

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Why has Bury Council allowed infrastructures that clearly are out of scale and character with the street scene? This creates a cluttered highway with wooden poles and enormous masts in abundance in my area of Newington Drive and now all over Bury?

John Williams

Cllr O'Brien

There are a number of telecommunication providers that require a range of infrastructure to deliver their service. Some providers use underground cabling, whilst other providers using masts and poles to provide their services.

However, the Government has passed legislation that means that telecommunication providers do not always need planning consents to install their infrastructure. As a general rule of thumb, apparatus up to 15 metres in height are deemed to be 'Permitted Development' under legislation. This includes the wooden poles that we are aware are being currently being erected in certain parts of the Borough.

For masts that transmit signals into receivers in properties, the legislation dictates that these do not often require full planning permission. Instead the legislation deems these has acceptable in principle and local authorities can only comment on their siting and appearance through 'prior approval' applications.

The balance of power, is therefore tipped in favour of the telecommunication providers and the local authority has little control over the installation of this infrastructure in principle.

Nevertheless, the Planning and Highway Authorities will continue to work with all telecommunication providers to help guide them to ensure such infrastructure is located in appropriate locations, and in a manner that does not impact on highway safety.

2. We have been in touch with Ofcom and they have confirmed that they have no procedure for dealing with this type of issue. It is up to the council to work with IX Wireless to resolve any network infrastructure siting complaints. As this is the case the residents and the councillors who believe that this infrastructure is not fit for purpose within the borough demand the council apply for an injunction to stop all further infrastructure building until an investigation is carried out. Just doing nothing is not an option due to the next meeting is in May.

Duncan Holland

(In attendance)

Leader

As indicated in the previous response, the Government has already established the principle of these structures and a lot of the proposed infrastructure as already deemed to be acceptable in principle under current legislation.

As such, there are no legal basis for imposing an injunction to stop this infrastructure from being implemented.

However, the local planning authority is currently investigating the telecommunication infrastructure that is being rolled out by IX Wireless to ensure that the company has secured the appropriate consents and permits.

Officers will help to steer as far as reasonably possible within the current restrictions, the siting and appearance of the structures

3. Why has Bury Council allowed a company to overbuild a broadband infrastructure that is a clear detailed issue in the government papers advising overbuilding should be avoided?

Amanda Law

(in attendance)

Leader

Across much of the country, there are a number of private companies that are investing and implementing high-speed broadband infrastructure to homes and businesses.

This is a central part of the Government's National Infrastructure Strategy to improve digital connectivity for all and the levelling up agenda. The Government's web pages state that *'enabling the fast and cost-effective roll-out of new infrastructure by industry is an important policy objective for the Government ...'*

(Reference only -Building broadband and mobile infrastructure - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk))

A number of different companies are operating and competing in this space. Not all use the same technologies, with some using underground cabling direct to properties and others using above ground infrastructure like masts and overhead cables.

As indicated, the Council has little control over much of this infrastructure and there does not appear to be threshold that constitutes an 'overbuild'.

4. Does the Council as part of the Regeneration of Radcliffe have a process that identifies any derelict buildings meet safety standards?

Carol Bernstein
(In attendance)

Leader

Regeneration proposals are set out in the Radcliffe masterplan.

Where sites or buildings have a detrimental impact upon amenity, are derelict or in severed dilapidated states, the Council will consider and use appropriate powers under the Planning, Building or Environmental Health Acts to address them, in Radcliffe and elsewhere.

(NOTE: Cris Logue has instructed Building Control Officers to issue a Section 79 notice on the owners on the recently collapsed building in Radcliffe. The aim is to encourage the owners to clear the whole site).

5. How do the councillors justify awarding themselves 20% increase in allowances in these austere times when other workers ie. NHS are struggling to get 5% ?

Supplementary question (if applicable): How many of the councillors who voted for the 20% increase also **have** a salary from other employed work/day job?

Dina Judge
(In attendance)

Leader

Members' allowances are determined in accordance with the Local Authority (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003.

Member Allowances are set following a recommendation from an Independent Remuneration Panel any annual uplift in allowance payment is linked to the Local Government Public Sector pay award

The scheme of Members' allowances was agreed in this context last year and is reviewed at the beginning of every municipal year.

The Council has no control over NHS salaries, but the quality of terms and conditions for our staff on the lowest earnings is a key priority for Bury Council.

We are one of the few GM authorities to pay the Real Living Wage and to meet the standards of the GM Good Employment Charter.

Supplemental

We do not hold this information.

6. When planning applications are approved for double extensions to include extra bedrooms/utility rooms etc surely that is the time to review the council tax band on those properties The view that an extended house is only re-evaluated when sold should be reviewed to make the system fairer.

Supplementary question (if applicable): Why has the council not undertaken this review in over 30 years?

Barbara Marland

Cllr Gold

The power to conduct these reassessments is contained in The Council Tax (Alteration of Lists and Appeals) Regulations 1993. Regulation, 4(1)(a)(i) states: *“no alteration of a band shall be made unless there has been a material increase in the value of the dwelling and it has subsequently been sold”*. The Council will notify the Valuation Office Agency when alterations occur but legislation only enables an increase to be applied when the property is sold.

Supplementary question (if applicable): *Why has the council not undertaken this review in over 30 years?*

Answer:- *Valuation of Council Tax bands is the responsibility of the Valuation Office Agency, not the local authority. Council Tax bands are set according to the value the property would have sold for on 1 April 1991 in England and 1 April 2003 in Wales.*

7. I am a full time carer and need to accompany my disabled brother to hospital appointments and pick up prescriptions if they are needed urgently. I put out the correct bin for that week, clearly marked with the house number as requested , and fetch it in as soon as possible, after it has been emptied. Now because it has been stolen, I cannot get a new bin free of charge.

Shirley Francis

(not present)

The request for a replacement green bin has been reviewed by the Waste Management Team and one will be provided for the resident free of charge on this occasion. It will be delivered week commencing 19/03/2023.