



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-319471-24

Development	Construction of new 15m high shrouded pole (16m to top of lightning finials), together with antennas, dish, associated telecommunications equipment and ground level equipment cabinets. Proposal includes removal of existing 10m wooden support pole carrying telecommunications equipment (13m overall)		
Location	Eir Exchange, Main Street, Portlaw, Co Waterford.		
Planning Authority Ref.	2460019		
Applicant(s)	Eir (Eircom Limited)		
Type of Application	Permission.	PA Decision	To refuse
Type of Appeal	First vs refusal	Appellant	Eir (Eircom Ltd)
Observer	Lisa Mullin		
Date of Site Inspection	20/07/24	Inspector	Ann Bogan

Context

1. Site Location/ and Description.

The 0.2ha site is located on Main Street, Portlaw, Co Waterford. The proposal is located on part of the existing Eir exchange site, close to where the existing 10m high wooden telecommunications pole and associated telecommunications antenna/dishes are located, to the rear of the exchange building. The front

boundary to the street is a 2m+ high stone wall. A Community Centre is located on adjoining site to the south and the garden of a two-storey house abuts the site to the north. A Garda Station adjoins the Community Centre. The rear of the site backs onto gardens of single storey houses on William Street to the east. The area is largely residential, with commercial activity located nearby in the Square.

2. Description of development.

- Construction of a 15m high telecommunications pole, (16m including lightning finials), located to the rear of the existing Eir exchange, described as a 'shrouded pole', together with antennas and dish. Diameter of pole is circa 600mm for its full height, although no dimensions are given. A 600mm diameter dish is shown attached to the pole in elevations drawings.
- associated telecommunications equipment and ground level cabinets
- includes removal of 10m existing wooden pole (13m overall height)

3. Planning History.

309117/21: Vodafone Ireland Ltd was refused permission on appeal for 15m monopole telecommunications support structure, with antennas, discs and associated equipment and to remove existing 10m timber pole and antenna, upholding planning authority decision (20/746).

Reason for refusal was that having regard to the Telecommunications, Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1996, and the provisions of the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 and Portlaw Local Area Plan 2014-2020, *'the board considered the proposed development would be detrimental to the character of the historic core of Portlaw. The proposed development would be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines and would, therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area'*.

20/465: Vodafone Ireland Ltd refused permission to erect 15m monopole telecommunications structure with antennas, dishes and associated telecommunications equipment and to remove existing timber pole telecommunications support structure. Planning authority decision not appealed. Reason for refusal was that the proposed mast would adversely impact residential and visual amenities of the area, would represent an incongruous feature in Portlaw's historic landscape and would be contrary to the Telecommunications

Guidelines and Portlaw Local Area Plan 2014-2020, regarding the siting of telecommunications infrastructure in residential areas.

9514: Telecom Eireann Permission granted or toilet extension to exchange.

4. National/Regional/Local Planning Policy (see attached)

- National Planning Framework National Policy Objective 24
- National Broadband Plan 2020
- Telecommunications, Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1996:
- DoEHLG Circular Letter PL07/12 on Telecommunications
- Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028
 - Policy Objective UTL16
 - Policy 6.7 ICT/Telecommunications
 - Policy BH05 Architectural Conservations Areas. Site is within Portlaw Architectural Conservation Area

5. Natural Heritage Designations

- Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code: 002137), 60-100m to south-east and south of site.

Development, Decision and Grounds of Appeal

6. Planning Authority Decision

The planning authority decided to refuse permission for the development for the following reason:

'Having regard to-

(a) the guidelines relating to telecommunications antennae and support structures which were issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government to planning authorities in July, 1996,

(b) the provisions of the Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028, and

(c) the height and location of the proposed development in a residentially zoned area,

it is considered that the proposed development would be visually obtrusive, would injure the amenities of the area and of property in the vicinity and would have potential to negatively impact the character of the historic core of Portlaw, its vistas and settings. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Planning Report

The planning officer was not satisfied that adequate consideration had been given to alternative site location and was not favourably disposed towards the proposed development on the basis of its location in the historic core of Portlaw and its proximity to residential development, and recommended refusal of permission. The planning authority decision is in line with this recommendation.

Other Internal Reports

Conservation Officer: Refusal recommended from a conservation perspective as the proposed development by virtue of its location and height has the potential to have a negative visual impact the character of the historic planned town of Portlaw, its vistas and its settings and would contravene built heritage policies and objectives as per Chapter 11 of the WCCC Development Plan 2022-2028, in particular BH5.

Third Party submissions to Planning Authority

13 submissions received. The grounds for objection can be summarized as follows:

- Adverse impact on historic character of Portlaw, its attractiveness, tourism potential – planned 19th Century village
- Proposal will have a significant and prominent visual impact, totally out of harmony with the area
- Photomontages do not portray full visual impact of proposal
- Concern that structure will be required to hold further hardware as demand for technology increases
- Proposal has already been refused permission previously
- Proximity to houses in the area and on nearby community centre - adverse impact on amenities of the area to include houses on William Street;
- Health concerns on residents, businesses and national school

- Inadequate evidence of compliance with ICNIRP (International Commission for non-ionising Radiation Protection) standards for emissions.
- Value of property in vicinity will be devalued.
- Application is contrary to Guidelines on Telecommunications Structures, alternative sites have not been adequately considered, presumption against free-standing masts in residential areas;
- Alternative location available at Ballycahane situated a short distance from Portlaw;
- Invalid planning application – not signed by applicant, no letter of consent from Eir submitted with application
- EIA Screening taking account of all Towercom should be undertaken
- Necessity of proposal - telecoms coverage in Portlaw is already “good”.

7. First Party Appeal

Towercom on behalf of Eir submit grounds of appeal, in summary:

Established utilities and telecommunications location

- Location is in existing Eir exchange site, an established utilities site.
Telecommunications Guidelines says such sites should be favoured for telecommunications infrastructure within towns and villages
- Proposal replaces existing timber pole which has established links and utilities within the Vodafone network
- Exchange location is planned to be on the Vodafone national fibre ring which will allow backhaul transmission capacity from surrounding sites to be aggregated back to this high-capacity point of collection.
- Increased height of structure to 15m shrouded monopole will accommodate additional equipment, increasing capacity of infrastructure in area

Need for telecommunications site

- No existing substantial telecommunications sites in Portlaw area capable of accommodating additional equipment or connecting to Vodafone national fibre ring, such as at Eir Exchange
- Towercom and Vodafone reviewed other sites re potential for co-location. Eir 30m lattice tower at Curraghmore Estate, referenced in planners in report, is

2km north west. Vodafone and would require 2.4km run of fibre and wooden poles to carry it from the Exchange, and was discounted on that basis.

- Proposal will allow deployment of advanced 4G and 5G technologies resulting in enhanced broadband services to Vodafone customers and also cater for the All Together Now festival
- When selecting site, balance is sought between technical objectives and minimising impact on local community and the built and natural environment. Submit this is achieved in this site.

Visual Impact

- The development is not excessive with reduced footprint and scale from previous applications
- Position of site to rear of exchange building in established utilities setting in village centre, with varied roofscapes, streetlights, electricity poles, existing telecommunications infrastructure and natural screening are all considered mitigation factors.
- To address concerns raised in previous application, revised design for a shrouded pole structure has been chosen to minimise impact on village
- Being covered in a shroud, the antennae blend in, appearing to be part of the pole and ancillary cabling is connected within the pole casing
- Every effort has been made to minimise visual impact on historic surroundings of village by also keeping the structure to minimum 15m height associated with effective transmission
- Submitted that proposed development would not be visually obtrusive or negatively impact on the historic core of Portlaw, its vista and settings.
- Photomontages submitted show proposed structure would be mostly unnoticeable and intermittent in the surrounding area.

National, Regional and Local Development Plan policies

- Submits current proposal is in accordance with national and local policy
- Refers to Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 policies relating to facilitating provision of utilities and criteria for assessing proposals for same

- Revised design with shrouded pole and minimal height increase from existing pole minimises its obtrusiveness as much as possible in line with Development Plan criteria
- Proposed development and its use to accommodate emerging technologies and additional operators, is wholly in line with recommendations of Report of the Mobile Broadband Taskforce
- National Planning Framework supports local connectivity including broadband networks, including for rural areas
- National Development Plan also supports delivery of high-speed broadband
- National Broadband Plan stresses need for high-speed broadband for economy and society

Planning precedent

- References four examples of telecommunications structures at Eir exchanges in towns and villages of similar height and design to this 15m high proposal, which were granted planning permission by An Bord Pleanála
- These examples were considered acceptable and the proposed 15m high shrouded pole structure should be considered by An Bord Pleanála to be an appropriate design within the surrounding environment.

8. PA Response

- None

9. Observation on appeal

Observation on behalf of Lisa Mullin, resident of Portlaw, by FP Logue Solicitors

- Concern re increased deployment of telecommunications technology in Ireland without adequate regard to protection of health
- Council should have identified proposed development as a contravention of Development Plan, as it does not comply with Antenna Guidelines
- Concern that applicant has not sought an alternative location, despite previous refusals of permission on the site
- Submits reason is that the operator is Towercom and not Eircom and that Towercom have acquired rights from Eircom to erect mast on site but have not disclosed this in application or appeal

- Submits Board is required to obtain full information on Towercom project to erect numerous telecommunications structures around the country, in order to comply with EIA Directive, particularly, given cultural heritage reasons for refusal
- Submit that applicant cannot comply with Antenna Guidelines as they have already acquired rights to site. No assessment of alternatives. Submit appeal is driven by commercial needs of Towercom to develop as many telecoms masts as possible

Environmental Screening

9. EIA Screening

The construction of a telecommunications mast/antenna is not a class of development designated in Part 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. Therefore, the requirement for submission of an EIAR and the carrying out of an environmental impact assessment may be set aside at a preliminary stage.

10. AA Screening

Having regard to the nature and scale of development and absence of connectivity to European sites, it is concluded that no Appropriate Assessment issues arise as the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

2.0 Assessment

2.1. Having examined the documentation on file, including the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the reports of the local authority, having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local and national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues to be considered in this appeal are as follows:

- Background and previous applications
- Compliance with national and local policy framework
- Justification for the proposal and consideration of alternative sites

- Visual Impact
- Public health and other issues

2.2. Background and previous applications

2.2.1. Two previous applications were made on the Eir Exchange site in Main Street Portlaoise in 2020 for a 15m monopole telecommunications structure with associated antenna, dishes and equipment, to replace the existing 10m wooden telecommunications pole and antenna. In both cases the structure was to be located to the rear of the Eir Exchange building. As outlined above, the first (20/465) was refused permission by the planning authority. The second (20/746) was for a tapered slimmer monopole with a smaller amount of operator's equipment. The planning authority's decision to refuse permission was upheld by the Board on appeal (309117-21).

2.2.2. In the current case the proposed monopole is situated to the rear of the Eir Exchange building, as in the previous applications. It is described as a shrouded monopole and the height at 15m is the same as before, with a lightning finial of 1m rather than the previous 1.5m. The drawings appear to show the proposed monopole as 600mm in diameter (no dimension provided) from base to top, with no taper. The previous application considered by the Board (309117-21) was for a monopole that tapered from 1000mm at the base to 600mm at the top. Antenna in the current application are said to appear as being integrated into the shrouded monopole pole, although there is little detail provided on the form of such shrouding. Overall, therefore, based on the drawings provided, the scale of the proposal is somewhat reduced from the scale of the previous application considered by the Board.

2.3. Compliance with National and Local Policy framework

2.3.1. The National Planning Framework has as a fundamental underlying objective for the need to prioritise the provision of high-speed broadband.

2.3.2. The Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1996 (the Guidelines) aim to provide for a modern mobile telephone system as part of national development infrastructure, whilst minimising environmental impact. They set out some key issues to be considered in assessing suitability of locations for telecommunications support structures. Section 1.2 states

that buildings of historic or architectural interest need to be protected. Section 4.3 states that '*visual impact is among the most important considerations that have to be taken into account in arriving at a decision on a particular application*'. The guidelines also state that '*Only as a last resort should free-standing masts be located within or in the immediate surrounds of smaller towns or villages. If such location should become necessary, sites already developed for utilities should be considered and masts and antennae should be designed and adapted for the specific location*'. They further state: '*Only as a last resort ...should free-standing masts be located in a residential area or beside schools*' and that existing utility sites should be considered in such a situation. Sharing of facilities is also encouraged to reduce visual impact of structures.

- 2.3.3. While the current application is located on an existing utility site, the specific circumstances of each case must be taken into account; including in this case, the location of the site in the centre of the historic model village of Portlaw, its proximity to residential areas and potential for alternative suitable sites.
- 2.3.4. Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 in Policy Objective UTL16 aims to support development of telecommunications infrastructure, subject to environmental considerations and sets out factors to take into account including minimising size of equipment, sharing of infrastructure, concealing or disguising masts and antennas through design or camouflage, reason for chosen solution, details of design including height materials and all components of proposals, visual impact assessment and having regard to the Guidelines. I note in this case the absence of detail provided with regard to the design of the shrouded monopole.
- 2.3.5. The Development Plan designates the historic core of the town of Portlaw as an Architectural Conservation Area. Objective BH05 seeks to preserve the special character of ACAs and protect the ACAs from inappropriate development that would detract for the special character of the ACA and also seeks to encourage the undergrounding of overhead services /wiring within ACAs. Careful consideration is therefore required in considering the impact of the proposed development on the special character of the ACA.
- 2.3.6. Portlaw is an exceptional village in terms of its built heritage and history. According to the statement of character for the Portlaw ACA in the Waterford City and County

Development Plan: *The built heritage of Portlaw, within the Model town area, is a physical manifestation of past social, economic and cultural events. In its heyday, in terms of scale and sophistication, Portlaw would have matched other world-renowned model towns such as Saltaire and New Lanark... Portlaw was also thought to have been a model for Bourneville, which is considered the pinnacle of this form of social and urban planning. The layout of the model village inspired by the Baroque tradition of urban planning make it exceptional both in the context of Irish urban development as well as that of model village design.'*

- 2.3.7. The village still retains many features of the planned industrial town not only in its layout of central square with streets radiating out from it, but also in the distinctive design of the original single storey and two storey houses, with the curved roofs, known as 'Portlaw' roofs. I note these roofs are still evident in the town including in the single storey houses in nearby William Street and in the pair of two storey houses on Main Street to the north of the subject site. There is a protected structure on the opposite side of the street to the site (RPS 596) and a number of structures on the NIAH in the wider area.

2.4. Justification for the proposal and consideration of alternative sites

- 2.4.1. Towercom on behalf of Eir state that the proposed development is needed to provide improved services to Vodafone customers in the area, in particular in the town of Portlaw. They state that the existing structure is not suitable for providing the increased coverage and improved services in the local area due to its low height and limited structural capabilities. The proposed development will increase coverage in the town and surrounding areas to 'very good' for 4g and 5g services. The Comreg Map indicates that coverage is classified as 'good' at present.
- 2.4.2. The applicants state they considered the possibility of co-location at existing telecommunications sites but there are no substantial existing sites within the area capable of accommodating additional equipment to serve Vodafone customers. In this context they refer to existing locations at Ballycahane, Laherdan/Fairbrook, Kilmeaden and Crehana South. The Planning Officer's report notes that Vodafone and Eir operate from Ballycahane, which is the closest to Portlaw, is in an elevated location with an apparent line of site to Portlaw and wonders why it would not have capacity to accommodate the additional required infrastructure, and also raises the

suitability of a site with permission at Curraghmore. I note the unsuitability of Curraghmore is addressed in the appeal submission, but there does not appear to be any further comment re the site at Ballycahane.

- 2.4.3. Apart from sites with existing telecommunications infrastructure, there is no evidence provided as to what other sites, if any, were identified or considered which could serve as a suitable location for a telecommunications structure to serve the town and surrounding area. I believe the absence of consideration of other potential sites in the vicinity of the town, weakens the justification for locating within a village and residential area, locations which the Guidelines say should be selected 'only as a last resort.'

2.5. Visual Impact

- 2.5.1. In the previous application the proposed monopole had a wide base and tapered upward, while the current proposal is 600mm diameter from base to top. I note as in previous applications the lower part of the pole is largely screened from view as it is to be rear of the Exchange building, so the change in diameter from previous applications may not be very significant in terms of visual impact, from most directions, apart perhaps from the rear of houses on William Street.
- 2.5.2. The current proposal is described as a 'shrouded monopole', and it is stated that the antenna will appear as if they are part of the pole. I would accept that the absence of visual antenna would be an improvement on the previous proposal where the antenna were visible on the upper part of the monopole. I am somewhat concerned about the lack of detail provided as to the form of such shrouding or how many antenna or other items of operator's equipment are to be provided in or on the pole. This lack of detail is out of line with the Development Plan requirement to provide 'details of the design, including height, materials and all components of the proposals' (Policy Objective UTL16).
- 2.5.3. I note there is a 600mm diameter disc attached to the pole indicated in elevation drawings, and described as operator's equipment, although it is not shown in the photomontages provided. Also, the application has little information on whether there is intended to be capacity for further antenna or for co-location of other operators in the future.

- 2.5.4. I have reviewed the photomontages provided and I note the monopole is not adjudged to be visible from the outer ends of some of the radial streets such as Queen Street and Brown Street or in a view from the town square. From my own observation and based on the visibility of the existing wooden pole and the equipment on the top of it, I believe the proposed monopole will be visible and dominant from a number of viewpoints in the town square. It will also clearly be visible and overbearing from William Street over the existing single storey dwellings, and also from the rear view of the dwellings backing onto the site and adjoining it. It will also be visually dominant from Main Street in the vicinity of the Community Centre and nearby houses.
- 2.5.5. I note the Conservation Officer's view that the proposed development has potential to negatively impact the planned town of Portlaw its vistas and settings. Objective BH05 of the Development Plan seeks to preserve the special character of ACAs and protect the ACAs from inappropriate development that would detract from their special character. I concur with the view that the planned town of Portlaw is unique and its character is deserving of preservation.
- 2.5.6. The applicant cites examples of permissions granted elsewhere as precedents for the current situation. However, each application must be assessed on its merits taking account of the particular circumstances pertaining to that location, having regard to national and local policies.
- 2.5.7. In this case, although the proposal is somewhat reduced in bulk from the previous proposal which was refused permission by the Board, I do not consider its impact is sufficiently reduced to merit a different outcome. I believe that the proposed replacement of the existing slim wooden pole with a bulkier and more overbearing 15m telecommunications structure on this confined site, would adversely affect the character of the streetscape, be detrimental to the special character of the historic core of Portlaw and would impact negatively on the visual and residential amenities of the area. Furthermore, it would not align with national policy as regards its location within the village and in a residential area. It would therefore be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development of the area and I recommend that permission be refused.

2.6. Public Health and other issues

- 2.6.1. Public Health: Concern was raised with regard to the potential impact of the proposed development on public health by the observer to the appeal and in submissions to the planning authority. The Commission for Communications Regulations (ComReg) is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of radiation emissions. Compliance with emission limits in respect of regulation is regulated nationally by ComReg and health issues are not a matter for An Bord Pleanála in determining and deliberating on the application proposed. Regular measurements of emission levels are required to comply with International Radiation Protection Association and Guidelines. I note also that Section 6 of the cover letter submitted with the application confirms that the proposed equipment on the existing and proposed installation at Portlaw complies with required ICNIRP standards for non-ionising radiation.
- 2.6.2. Furthermore, Circular Letter PI.07.12 states that planning authorities should be primarily concerned with the appropriate location and design of telecommunications structures and do not have competence for health and safety matters in respect of telecommunications infrastructure.
- 2.6.3. Role of Towercom: The role of Towercom in the application was raised as an issue by the observer.
- 2.6.4. The applicant and site owner in this case is Eir, as stated on the application form. A letter accompanying the application confirms Eir's consent to Towercom to act as their agent in making the application. Any other arrangements that may exist between the two parties are outside the scope of this appeal process, and the proposal has been fully considered on its merits.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1. I recommend that permission for the development be refused for the reason outlined below.

4.0 Reasons & Considerations

Having regard to:

- a. the Telecommunications, Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1996,
- b. the provisions of the Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028
- c. the height scale and location of the development in a predominantly low-rise residential area,

it is considered that the proposed development would be visually obtrusive, would seriously injure the amenities of property in the vicinity and would be detrimental to the character of the historic core of Portlaw. The proposed development would be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines and would, therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Ann Bogan

Planning Inspector

17/08/2024

Appendix 1 Relevant national and local policy and guidelines

National Planning Framework ‘Project Ireland 2040’:

National Policy Objective 24 - support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan.

National Broadband Plan 2020:

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) is the Government’s initiative to improve digital connectivity by delivering high speed broadband services to all premises in Ireland, through investment by commercial enterprises coupled with intervention by the State in those parts of the country where private companies have no plans to invest.

Telecommunications, Antennae and Support Structures (Guidelines for Planning Authorities - 1996)

The Guidelines provide relevant technical information in relation to installations, and offer guidance on planning issues so that environmental impact is minimised and a consistent approach is adopted by Planning Authorities. These Guidelines require that Operators take cognisance of the Guidelines. The Guidelines aim to provide a modern mobile telephone system as part of national development infrastructure, whilst minimising environmental impact. Amongst other things, the Guidelines advocate sharing of installations to reduce visual impact on the landscape.

The Guidelines state: ‘Only as a last resort should free-standing masts be located within or in the immediate surrounds of smaller towns or villages. If such location should become necessary, sites already developed for utilities should be considered and masts and antennae should be designed and adapted for the specific location. The support structure should be kept to the minimum height consistent with effective operation’.

The guidelines also note that ‘Only as a last resort ...should free-standing masts be located in a residential area or beside schools. If such a location should become necessary, sites already developed for utilities should be considered and masts and antennae should be designed and adapted for the specific location. The support structure should be kept to the minimum height consistent with effective operation and should be monopole (or poles) rather than a latticed tripod or square structure’.

4.3 Visual Impact: The guidelines note that visual impact is one of the more important considerations which have to be taken into account and also that some masts will remain quite noticeable in spite of the best precautions.

4.5 Sharing Facilities and Clustering: Applicants will be encouraged to share facilities and to allow clustering of services and will have to satisfy the Planning Authority that they have made a reasonable effort to share.

Circular Letter PI07/12 ‘Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structure Guidelines’

This Circular was issued to Planning Authorities in 2012 and updated some of the sections of the above Guidelines including ceasing the practice of limiting the life of the permission by attaching a planning condition.

It also reiterates the advice in the 1996 Guidelines that planning authorities should not determine planning applications on health grounds and states that, ‘Planning authorities should be primarily concerned with the appropriate location and design of telecommunications structures and do not have competence for health and safety matters in respect of telecommunications infrastructure. These are regulated by other codes and such matters should not be additionally regulated by the planning authority.’

Waterford City and County Development Plan County Development Plan

Policy Objective UTL 16 outlines the following requirements for new telecommunications structures as set out in Chapter 6 of the plan:

We will work in collaboration with service providers to deliver a more enhanced connectivity service experience in a way that protects our footway and road surfaces and delivers the economic and community benefits of technology. We will facilitate the continued provision of communication networks, smart infrastructure, broadband and appropriate telecommunications infrastructure and services, subject to environmental considerations, in order to contribute to economic growth,

development, resilience and competitiveness. In considering proposals for such infrastructure and associated equipment, the following will be taken into account:

- The installation of the smallest suitable equipment to meet the technological requirements,
- Solutions to deliver shared telecommunication physical infrastructure in new development to facilitate multiple service providers at a non-exclusive basis and at economically sustainable cost to service providers and end users,
- Concealing or disguising masts, antennas, equipment housing and cable runs through design or camouflage techniques; or
- A description of the siting and design options explored and the reason for the chosen solution, details of the design, including height, materials and all components of the proposals,
- A landscaping and screen planting plan (if appropriate),
- An assessment of the cumulative effects of the development in combination with existing equipment in the area; and a visual impact assessment (if relevant).

Proposed development will be required to have regard to the “Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1996 and Circular Letter PL07/12” issued by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government and to any subsequent amendments as may be issued.

Policy 6.7 ICT/Communications

Physical and digital infrastructure improves connectivity....The Council will continue to support and facilitate operators to improve speed and service across Waterford in line with national policy.

Policy BH05 Architectural Conservation Areas

It is the policy of the Council to:

- Achieve the preservation of the special character of places, areas, groups of structures setting out Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA).
- Protect the special heritage values, unique characteristics and distinctive features, such as shopfronts within the ACA from inappropriate development which would detract from the special character of the ACA.

- Prohibit the demolition of historic structures that positively contributes to the distinctive character of the ACA.
- Encourage the undergrounding of overhead services and the removal of redundant wiring/cables within an ACA and to assess all further cable installations against its likely impact on the character of the ACA as the cumulative impact of wiring can have a negative impact on the character of ACAs.
- Provide guidelines on appropriate development to retain its distinctive character; and protect elements of the streetscape such as rubble stone boundary walls, planting schemes and street furniture such as paving, post boxes, historic bollards, basement grills, street signage/plaques, etc. which make a positive contribution to the built heritage.
- Retain or sensitively reintegrate any surviving items of historic street furniture and finishes such as granite kerbing and paving that contribute to the character of an ACA.

Vol 3 Appendix 10 Architectural Conservation Areas

Portlaw Architectural Conservation Area

Summary of special character

The built heritage of Portlaw, within the Model town area, is a physical manifestation of past social, economic and cultural events. In its heyday, in terms of scale and sophistication, Portlaw would have matched other world renowned model towns such as Saltaire and New Lanark. Through marriage the Malcolmson's were connected to Quakers who designed Bessbrook, the only other planned industrial town in Ireland. Portlaw was also thought to have been a model for Bourneville, which is considered the pinnacle of this form of social and urban planning. The layout of the model village inspired by the Baroque tradition of urban planning make it exceptional both in the context of Irish urban development as well as that of model village design.

The village of Portlaw still retains many of the features of the planned 19th Century industrial settlement. Four streets William Street, Brown Street, Bridge Street and

Street radiate from the Square and the gateway of the Old Mill, which would have been the centre of all activity. Along these streets are the workers houses.

Central to Portlaw is the Old Cotton Mill/The Tannery site. The present layout of the factory buildings began in 1825 with the Cotton mill complex. The main block is a fifteen-bay five-storey rubble stone block originally detached, and was originally six-storey. The thirteen-bay five-storey rubble stone block, built 1837 - 1839, to north was originally six-storey. The factory was used for tanning from 1932 – 1985. The buildings were extensively extended, 1945, to accommodate its use as a tannery to include a 26 bay four storey concrete building with a flat roof. The pair of water wheel pits, the engine house, the redbrick chimney, weirs still remain. The site is now derelict, the fittings of technical or engineering interest now gone. The site is considered of national importance. Around the town there are a variety of civic structures such as the Courthouse, the Schoolhouses and the Dispensary (now a Heritage Centre). Dwellings include the Classical style mansions such as Mayfield House (now derelict), Clodiagh House, Woodlock House and remains of Milfort.

Developments within curtilage

New development within these sites should retain the predominance of the main building on the site and should respect the pattern of the historic urban grain of the planned village Council services

Where opportunities arise, the Council will to seek the placing underground of all electricity, telephone and television cables within this Architectural Conservation Area.

Location and Boundary of ACA

The boundaries of the streetscape of distinctive character in the Waterford County Development Plan 2011 – 2017 include the historic core of the village around the Square and the streets radiating from it Brown Street, George Street, William Street, Main Street and Queen Street, Clonegam Road and Factory Road have been extended to the east to include includes the Mill and along the canal and river banks.