

## **APPENDIX A: 20/07885/FUL**

### **Consultation Responses and Representations**

#### **Councillor Comments**

**Councillor Whitehead:** The Parish Council and residents are considerably exercised over the above planning application which is for the erection of 20-metre Telecoms mast that they feel would be visually intrusive on the landscape.

The mast will provide needed coverage for the Emergency Services Network (a laudable aim) and may also (although this has not yet been ascertained) improve upon the almost non-existent mobile phone coverage for ordinary users. The contractors have now substituted a pole design for the original proposal of a lattice tower, but we feel that they have not properly explored alternative sites in the area which would be less visually intrusive. We have been told that “The replica telegraph pole designs look just like telegraph poles (to the untrained eye)”

I have yet to see a 20-metre telegraph pole! (Or maybe even higher – it is unclear as to whether this includes the base).

I was surprised to read the section in the application which states “Positive comments were received from the Local Ward Councillor and Parish Council and further information was supplied to them following contact from both parties.”

This is patently untrue. I was unaware of the proposal until it was listed on the Council website, and as far as I am aware, the Parish Council have not given any positive feedback.

I also consider the following to be untrue: 'Views of the installation will be limited to fleeting glimpses. Trees situated at the roadside and in close proximity to the installation will prevent full views to the installation. The elevation of the land upon which the installation is situated upon will also prevent views of the installation, preventing it from being in the direct eye line of motorists.'

Maybe not in the direct eye line of motorists, but the mast is within 100m of dwellings. It is in the full view of those dwellings, so I don't know where 'fleeting glimpses' comes from.

I note that the application states that, in selecting a site 'Consideration is always given to sharing any existing telecommunication structures in the area'.

However, I have seen no evidence that an existing lattice mast (at least 20-metres tall) only 800 metres away at an electrical substation has been considered. It seems to us that the contractor, despite what is written in the application, has not properly assessed alternative sites, and has opted for the site most convenient to themselves, being in an elevated position, close to a road and power line.

In reality, there are many possible alternate sites. I am well aware that the whole area is AONB (which the applicant agrees is a material consideration, and which our CP10 seeks to protect) but with a bit of local consultation with the Council, the residents and the Chilterns AONB Board, I feel sure that a less obtrusive site could be found that achieves the objective of the applicant.

If a public consultation had been held, the interested parties would have been able to help identify potential sites, and we wouldn't have the furore that we have now. A Win – Win

The application also includes several errors of fact: in section 25 of the Planning Application Ownership Certificates and Agricultural Land Declaration, the owner is named as living at Faylands. This address is the home of Mike and Maria Spink (to whom the contractor wrote on 26 October) advising them of the forthcoming planning application. Mr and Mrs Spink DO NOT own the proposed site.

The actual owner of the land is Mrs Frances Emmett who has therefore not been given the statutory 14 days to comment to the Council before the full application was submitted. Is this a breach of the Town and Country Planning Act? If so, it makes the whole application invalid because the correct procedure has not been followed.

The application states that the site is not within 3km of an airfield. Another error of fact. They obviously didn't refer to OS175! [Officer Note: the distance to Wycombe Air Park has been checked and is over 3km from the proposed site.]

The applicant has also stated that there are no trees or hedges on land adjacent to the proposed development site that could influence the development or might be important as part of the local landscape character. He obviously has never visited the site! It is surrounded by hedges! Neither is there is any indication of any survey as to whether there are important habitats or other biodiversity features; yet the applicant has said that no such risks exist!

I suggest that, because of the inattention to detail, the blatant untruths and the failure to engage the residents in any meaningful consultation, you might be tempted to regard the proposal as frivolous and suggest to the applicant that he withdraws it. What I and the residents would like is a constructive consultation process with the aim of finding a site that will be visually unobtrusive whilst providing the necessary coverage. As I have said above, a Win – Win!

#### Parish/Town Council Comments

##### **Hambleden Parish Council**

The Parish Council strongly object to this application. The proposed site is a highly inappropriate location with the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an area well known for its rural character and views. We would request that no permission is granted until the applicant can prove that there has been an exhaustive search for an alternative, far less intrusive location has been completed and a technical appraisal of the suitability for the Chisbridge substation mast which is located 800 metres from the proposed site has been presented. If permitted in this location, the proposed mast would dominate views from footpaths in every direction.

Whilst the parish council obviously would welcome better coverage for the Emergency Services Network, particularly if this would also improve the virtually non-existent coverage in places for residents (although this has not as of yet been ascertained) we firmly believe that there are better positions for this mast to be placed. Whilst the amended plans of 06/11/20 are now for a telegraph style pole rather than the original lattice mast, at a height of at least 20 metres (plus the height of the base) it will quite obviously not be a telegraph pole.

A public consultation has not been held, despite the parish council strongly suggesting one is needed to the applicant. The parish council are more than happy to engage with EE to help find a better site, and other local landowners are willing to discuss locations on their land that will not cause such a blight on the landscape of the AONB. The current proposed location is on private land but the owner is incorrectly listed in the application form. The actual owner does not wish for the mast to be sited on their land.

We note that the application states that, in selecting a site:

Firstly, consideration is always given to sharing any existing telecommunication structures in the area.

However, we have seen no evidence that an existing lattice mast which is at least 20-metres tall and approximately 800 metres away at an electrical substation at Chisbridge crossroads has been considered. It seems to us that the contractor, in spite of what is written in the application, has NOT

properly assessed alternative sites and has opted for the site most convenient to themselves, being in an elevated position, close to a road and a power line. The lack of investigating alternative use of the existing mast located nearby is contrary to NPPF guidance 113.

We also consider the following, written in the Design an Access Statement to be untrue:

Views of the installation will be limited to fleeting glimpses. Trees situated at the roadside and in close proximity to the installation will prevent full views to the installation. The elevation of the land upon which the installation is situated upon will also prevent views of the installation, preventing it from being in the direct eye line of motorists.

The Parish Council have forwarded this application to the Chilterns Conservation Board for their opinion, as we do not believe that they have not been approached by the applicant, despite the suggestion from the Parish Council. The Chilterns Conservation Board have already voiced their numerous concerns and objections via the planning portal.

We would also like to point out the Design and Access Statement misrepresents the position of the parish council. A neutral response was given, pointing out that there is an existing mast that could be used located 800 metres away, and asking which other sites have been considered. The second question has been ignored, despite being asked several times.

Hambleden Parish Council requests that the applicant is asked to withdraw this application, and a constructive consultation process with the Parish Council and local residents happens with the aim of finding a site that will be visually unobtrusive in the AONB and still provide the necessary coverage, and that will properly assess the possibility of using of the existing mast located in Chisbridge rather than a new build.

### Consultation Responses

**Natural Environment Officer** - the proposed mast is located in a field and is set back from the nearby hedgerow. The closest significant habitat in Bushes Wood which is an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, however it is far enough away from this to have any significant impact.

In line with policy DM34 there is a requirement to achieve a biodiversity net gain and there are opportunities where this can occur associated with this proposal. This could include filling gaps in the hedge from the road to Bushes Wood alongside the track and a new native hedge around the edge of the compound. This could be secured by condition.

**Environmental Services** – No objection

**Wycombe Air Park (Airways Aero Associations Ltd)** – None received

### Representations

#### **Amenity Societies/Residents Associations**

**Chilterns Conservation Board** - We recommend the application is withdrawn to facilitate further engagement and dialogue on an alternative location.

The principal development management objective is the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB as set out in the CROW Act, the Wycombe Local Plan, the NPPF and in the AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024.

The proposed site location is particularly sensitive

The AONB duty of conserve and enhance must be afforded 'great weight' in the balancing of issues.

The applicant's rather downplay this as a 'material consideration' which does not reflect the importance of the legislation in CROW, policy in the Wycombe Local Plan and duties set out in the NPPF.

An alternative appropriate location could deliver the NPPF 113 requirements for concealment and the conservation of the special qualities of this 'intact, secluded and tranquil landscape'.

As the application stands the height of the pole together with dishes mounted at 16.45 metres would appear incongruous in the landscape. Landscape character would be harmed as a consequence.

Alternative solutions may be available in the near future comprising a network of small cells, typically located on roofs, barns chimneys or similar structures which could be deployed.

### **Other Representations**

1 comment has been received supporting the proposal:

- Have suffered poor mobile and internet coverage for over 20 years
- Have to work from cafes in Marlow and Henley to achieve good enough mobile / internet coverage in connection with running a business
- Improved mobile phone coverage will enhance the lives of many and support small business

41 comments have been received objecting to the proposal:

- Visually intrusive in the AONB
- Adverse impact on setting of listed buildings
- In front of several homes
- Very visible site
- Site chosen to minimise cost, with easy access to road and power, rather than to minimise visibility
- Have not fully explored alternative masts or structures
- Disagree with statements made in the submitted documents
- Notice not served on correct land owner [officer note: the applicant has now addressed this.]
- Will be clearly visible from public footpaths
- Will limit access to the field for agricultural vehicles
- No account taken of proximity to Wycombe Air Park
- No attempt to disguise mast with landscape backdrop
- No other land owners approached
- Alternative sites listed are in the valley or at lower elevation so are not comparable
- Mast at the substation to the east should be considered
- Potential for addition of further equipment to the mast in future
- Could be sited in the middle of woodland
- Concern over potential noise from mast and equipment
- Lack of consultation with the local community
- Could be a dangerous distraction to walkers, motorists and cyclists next to a busy road
- Applicant should be required to carry out a full LVIA (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment)