

Objecting to a Planning Application (v9) - some ideas

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We are happy for this to be shared in any way.

Please buy us a coffee at <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/stop5g>

Important Note: The current version of the NPPF is December 2024 and that is the only one that can be referred to by Planning Officers for current applications. If you're looking at an old one then the NPPF version in force at the time of the Application will apply. That is likely only if you are working on an Appeal.

Anyone can comment or object to a planning application - see the Planning Practice [Guidance on Consultation](https://tinyurl.com/25t94zn3), <https://tinyurl.com/25t94zn3> - currently the 12th item in the list. Note that there are other Guides on topics that might be of interest to us when making a specific objection; Bio-diversity for example or Air Quality where telecom could be a "*point source of air pollution (pollution that originates from one place)*"

If you are not local it helps if you reference that and say why you are concerned. It helps to be obvious. I write that it is a national issue.

I suggest that you choose your favourites from the selection below - start with the basic ones as Case Officers will take more notice of those. **Add anything personal and site specific** from local knowledge. Discussing this with friends and neighbours will give you ideas for that. Many of the suggestions can be used for any planned mast.

Don't worry about copying someone else's statement(s). Telecom companies use the same justifications in most of their applications with just a few site specific notes to try and show they have been there. You can add to them in any personal way you like.

We also have a template that you can print in multiple copies to take door to door when there is a mast nearby. Ask people to complete their name and address, select their choice of items and sign it. You take it away and deliver a whole lot to the Council the next day. Get a receipt of the numbers.

It is important to **REMEMBER YOUR OBJECTIVE** and not what you would like to write. Above all **do not give a dissertation on RFR or 5G** as you won't impress anyone - that is for another place and time.

Your objective is simple; to have one planning application refused.

That's it. Don't get confused about that.

Help the case officer or Planning Committee to make that decision by sticking to the point. Currently most of them will have no idea about EMF/RFR and 5G other than they have a mobile phone with them all the time and it's pretty cool. You would like it to be different but it isn't. Yet.

The Planning Committee will have half an eye on the applicant submitting an appeal and will want to avoid that, so give them reasons in which they can feel confident. A retired Council planner has said that is why Councils ignore the health argument.

Always copy your objection to the Ward Councillors, usually listed within the details page on the planning application.

The first group (1 to 21) are statements that apply to almost every application. It is fine to stick with these as they are all good arguments. They are also **the most common reasons for Councils refusing** an application.

The next group (22 to 33) is a few 'site specific' considerations that **may** apply in your case. And of course may not! You may have others so use them.

You can stop there and have done your job.

To go further in this paper you will need a wider knowledge of EMF or planning at least.

At the end I have put some more widely important issues which can be used in any application but they may be more technical or legal.

Some Abbreviations you may encounter

LPA means the Local Planning Authority, usually the Council

SSSI is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and,

in a planning application the Site Specific Supplementary Information

PSI is a site of Potential Scientific Interest.

NPPF: the National Planning Policy Framework (Note that this is not legal, statutory nor mandate.) The current edition is 2021 but many companies and Councils still use the 2019 edition; you could correct them. (See note above also)

PPG: Planning Practice Guidance <https://tinyurl.com/25t94zn3> These can be very useful.

EECC: the European Electronic Communications Code (After the UK left the EU this became "retained legislation" and is superior to UK law.)

ICNIRP: the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (A company that issues a set of "guidelines" as suggestions for safety levels. It is hotly disputed.)

Learn how to find new applications by looking at the Council planning portal (or site). On www.ianjarvis.co.uk is "Tutorial 1" to show you how to do this. If your Council has a different looking site use the contact above.

Good Basic Objections

These will be appropriate for any mast application

1. The mast and cabinets will ruin the aesthetic or character of the area. You must consider both the mast AND the cabinets together. I know that the telecom companies have development rights on the cabinets but they would not put up either without the other.
2. There is very little street furniture (lights etc) and this would have an enormous, aggressive and incongruous visual impact
3. This would result in unnecessary visual clutter introducing a prominent, obstructive, incongruous and alien feature to local amenities. Ugly
4. The mast is highly visible, ugly and is in no way camouflaged nor designed specially for this place.
5. It is too close to nearby homes, hospital, hospice, care home etc.
(There may be something in the Local Plan about that.)
6. Who has the right to decide on the appearance and the addition of this monopole other than local people. You have not asked us. You take the opinion of the telecom company when none of them have been here.
7. The consultation to put this mast up was NOT thorough enough. **The Council should place at least one notice near the site where people will be walking and write to nearby residents.** (see the PPG on Consultation, <https://tinyurl.com/25t94zn3> .)
8. The cabinets are an obstruction to the pavements (by the shops) and will make it difficult for people with prams and pushchairs and people using wheelchairs.
9. Cabinets attract graffiti; and give off a noisy hum which is deliberately and knowingly creating noise pollution
10. The cabinets will reduce visibility especially for children attempting to cross the road & for drivers who may not see them.
11. There are also many other obstructions on the path this will just add one more and make negotiating them more difficult especially so if you are visually impaired. There will have to be a learning exercise again.
12. A refusal statement you can use directly: *"The cabinets will cause a potential obstruction for pedestrians with disabilities and visual impairments. As such, the proposed development is considered to be unacceptable on grounds of pedestrian safety."*
13. This is an area of very high footfall with (eg as appropriate) local shops and supermarkets, a library. Many people will be exposed unknowingly to the EMF radiation.
14. The cabinets will create further obstructions have dangerous high voltage according to notices on some of them. Sited close to the road gives an added danger.
15. Many cabinets have warning notices from the telecom company about high voltage or high levels of radio frequencies (EMF). How can these be safe when they have warning notices?

16. The cabinets proposed will block the pavement or eg "my children enjoy walking along the grass verge right where you plan to put them" or "*The mast and cabinets would be overbearing and visually obtrusive additions that unnecessarily clutter the street scene.*" Quoted from a refusal.
17. The 5G mast so close to our homes it will devalue the sale price of our property and may put people off buying houses in the area. This shows people don't want these near their homes and are concerned about potential harms.
18. The council cannot disregard any concerns around safety and health. I and many neighbours **have fears for the effect on our health** and that of our children especially in the medium and long term. and many European countries and scientists have a variety of concerns. (eg France banned wifi in primary schools)
19. Also see this from Cyprus <https://ehtrust.org/cyprus-issues-decree-banning-wireless-kindergarten-elementary-school-classrooms/>
20. Many cabinets have warning notices from the telecom company about high voltage or high levels of radio frequencies (EMF). How can these be safe when they have warning notices?
21. It is worrying that these are going up around our city and many people have serious concerns over the constant high EMF radiation. It will create stress and mental health issues among the people when your primary function is for the health of them.
22. What insurance cover is held for any damage or health harms that **may** occur as a result of the erection of this structure?
23. Improving air quality is a stated aim of Councils. These masts will irradiate the air and add positive ions both of which are scientifically considered a form of air pollution. There will be no place in the region that is free from major sources of RFR/EMF.
24. What is the need for this monopole? We all have a reliable service for both broadband and mobile devices.
You should
25. The applicant has not proven that there is an 'acute need' (or anything similar) for any 'improved service' or 'benefits'. I have a perfectly satisfactory broadband service currently and speed is no problem.
26. The Council should be prioritising fiber cable.
27. The mast will consume a large amount of electrical power (about 2 to 4 times more than a 3/4G one). Earlier ones did not have cabinets but these are being built with at least three and some with 8. This cannot be in line with your sustainability and environmental objectives nor any climate emergency?
28. In addition to power, the mast and cabinets create excess heat; the cooling fans can be heard and they make a loud noise. With the climate emergency which you keep stressing in your documents and policies, how can this make any sense? The slight rise in temperature around every structure will add to summer heat and we are hearing the BBC warning of heatwaves even without considering this extra source. Such warnings from The BBC and from the Council cause much mental anxiety.
29. it's well known that urban areas are warmer than rural (heat islands) the mast will add more

Some ideas for site specific objections

or ones needing a little more knowledge

30. The PPG on Consultation notes that "**Anyone**" can comment. Even people or groups that are not local.
31. No long term health studies have been completed as the industry confessed to Senator Blumenthal in a USA Congress meeting. <https://tinyurl.com/3hfteb6y>
32. There is no **evidence** provided for the claimed benefits. There should be evidence shown for **any** planning application no matter what.
33. "**Perceived harm**" is a legitimate argument to prevent an application; actual harm does not have to be proven. Thus you can write that you **fear** harm to your health from the EMF or that you '**perceive risks**', for example to the environment (animals, birds, insects and plants) and your family. Mention any current health issues, for example if someone in your home has a pacemaker or metal from reconstruction after an accident. Ask for proof that it will not affect any of those and proof of their insurance.
34. In 2003, **Swisscom AG** a telecom company wrote in a patent application, "*The influence of electrosmog on the human body is a known problem.*" <https://tinyurl.com/4wtpve43>
35. If there are any shops or businesses nearby ask what the Council has done to advise them on health and safety (legal) regulations and who to contact should there be any incident that could be related to the presence of the mast. Visit the shops and speak to the owners; leave some leaflets at the shop so customers can take them. All business owners, CEOs etc must have in place adequate H&S standards and procedures. The Council is introducing equipment that will affect them and about which employees have **a legal right to be fully informed**. The Council is the only authority that can give or refuse permission to a new mast and may be liable.
36. Any school or nursery in the vicinity should have been consulted. Ask to see evidence; both the letters and replies. **Have the potential dangers been explained sufficiently for the school authorities to respond intelligently?** (If a school has wifi then the children will be exposed for (say) 5 hours on each school day. Over their school and college career that makes a lot of hours. Schoolchildren have been described as "sensitive receptors".)
37. Where there are other masts near and their signals will overlap with this new one, it renders the location unsuitable. What investigation has the council done to ascertain the complex effects caused by crossing of these multiple waves? Please reply with the details, including the technical specification to all the masts involved.
38. **Hospitals:** For a telecom structure near to a hospital or similar such as a Nursing Home the Council should take note of exclusions in the ICNIRP 2020 guideline. This would also be very important to a maternity ward because of the extra vulnerability of a foetus and a newborn baby and the likely high use of EMF within the hospital itself. Ask if the hospital has been consulted and if the potential dangers have been fully explained. Ask for copies.
ICNIRP states: "*Medical procedures may utilize EMFs, and metallic implants may alter or perturb EMFs in the body, which in turn can affect the body both directly (via direct interaction between field and tissue) and indirectly (via an intermediate*

conducting object).” and continues **that such issues are outside the scope of the guidelines.** Do patient-facing staff know that?

39. **Trees:** If there are trees near the mast, ask if the Council has consulted with their ‘Tree Officer’ or with a local ‘tree warden’. (Many places have one or more volunteer wardens in such a role.) Excavation for cabinet bases and for cabling etc will damage the tree roots nearby and likely lead to the death of at least one tree. The following is quoted from a refusal early in 2022:

the mast “risks presenting a detrimental harm to the adjacent protected trees. No supporting arboricultural impact assessment or details of the proposed excavation (including the root area) have been provided. The proposal’s position within the root protection area of a mature beech tree, risks presenting significant harm to the tree’s health. The beech tree together with the surrounding trees provide a positive contribution to the public realm. Subsequently, potential harm to this tree, with no evidence to prove otherwise, is contrary to saved UDP policies”

Solihull placed a protection order on a tree to prevent the applicant from lopping it.

40. **Conservation area:** If the mast is within a conservation area (or any other designation, eg SSSI, PSI, AONB) that will give more possibilities to object. Particularly for example “the telecommunications mast and ancillary equipment cabinets are considered to present an unacceptable impact on the character of the scene in this Conservation Area”.

In planning there is a phrase "incompatible and inappropriate/unacceptable" use of land" which can be used in this context as well as others.

Note; Councils are mostly very protective of their conservation areas.

41. The mast site is within (eg) 500 metres of a children's play area in the local park. The radiation is particularly dangerous for children and babies and *I am afraid for their health.*
42. The site is home to (eg) *newts/ frogs/ bats, rare orchids* and will be affected by the radiation. (We have found wildlife conservation organisations pretty useless as a help.) *(The argument is more effective if it is a protected species, a SSSI or PSI) and here is a compelling (2022) observational study you might send:*
<https://tinyurl.com/2jdeujkc>
43. The site has a heavy footfall being adjacent to a library, local shops, bus shelter, community hall, gym etc
44. The site is within (eg) 500 metres of a school / education facility, care home, over 60s flats etc where there are vulnerable people.
(See also an earlier point as the logic applies there also. You can ask if it has been tested for effects on medical equipment such as a pacemaker, it hasn't.)

Note: Most people can stop here

General but more technical

Health:

The Council (either the case officer or the Planning Committee) will argue that they cannot consider health as a "material consideration". This is not true. The primary responsibility of a Council is to care for the health of its constituents and the environment; they cannot do that in every other case and ignore it for telecomms (health and environment are mentioned many times in the NPPF). That is their legal responsibility and their prerogative - they can even over-ride Government policy and regulations. Additionally, the EECC

makes health an imperative and a material consideration within planning for telecoms, and that over-rides any UK legislation. (Though people still debate it.)

You can also comment that the NPPF mentions "health" about 20 times (I checked) and similar wording (eg "healthy") many more times. It is completely illogical to allow it to be considered for every other planning application and not when telecoms is concerned.

Particularly when an application is near a hospital and ICNIRP has excluded these from the guidance because 'emfs affect biological tissue' (see earlier item) my argument would be that they have stamped on their own foot.

Often they will refer to paragraph 123 of NPPF 2024 edition where it notes "*Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only.*" The question then remains over what are planning grounds and that seems a fairly loose answer. If we look at the opposite side, Applicants often argue on economic grounds, on a perceived "need" or their own business objective. These also are not "planning grounds" so if they can use those claims then an objector should be able to use health.

You could add that you will submit a Statutory Nuisance Complaint if the application is approved.

There are also court rulings nationally and internationally that support the argument that emf has negative health effects as well as a growing body of scientists reporting experimentally. (It's worth noting that this has been known since the middle of the 20th century.)

ICNIRP Guideline:

All applications, must submit a **self-certification** that the equipment on the site (including anything that was there before and any planned future additions) will be operated within the ICNIRP guideline for emf emissions.

"Self-certification" is exactly that; the telecom company certifying itself. (Conflict of Interest?) ICNIRP itself does NOT issue any form of certification whatsoever - you can read that on its website. "Pinch" and "salt" might flick into your brain.

Many read 'the equipment **is designed to be compliant** with the ICNIRP guidance' or similar. This is **very** different from saying 'it **does** meet that and we have tested it and we will maintain it and keep checking'.

I mentioned that to someone with some legal knowledge who completely agreed with me.

Question/challenge the statement and ask what make of antennas will be used and what the precise specification is and (for example) what testing has been done with results. If it is for a 5G enabled structure then ask what frequencies are planned for the site and proof of the distance travelled by a 5G collimated beam and how the strength of that beam changes over distance if at all.

The declaration or self-certification is a crucial indication for the safety of the local population and the Council has the prima facie responsibility in this regard. It cannot be regarded as "commercially privileged". It forms a part of an open and transparent local government process, and the planning office must be provided with sufficient information and detail that they can assure themselves of the validity of the application, of which the ICNIRP declaration is a significant part.

In 2003, then Secretary of State John Prescott, in withdrawing from a legal case, stated that it is unacceptable for a local Planning Authority to accept such a declaration or self-certificate without assuring itself of its accuracy.

See also the Appeal case in Steven Thomas vs Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC), where the refusal of the appeal by CBC clarified (to some extent at least) that the decision maker **must** consider the ICNIRP declaration and make their decision with a weighting of the local evidence.

Several planning appeals have been lost on the ground of a flawed ICNIRP declaration; ie the planning inspector had insufficient detail and data to be assured that the mast or structure would be safe **in operation**.

The role of the technical assessor is to provide that information for the planning office.

Power Consumption:

The Applicant will claim that 5G will be saving power over 3&4G, and the Council may claim that also. **It is not true.** The only place it is true is when comparing a 4G single antenna with a 5G single antenna. Because each mast will contain many more antennas (and chips) this slight advantage is immediately lost.

Then there is the claim that as the beam does not travel so far the masts need to be placed closer, ie lots more masts. Argument lost again.

See Nokia paper at <https://tinyurl.com/yhe85t2j>

Additionally, the plan is for many more devices to connect; have you heard of the "internet of things"? I thought so, and every one of these 'things' will use electricity. Already houses are being built where everything can be controlled from a smart-phone. Many of these will need back-up batteries in addition to the immediate use of mains electricity.

You may have seen many new street lights (LED) going where there never used to be lights before, eg motorways.

Asif Naqvi and others have done calculations which show that the average 5G enabled monopole will use the equivalent of around 45 domestic homes, increasing to around 75 when everything is connected.

Bang! and out of the window go any suggestions or claims of 'green', 'sustainable' or 'efficient'. 5G is incompatible with the Council's aims of sustainability.

Slightly Deeper

Note that where the term "cell(s)" is used it is not the American use meaning a mobile phone. It means a small area of coverage.

These next ones require a study of the actual documents with the application and more work to write your objection. Often the "Supplementary Information" or SSSI is the place you find many claims, statements without evidence and judgements. You will also often see that the only justification is for their own economic or business benefit. Not yours. You will also see a lot of PR claims as well as other documents such as a 'health guide to 5G'.

45. How will the Council check after installation and **full** switch-on that the emissions are within the limit? How will you test for spikes and "cumulative" levels which is what the NPPF states, whereas ICNIRP guidance is based on a single device for 6 or 30 minutes.

If it is not operating correctly, what reparations will you use?

46. Please supply **evidence** to the following claims

- **pick anything from the application.** There are usually many statements without any justification or evidence and without any reference. I spot them all the time. Here are a few you might spot:
- "Coverage is poor in the cell area" - poor for whom? You could ask, eg Has anyone complained, how many? Note that currently, ie 2025, no company has more market share than about 25%. So whatever 'improvement' it may make it will be for only that portion of the population. **(If anyone has, it might be their personal circumstance and not relevant to anyone else, eg an old router.)**
- "required" or "essential" - you might ask, by whom? Please justify.
- "will enable local business to grow". This has nothing to do with planning rules and so should not be a reason for the application and should not be taken into account by the LPA in making a decision. It is often claimed in a residential location where there are no businesses.

47. You might also spot a few words such as "might" / "might not", "is unlikely to"; "should" / "should not". These all mean that they don't know. These statements give you an opportunity to question and challenge the truth of the statement and ask for their evidence. Most likely there will be none.

- "is unlikely to impair the visual amenity" - means that it probably does and certainly could. Often that is mentioned when the site is on the edge of a large green space. Who has the right to say that anyway?
- "unlikely to have any material impact" does not mean that it won't. You could ask what is meant by that phrase. A similar word is 'significant' – to whom?

48. The applicant, aided by the Council, should have consulted with the local people. Many do not. If there was only one notice on a lamppost this is not adequate consultation. In particular they should carry out consultation exercises with

- education establishments such as nurseries, schools, colleges, universities
- hospitals and care homes
- residential homes for people with mental problems
- retirement apartments

Consultation should be 'fully informed'. Consultation is different to notification. The Gunning Principles apply (see on our website) as does the PPG on Consultation (mentioned above) and other Government documents.

In one case they claimed to have consulted a school that didn't exist!

49. Another trick applicants use is vague phrases such as "in close proximity", "near" eg "*There are no schools/colleges in close proximity to the proposed location.*" Challenge that or argue a specific case. I spotted that one in a recent application when there were four schools/nurseries within 250 metres. That is quite close enough to influence young children. There were also homes much closer, as there usually is.

50. Look out for all encompassing phrases eg "as with **all** 5G cells" (an actual example). These could be highly dangerous since if it is accepted as part of one application then it can be argued on every single application. If the Council does not refuse it or make the applicant remove the statement it leaves that possibility wide open.

51. If any single cabinet is **over 2.5 cubic meters in volume** then the monopole **and** cabinets **MUST** be submitted for full planning and cannot use 'prior approval'. The

dimensions (height x width x thickness) of cabinets is often in the planning documents with the application - and if they are not you can ask.

It is worth checking after erection where any look particularly large and use it as an argument to have it removed as the planning would have been illegal if you cannot find it in the original application.

52. Items after that ask you to read the application itself carefully to pick out any places where eg some common tactics
1. the applicant is not being truthful
 2. the applicant seems to be trying to confuse
 3. the applicant has not done sufficient consultation
 4. a statement has been made without showing evidence.
 5. the applicant is making vague claims.
 6. measurements (eg distance from the nearest home) are inaccurate (because you checked. See our Fact Sheet on the website)

The NPPF

Note: the NPPF is itself a Material Planning Consideration; Also it is GUIDANCE thus not mandatory.

Getting more 'technical', you may want to look at the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is a **guideline** for LPAs and is often referenced by Applicants. You can download it from <https://tinyurl.com/2p95unu> Section 10 is the one for telecommunications though the rest does also apply.

You can then use several points from that. (*Quotes in red are from Section 10.*)

- Ask to see their consultation that proves the local community "**want and need**" the tower.
- All such towers and poles should be "**sympathetically designed and camouflaged**". Do you think it is? If not it is legitimate to object on this argument.
- Ask to see **evidence** that it will not "**interfere with existing equipment**". For example your smart meter, medical devices such as an implanted pacemaker. Ask to see their research.
- Ask to see the report(s) on local consultations, including educational institutions, community spaces (halls, libraries etc), care homes, sports venues, flats specifically for the 'over 60s'. Some of these places may have special equipment relative to the previous point. The Council should have checked. (Note the 2024/2025 court reports on Thomas vs Chetenham)
- Ask for "**a statement that self-certifies that the cumulative exposure**" will not exceed ICNIRP guidelines. Cumulative means the total of *absolutely every electronic device in the surrounding area*.

(Note: It is impossible to prove with any degree of certainty because no-one can be certain of effects of multiple emissions mixing and bouncing around, especially in

confined spaces with many devices. Even some telecom companies have said that privately.)

- Ask why they have not prioritised "full fibre connections" for this area. In a city it would be unusual if fibre is not available or in progress.
Fibre cable to the home essentially means that you have the same speed without the disadvantages. Fibre cable does not leak RFR, it is more stable, less vulnerable to hacking, and longer lasting. 5G is not for broadband which is what most people want.
- Paragraph 123 is often referenced by applicants seeking to defeat our arguments, particularly on health grounds.; "Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only." (I mentioned this earlier.)
However I have been unsuccessful in finding any definition of what might be included in a list of "planning grounds".
Interestingly it is in Section 10 which relates specifically to telecomms. Health, environment and quality of life are mentioned in many different ways throughout the rest of the document as a guiding principle. See particularly NPPF paragraphs 8b and 8c. How can this be valid in every other type of planning consideration and yet not for telecom structures?
- The same argument should also apply to the Applicant when they make claims for the equipment that are nothing to do with "planning".
- The applicant seeks to justify the mast because it is their "business objective". That is not a planning reason.

Note: there are many other documents if you want to gain a PhD! Telecommunications Acts and Planning Acts are many; The Electronic Communications Code (ECC) from Ofcom; the European Electronics Communication Code (EECC) which is a Statutory Instrument retained as part of Brexit; and several Codes of Practice. In addition. Many counties, cities and towns have their own local plans and policies. Learn about those in your own area.

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