STATEMENT IN SUPPORT
OF
APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

June 2017

Arqiva
Crawley Court, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 2QA

Ref: S029 Barnsley Road (SW)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Proposed Development

This application is for the installation of electronic communications apparatus that forms part of Arqiva's planned Smart Metering network.

Arqiva is a designated Electronic Communications Code Network Operator and has been appointed by the Department of Energy & Climate Change to develop the Smart Meter infrastructure network in the north of England and Scotland.

The Benefits of the Smart Metering Network

Smart metering is a Government programme to roll out, between 2014 and 2020, smart electricity and gas meters to homes and small businesses across Great Britain. The smart meter initiative is a key part of the Government's programme to cut greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonise the economy and support the creation of new green jobs and technologies.

Smart Meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters. They will offer a range of intelligent functions and provide consumers with more accurate information, bringing an end to estimated billing. Consumers will have near-real time information on their energy consumption to help them control and manage their energy use, save money and reduce emissions.

By providing these benefits it's argued that the development assists in achieving the goals of sustainable development. This is in accordance with the statutory duty placed upon local planning authorities and accentuated by the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Technical and Operational Constraints

The Smart Meter programme, like all electronic communications networks, will need to be supported by an infrastructure of operational sites with the required antennas and other apparatus needed to provide radio coverage to the local area.

As the Smart Meter network must be able to communicate with meters that are typically found in the heart of a property, for example, in an under stairs cupboard, then the sites must be developed in locations that can provide the required level of coverage.

Site Selection

In accordance with best practice site sharing, utilisation of existing buildings and structures has been explored in a sequential approach to best meet the operational need whilst minimising environmental impact. In this case, it has not been possible to share an existing electronic communications site or install antennas on a tall building or structure. Hence, there is a requirement to develop a new ground based mast.

Pre-Application Consultation

Information on Arqiva's planned Smart Meter network was provided to the Council on 18 December 2013.

Pre-application consultation on the proposal was undertaken with Barnsley Council's planning department and with the Ward Members for Cudworth – Councillor Joe Hayward, Councillor Steve Houghton and Councillor Charlie Wraith MBE. The local planning authority replied to the consultation and subsequently additional information has been provided.

Compliance with Planning Policy and other Material Planning Considerations

Policy at national level is set out in the NPPF. The NPPF views high quality communications infrastructure and systems, such as the coverage provided by the Smart Meter network, as essential for achieving sustainable development objectives.

The relevant Development Plan includes the *Barnsley Unitary Development Plan* (adopted December 2000). In review of its policies, the application demonstrates that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and in particular *Policy UTL5 Telecommunications*. The site does not fall within any particular land allocation or designated area.

All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise any perceived visual and environmental impact whilst having regard to the need to provide the required level of radio coverage for the network.

With regards to design, layout and scale, this has been guided by the special technical and operational requirements that are associated with electronic communications development. Good practice guidance requires careful consideration of the siting and design to minimise visual impact and encourage assimilation.

In addition, consideration has been given to the need for the development being in the wider public interest and an appropriate balance has been struck between the objectives of developing new high quality communications infrastructure and environmental considerations. It is considered that on balance the proposal offers greater benefit than harm and therefore should be acceptable.

ICNIRP Compliance

The proposed antennas comply with all relevant health and safety requirements in accordance with ICNIRP guidelines. A certificate of compliance has been provided with this application.

Servicing and Maintenance

The site will require periodic access for maintenance and servicing visits. This will be restricted to authorised personnel only and therefore the proposal does not give rise to any issues associated with public access.

In conclusion, the proposed development has been sited and designed with reference to pre-application consultation in order to locate the development as sensitively as practicable. Specific consideration has been given to technical requirements and national and local planning policy. The proposal is supported by both local and national policy and as such it is considered that the application should be looked upon favourably.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of the application made in respect of a development proposed at *Pavement of Barnsley Road, Cudworth, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 8TD* as part of Arqiva's planned Smart Metering communications network.

1.2 As shown in detail in the drawings submitted, the development proposes the installation of an innovatively designed radio mast, 12 meters high, which has been designed to blend into the existing street scene. The mast is similar in appearance to a typical street light. One small cabinet is also proposed at street level and again, will not be dissimilar to similar apparatus already found on highway land such as the control boxes for traffic lights.

1.3 Arqiva is an Electronic Communications Code Operator and so benefits from the right set out in Paragraph 9 of the Electronic Communications Code to carry out street works. The Electronic Communications Code is found at Schedule 2 of the Telecommunications Act 1984, as amended. Arqiva also benefits from the permitted development rights set out under Part 16 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended). Hence in this case, the application is made under the Prior Approval procedures set out under Conditions A.2 and A.3 of Part 16.

1.4 In this statement, which incorporates the design and access statement, we go on to highlight the purposes and benefits of the development proposed, to explain the particular need and to demonstrate compliance with planning policy. We also provide information on health and safety and related issues by way of further reassurance.

1. THE PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF THE SMART METER NETWORK

2.1 The proposed development forms part of Arqiva's planned Smart Metering Network. Smart Metering is a Government programme to roll out, between 2014 and 2020, smart electricity and gas meters to homes and small businesses across Great Britain. The smart meter initiative is a key part of the Government's programme to cut greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonise the economy and support the creation of new green jobs and technologies.

2.2 The Department of Energy & Climate Change has awarded the contract to deliver the radio communications network for Smart Metering to Arqiva and Telefonica. Arqiva will deploy and manage the radio communications network in Scotland and northern England whilst Telefonica will provide the network to the remainder of Great Britain.

2.3 This new national smart metering 'Wide Area Network' is a key project in the UK's National Infrastructure Plan and will form part of the UK's Critical National Infrastructure. Its deployment and timely delivery is particularly important to achieving a sustainable economy and meeting key Government priorities enshrined in the Climate Change Act 2008, and thereby supports the transition to a low carbon economy.

2.4 In due course, the network will also be available to water utilities and in similar fashion, consumers will be better able to understand and make informed choices about their use of this natural resource.

2.5 The proposed development and the wider Smart Metering network will make a significant contribution towards sustainable development objectives which will help the UK Government to meet its target of reducing emissions by at least 80% on 1990 levels by 2050, now set down within the UK Carbon Plan. This is relevant to the statutory duty already placed upon local planning authorities under Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and now accentuated by the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). More specifically, it will help to deliver the aspirations set out in Sections 5 and 10 of the NPPF.

2.6 Having regard to the Government's three key dimensions for sustainable development within the NPPF, smart metering will in particular assist in the following ways:

- **An economic role** – smart metering communications will help businesses to be energy conscious, smarter and invest in more energy efficient infrastructure to reduce longer term running costs. Consequential spin offs will, among many, be the creation of new green jobs and technologies, modern and cleaner industries and help stimulate retail sales in more efficient appliances.

- **A social role** - modern smart metering communications will allow consumers to benefit from real time information on their energy consumption, to help them control energy use, save money and reduce emissions. With greater visibility and understanding of their energy consumption, consumers will be able to make more informed choices about which appliances to use and when. For example, a consumer seeing the power consumption of a tumble dryer might be encouraged to use a washing line instead or perhaps to avoid operating it during peak periods of demand when pricing is higher.

- **An environmental role** – smart metering communications will help to reduce energy consumption at homes and premises and allow smarter working practices such as better energy management within larger businesses and incorporation of new efficient infrastructure into new developments. In this way modern smart metering communications will help ensure the prudent use of natural resources, alleviate energy waste, reduce carbon footprints and help the UK Government meet its energy emissions set within the UK Carbon Plan.

2.7 However, in order to make this important contribution to sustainable development objectives, the network has to be developed first and like all electronic communications networks, will need to be supported by an infrastructure of operational sites. This is no different than railway services, for example, being reliant on the associated infrastructure of lines and stations. In the next section, the particular network requirement from which this application stems is explained.

3. THE REQUIREMENT

3.1 Arqiva owns and operates the terrestrial radio and television broadcast networks. The company also owns most of the tower portfolio originally developed by T-Mobile (now part of Everything Everywhere) and have rights and manage other masts, towers and rooftops, developed or otherwise suitable for use for electronic communications. In total, Arqiva has access to over 16,000 sites around the UK, which is considerably in excess of the numbers available to any other electronic communications operator in the UK. Arqiva is also licensed to use the 412-414MHz spectrum that will be used as part of the Smart Meter network.

3.2 Basing the Smart Metering network on this portfolio of existing sites will be a critical element in minimising the potential visual impact associated with the deployment of a new network. This is obviously consistent with longstanding statutory and government policy requirements to use existing sites or other high structures so as to minimise visual impact.

3.3 As the network must be able to communicate with meters that are typically found within the heart of a property, for example, in an under stairs cupboard, then the sites must be located so that they can provide an acceptable degree of coverage to the properties that they serve.

3.4 New installations will be required in some areas for a variety of reasons, for example, the nearest existing sites are too far from certain properties; the signal from the nearest site may be adversely attenuated or affected by topography or natural or man made features such as trees or high buildings; or the fabric of the properties is such that the signals will be unable to penetrate them, for example, because they are old thick walled buildings. Without some new installations a number of homes and businesses would not therefore be able to benefit from smart meters.

Site Selection Process

Radio constraints on site selection

3.5 This proposed new installation has to fit in with the overall plan for the network based around Arqiva's existing sites. To help illustrate the context of this application, a computer generated coverage plot is submitted. Its estimate tends to exaggerate true levels of coverage on the ground because the modelling only takes broad account of general topography and manmade features. However, it is still a useful tool for explaining how the new installation will fit into the network in the wider area.

3.6 Figure 1 shows that the base-station proposed would provide Smart Metering coverage to Cudworth, Grimethorne and parts of Royston and Shafton, amongst other areas.

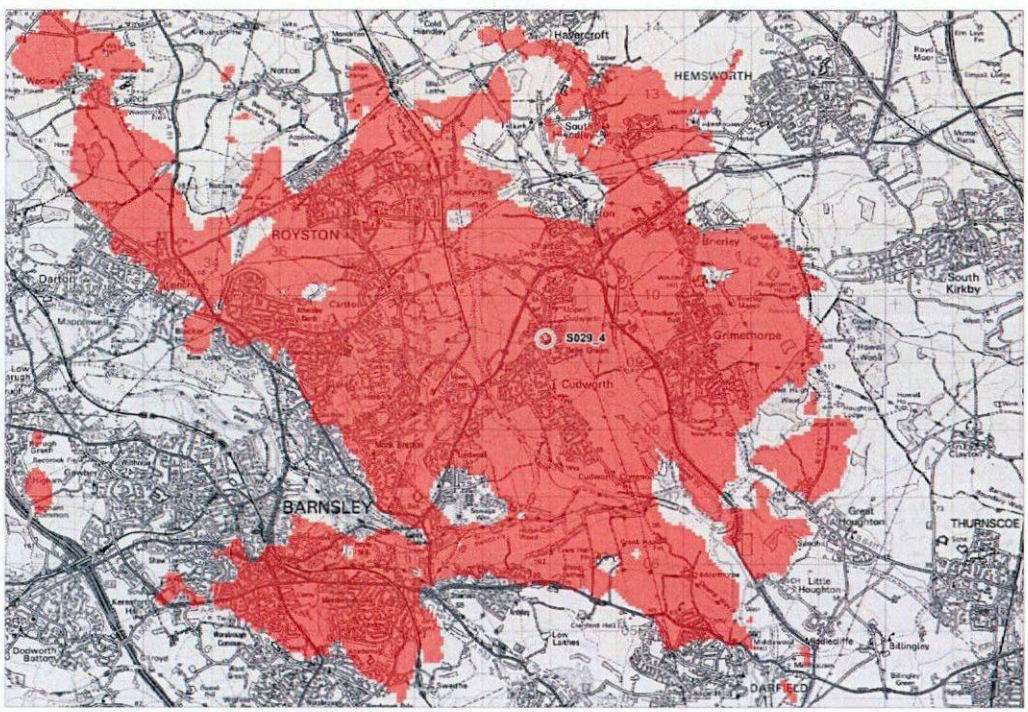

Figure 1. Extract from radio propagation charts showing indicative coverage from proposed cell S029.

3.7 The area within which a base station can be located must be carefully selected to ensure that base stations compliment and not interfere with each other. The proposed cell needs to be close enough to neighbouring cells to provide them with supplementary coverage while at the same time it needs to be sited at a location that will allow it fill identified gaps in coverage.

3.8 The search area represents the weighted mid points of population density that need to be served. Any potential alternative sites that are located too far away from the application site are likely to be rejected by our client for radio planning reasons, in particular with regard to the sites being too close to neighbouring cells and not providing coverage to all of the targeted geographical area.

3.9 Furthermore, a site too far away from the areas which the base-station is to provide coverage to, may require a mast that is higher and of greater scale than the 12m high pole proposed at the application site. This would result in greater potential for adverse landscape and visual impact.

Topographical and land use constraints on site selection

3.10 Local topography, land uses and other features can often mean that parts of a search area have constraints which make them unsuitable to accommodate a mast.

3.11 When establishing a new ground-based telecommunication mast, there is a set of criteria that a site may be assessed against to ensure effective operation, these include:

- Highway verge/pavement being sufficiently wide to prevent pedestrian obstruction;
- Easy access to a BT hard-wire for data transmission;
- Installation of apparatus not presenting issues with highway visibility splays;

- Presence of underground services restricting which parts of the highway can be excavated;

- Potential for nearby trees and high-buildings to corrupt radio signal.

3.12 Furthermore, sites that are in direct and full view from residential properties were treated as less favourable because of potential impact on the amenity of residents. Large parts of the local area have dense patterns of residential development which significantly limited the number of potentially suitable sites.

3.13 Land elevation was also a factor that informed site selection. The application site is in Upper Cudworth (north-Cudworth) where a land elevation of approximately 77m is achieved. Land elevation decreases at any location south of the site and decreases to below 40m at some locations. Siting the proposed mast on land that has a lower elevation than that achieved at the application site may require a compensatory increase in mast height to ensure effective radio operation.

3.14 When the application site is assessed against the constraints and criteria discussed in this section, it is found to be acceptable.

Exploring the use of an existing mast, building or other structure

3.15 A search of the Sitefinder database, maintained by Ofcom and the most comprehensive of all electronic communications sites, identified existing telecommunication sites in the local area which were investigated for sharing potential:

Site 1. Mast at Dorothy Hyman Stadium, cell ref. Orange SYK021/ O2 41299, E 439029 N 408700
&
Site 2. Mast at Dorothy Hyman Stadium, cell ref. Three S0538/ T-Mobile 65033, E 439121 N 408886

3.16 These masts were identified through online databases and assessed for sharing feasibility. It was found that because they each already accommodate the

apparatus of two telecommunication operators, neither has the physical space or structural loading capacity to accommodate the Smart Metering apparatus proposed.

3.17 Furthermore, the existing and proposed antenna sets also require a certain vertical separation to prevent cross-signal interference. Therefore even if these masts were structurally suitable, the Smart Metering antennas would have to be affixed at a lower position on the mast meaning that radio coverage would be poor or ineffective.

3.18 A search was also carried out to establish whether any other high structures/buildings might be used:

Site 3. Cudworth Telephone Exchange, Pontefract Road, E 439427 N 410470

3.19 Siting the Smart Metering apparatus on the roof-top of this building was considered, however it was concluded that the building would provide insufficient height to enable effective radio operation. In particular, the radio signal would become corrupted by surrounding trees and buildings. Furthermore, the building features an apex roof design which would not be compatible with the installation of apparatus.

3.20 Following failure of the roof-top option, a proposal to install a ground-based mast within the grounds of the telephone exchange was advanced. The plans featured an 18m high mast supporting antennas above it and were ultimately not progressed beyond outline design. The decision was taken that the proposal was unlikely to be granted planning permission due to the resulting landscape and visual impact, and also potential impact on the amenity of the surrounding residents. A mast of such a height was deemed necessary in order to allow the radio signal to clear surrounding structures and also to provide coverage to all of Cudworth and surrounding areas; the site is disadvantaged by its location at the edge of the town.

3.21 Potential alternative locations at which to site a ground-based mast were also identified, including:

Site 4. F1 Body Shop, Jackson St, E 438273 N 408875

3.22 A proposal to install a 15m high mast supporting panel antennas at this site was progressed following development at Cudworth Telephone Exchange being found to be unfeasible. The proposal was given planning approval by Barnsley Council in June 2016 (App. Ref. 2016/0743). The base-station could not be installed because the site provider did not give their legal consent for the equipment to be accommodated on their land.

Site 5. Pavement outside Pinfold Allotments carpark, Darfield Road, E 439101 N 408510

3.23 The Smart Metering pole proposed at the application site could be installed at this alternative location on the highway network, subject to detailed assessment. The site was considered less favourable on account of the assumed residential development currently being built on the carpark. It was considered that the risk of impact on residential amenity, particularly the outlook from windows, was too high.

Site 6. Grass verge at Darfield Road (opposite Jct of Field Dr), E 439221 N 408349

3.24 Likewise, the Smart Metering pole proposed at the application site could be installed at this alternative location on the highway network, subject to detailed assessment. This site was considered less favourable than the application site because of its open and rural nature, and absence of similar street-furniture which would commonly be found in towns e.g. high-level lampposts, equipment cabinets etc.

3.25 Our conclusion is that the best balance between environmental and operational considerations in this case is provided by using a specially designed structure on

highway land, set amongst the properties that need to be served. This is the reason for the application before you.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The relevant planning policy framework that has been taken into account and in part already alluded to is found principally within:

- The Development Plan
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England

4.2 These documents provide the overall policy background for electronic communications development, site specific policies and the key considerations relevant to the siting and design of appropriate electronic communications development.

The National Planning Policy Context

4.3 The general policy context can be summarised as follows:

- Government policy within the NPPF is to support high quality communications infrastructure and systems – this is especially relevant to smart metering, which is a Government initiative
- Government policy is to keep the inevitable environmental impact associated with electronic communications development to the minimum
- The best way to minimise environmental impact is to avoid the unnecessary proliferation of new radio masts and sites
- The starting point for planning new networks or the expansion of existing networks is therefore to use existing electronic communications sites

- Where new installations are required, as in this case, operators should look to develop innovatively designed structures, such as those designed to blend in with the street scene

4.4 The NPPF as a whole is aimed at encouraging a more positive approach to town planning. While the NPPF builds environmental protection into the definition of sustainable development, there is also a very clear emphasis that local planning authorities should be looking for ways to help development come forward and not reject applications simply on environmental grounds. The NPPF recognises that this is especially relevant where a development might have other significantly important benefits such as being essential to meet, for example, new nationally important infrastructure such as the Smart Meter communications network.

4.5 The importance of the proposed development as part of the Smart Meter network is clearly an important material planning consideration as it is precisely the type of new digital infrastructure that the NPPF is seeking to support. Hence, it is important to reflect on some key points within the NPPF which are relevant to the very important development at this site and the general planning principles that should apply when determining the merits of the application:

a. Paragraph 14 advises that authorities should:

- positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area [as part of plan making];

- meet objectively assessed needs unless the adverse effects would *"significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits"* ;

b. Paragraph 17 advises that planning should *"proactively drive and support sustainable development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units,* ***infrastructure*** *and thriving local places that the country needs";*

c. Paragraph 187, on "decision-taking" states that authorities should *"look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level*

should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible".

4.6 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF further states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development lies at the heart of the planning system and, in respect of decision-taking, this means that where development proposals that accord with the provisions of the Development Plan should be approved without delay. In respect of this guidance, the following sections of this statement demonstrate that the proposed development accords fully will all relevant Development Plan and NPPF policies and, therefore, permission should be granted for the development.

Section 5 - Supporting Advanced Communications Infrastructure of the NPPF

4.7 The proposal is supported by, and accords with, the guidance in Section 5 of the NPPF, which provides further guidance on the Government's objective of providing high quality communications networks in England.

4.8 The NPPF clearly acknowledges the benefits of modern electronic communications and seeks to encourage such development as being essential due to their role in supporting a modern economy, contributing to sustainable objectives, and enhancing local community access to a range of goods and services. Local planning authorities are advised to respond positively to proposals for electronic communications development and this has to include an understanding of the associated special problems and technical needs of developing communications networks such as the Smart Meter network.

Section 7 – Requiring Good Design of the NPPF

4.9 Government places great importance on the design of the built environment and paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that this is an integral objective of achieving sustainable development. The careful approach taken to the design and siting of the proposed development complies fully with this general policy objective.

4.10 More specifically, the proposal is supported by the guidance in paragraph 65 of the NPPF, which states that:

'Local Planning Authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits).'

4.11 In respect of this guidance, all reasonable steps have been taken through careful siting and design to minimise the visual impact of the development, so far as the technical and operational constraints allow. The proposal is an acceptable design solution that will not have any impact on a designated heritage asset.

Site specific policy

4.12 The site is not within any specific land allocation or designated area. The following policy from the *Barnsley Unitary Development Plan* (adopted December 2000) is, however, relevant to the proposed development:

Telecommunications

Policy UTL5

HAVING REGARD TO THE SPECIAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS OF LICENSED OPERATORS PROPOSALS FOR TELE-COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING THE ERECTION OF RADIO, TELEVISION, CELLULAR AND PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK MASTS AND ANTENNAE WILL BE ASSESSED WITH REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING FACTORS :

A) THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE SPECIFIC LOCATION HAVING REGARD TO THE EFFECT ON THE LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE, THE VISUAL AMENITY OF THE IMMEDIATE AREA AND THE WIDER AREA FROM WHICH THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE VISIBLE, AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

B) THE POSSIBILITY OF ERECTING ANTENNAE OR OTHER APPARATUS ON AN EXISTING BUILDING, MAST OR OTHER STRUCTURE AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE ERECTION OF A LARGE MAST

C) THE PRESENCE OF OTHER TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES WITHIN AND AROUND THE SITE

D) THE NEED TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL STRUCTURAL CAPACITY TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE GROWING DEMANDS FOR THE NETWORK DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING THAT OF OTHER OPERATORS.

ANY DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE SITED AND DESIGNED SO AS TO MINIMISE ITS VISUAL IMPACT SUBJECT TO TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.

4.13 In reference to *Policy UTL5,* the proposal is for infrastructure that is essential for delivery of the Government's Smart Metering initiative (see Chapter 2). A sequential site selection process has demonstrated that on this occasion it is not possible to share an existing installation and still meet technical requirements. The site does not sit within or near to any designated area.

4.14 The application has sought to demonstrate that the site presents the least environmentally damaging and technically feasible location within the local area. The process has also been informed by radio, topographical, and land use constraints (see p10).

4.15 The design of the apparatus aims to reduce visual impact and encourage assimilation into the local street scene. The pole would be of similar height and form to other column structures sited nearby on the highway, including streetlight columns. The design is much more discreet than a typical mobile phone mast. It is considered that the amenity of residents would not be unduly impacted.

4.16 In summary, the sensitive way the development proposed has been brought forward accords with best practice and forms part of a national important infrastructure project to provide smart metering services to the local area. This includes demonstration of a sequential site selection process. It accords with the key policy objectives at national level, which are reflected in the relevant policies at local level. The development proposed is therefore acceptable in principle and also accords with the more detailed guidance expressed in local policy.

5. DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

5.1 The development proposed essentially involves engineering operations and so is arguably exempt from the requirement to provide a design and access statement under Article 8 (1) (b) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. However to assist your determination, this section provides a description of the process adopted in the design of the proposals and explains the access considerations. The significant contribution such development makes towards sustainable development objectives has already been outlined earlier.

Physical Context

5.2 The application site is a pavement that forms part of the adopted highway of Barnsley Road. The surrounding area has business, shops residential and non-residential land uses including a car sales business and clinic. The local streetscape has existing street-furniture including street lamps, signage and road-side equipment cabinets.

Figure 3. Photograph of the application site.

Amount, Design, Layout and Scale of the Development

5.3 The scale, layout and design of the development has been guided by the special technical and operational factors affecting the need to provide an acceptable level of coverage to the local area, having regard to the need to minimise visual impact, which have been explained in the previous sections of this statement.

5.4 For example, the height of the mast, the numbers of antennas and its size, is the minimum amount of development required to provide coverage for the smart meter network. The mast design, a simple monopole, has been chosen as this is of similar size and form to other types of man-made vertical structures, such as streetlights, mobile network operators masts, CCTV poles, etc. that are a common feature of townscapes and landscapes across the UK. The pole is of the absolute minimum scale to meet radio coverage requirements and may have had to be higher if the application site was farther away from the targeted coverage area.

5.5 The same design considerations apply to the equipment cabinet, which is of similar size and design to other types of roadside cabinets commonly found in urban and rural areas. The location of the equipment cabinet, and the electronic communications equipment housed within it, reflects the technical and operational requirement to be in reasonable proximity to the antenna systems it supports.

Access Considerations

5.6 The installation is proposed on highway land and will be sited to prevent it causing an obstruction to the highway and pedestrian movement, or interfering with any existing access points or associated sight lines.

5.7 Once constructed the development will be unmanned requiring only periodic visits about once every two to three months for routine maintenance and servicing. The site will be easy to access for this purpose and typical visits will be

by an engineer using a four-wheel drive light vehicle that will be parked lawfully nearby.

Landscaping

5.8 In view of the nature of the development and its location on highway land, a scheme of hard or soft landscaping is not considered necessary or appropriate in this case. The development is similar to other man-made utility and communication structures commonly found in roadside locations without dedicated landscaping.

5.9 Visual receptors would predominately be the users of the adjoining highway who would only experience transient and partial views of the installation from select locations. The location of the site on a bend in the road means that the proposal would only be visible by commuters for a short distance when travelling on Barnsley Road. A position that is set-back from the edge of the highway has purposely been selected to further reduce its prominence. The proposal would not impact long-distance views.

5.10 The installation has been carefully sited to reduce the impact on residential amenity as much as possible. The installation is off-set from the windows of nearby housing to ensure that the outlook of residents is protected. It is considered that the overall visual impact would be low to moderate and outweighed by the benefits of the Smart Metering network.

5.11 It is considered that the local landscape is also of low sensitivity and could accommodate the development proposed. The proposed monopole would integrate well into the background setting which features street-lighting columns of similar scale, form and appearance.

Appearance

5.12 Insofar as the mast and equipment cabinet may be visible, they should look straight forward in appearance to reflect their function. The proposed monopole would have a galvanised-steel finish and the equipment cabinet would be

coloured dark green so that they integrate into their background setting. To that extent they should in time become accepted features of the local environment as with other forms of communications networks and essential public utility infrastructure. Alternative colours/finishes can be explored with the LPA, for example the pole could be coloured black to match the colour of the lampposts in the centre of Cudworth.

6. ICNIRP COMPLIANCE

6.1 A certificate confirming compliance with the relevant ICNIRP guidelines on public exposure has been supplied with this application. Accordingly, as explained within the NPPF, it is not necessary to further consider aspects of health and other concerns. This includes the perception of risk.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The proposed development forms part of Arqiva's planned Smart Meter network, which is being created as part of the government's initiative to roll out smart electricity and gas meters to homes and small businesses across Great Britain between 2014 and 2020. The network forms part of the UK's National Infrastructure Plan and the information provided by smart meters will help consumers to better manage and reduce energy use and potentially save money. Smart meters will play an important role in the government's policies to achieve a transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy.

7.2 The use of highway land seeks to provide the best balance between operational and environmental considerations. The site is located so that it can provide the required level of coverage to the properties it needs to serve, and the use of an innovatively designed structure will ensure that it blends in with other street furniture commonly found alongside the highway. The design and appearance of the structure should, therefore, be acceptable.

7.3 The proposed antennas will comply with all relevant health and safety requirements and will be compliant with the ICNIRP guidelines. There are no exceptional circumstances in this case and therefore no need to consider health effects and related concerns such as the perception of risk further.

7.4 This statement has demonstrated that the proposal is in accordance with local Development Plan policy and national policy set out in the NPPF. In particular, it is a form of development that is specifically encouraged as a matter of principle and in its detail complies with the policy objective of minimising potential environmental impact.

7.5 In conclusion, the application merits support and there are no material considerations that indicate otherwise.