced freedom of choice about where and how they work, how they interact with services and facilities and how they promote and operate their businesses. A connected community is a more sustainable one, as it represents the opportunity for a reduction in car-based commuting and a commensurate reduction in carbon output and traffic congestion. It also promotes the idea of South Worcestershire as a suitable place for high technology activities and employment to take place.</p> <p>The Government is committed to securing a world-class communication system. Currently, the main barrier to this is the availability of super-fast broadband, especially in more rural areas. It has announced that it wants to see every community in the UK connected to the fibre broadband network by 2015. At present the coalition government aims for 90% of people in the UK to be within reach of a superfast broadband (24Mbps+) service by 2015.</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the role of advanced, high quality communications infrastructure in creating sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks will also play a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.</p> <p>It states at paragraph 43:</p> <p><i>In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband. They should aim to keep the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. Existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need for a new site has been justified. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.</i></p> <p>Increasingly the demand is for super fast broadband using fibre optic technology but there is no</p> | |

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| <p>legal requirement to provide this facility. BT is currently rolling out super-fast broadband to two thirds of the population by 2015. In April 2011 Malvern was included in this programme.</p> <p>The law requires that copper wire telephone services are provided to all new development. It is therefore assumed that there will be no issue with the provision of telephone services to new development.</p> <p>Information from the Worcestershire County Council R&I Unit (February 2012) identifies a number of locations within the region where broadband “slow spots” are found, as well as areas that are scheduled for super-fast broadband. These areas include the Worcester to Droitwich corridor, Malvern and Evesham and their hinterlands.</p> <p>Developments should provide for the physical requirements of communication infrastructure, allowing for future growth in service infrastructure. According to a white paper from BT (January 2011), it is estimated that around 80% of the cost of deploying new infrastructure is associated with civil engineering costs:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Projects have therefore looked at building new duct and/or laying optical fibre and then renting this to operators.</i></p> <p>It goes on to point out that there needs to be a correlation between provision and demand for the provision to be cost-effective:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>... there is a risk that disconnecting deployment of infrastructure from service providers can result in suboptimal deployment where the infrastructure maps poorly to emerging demand.</i></p> <p>Worcestershire County Council is currently awaiting the endorsement of its Local Broadband Plan, which will help to co-ordinate and deliver the roll-out of network improvements across the region.</p> <p>Development is required to have regard to the latest guidelines of the International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection. These guidelines are for the protection of humans exposed to electric and magnetic fields in the low-frequency range of the electromagnetic spectrum. They are intended to provide protection against all established adverse health effects.</p> <p><u>Other options</u></p> <p>No policy on broadband infrastructure – the lack of ability to influence the provision of</p> | |

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| | <p>necessary infrastructure in the right place and of the right type when development is being proposed will mean that the roll-out of high speed broadband in particular could be unnecessarily delayed. In addition, providing suitable infrastructure at the point of development will prevent disruption to residents and businesses if it subsequently has to be provided at a later stage.</p> <p>No policy on telecommunications infrastructure – although the NPPF provides strategic guidance on the issue, having a more locally focussed policy allows for more flexibility and sensitivity in dealing with mast and base unit provision, location and impact amelioration. It also offers more certainty to providers about what will be considered appropriate in certain areas.</p> |