

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

FOR PROPOSED UPGRADE TO

AIRWAVE SOLUTIONS LIMITED SITE (REF: KXR791 NHU074), LOCATED ON THE EXISTING MONOPOLE AT ELILAW, THROPTON, MORPETH, NORTHUMBERLAND, NE65 7HN.

This Design and Access Statement is provided in conjunction with the Supplementary Information Template, drawings, and supporting material that is submitted as part of this planning application.

This statement is submitted pursuant to Article 4C of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure), Order 1995 (as amended), ABD Regulation 3A of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas), and Regulations 1990 (as amended).

In accordance with the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development, and published Government guidance, this proposal has been developed having regard to the need for good design.

In particular:

- Considerations of design and layout are informed by the context, having regard not just to any immediate neighbouring buildings but the townscape and landscape of the wider locality. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials, and ecology all help to determine the character and identity of the development.
- The scale, massing, and height of proposed development have been considered in relation to that of adjoining buildings; the topography, the general pattern of heights in the area; and views, vistas, and landmarks.

The following general design principles have been taken into account in respect of this proposed telecommunications development:

- A proper assessment of the character of the area concerned.
- That the design shows an appreciation of context.

SITE CONDITIONS, TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS, LANDSCAPE FEATURES, AND CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

The current development proposal, and subject of this planning application, is for Airwave Solutions Ltd, the services network operator that provides mission critical communications for the Emergency Services across Great Britain (Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade). Additionally, this service also includes other Public Service and Government agencies such as Coastguard, Mountain Rescue, RNLI, and Customs and Excise.

The Airwave Network forms part of the nation's Critical National Infrastructure. Designed and proven to withstand major incidents, even when other networks fail, the Airwave Service is relied upon during routine operations as well as during the toughest situations that our country's Emergency Responders face. The Airwave network already meets the stringent reliability criteria required by the UK Government. However, the existing transmission network provided by BT is set to be decommissioned during 2016. As a result, Airwave has to replace the existing ground mounted kilostream network with "line of sight" dish antennae.

The proposed development comprises of 1no. 600mm additional dish to an existing monopole. Without the additional dish, the site will not provide adequate service for the emergency services.

Pre Application Discussions and Negotiations

No pre-application discussions were conducted due to the minor nature of the proposal on an existing telecommunications site.

Documentation Submitted with Application

- Planning Application Cover Letter;
- Location Plans;
- Layout Plans and existing/proposed elevations;
- Supplementary Information Template;
- Relevant application forms, ownership notice and application fees; and
- ICNIRP certificate.

Design Component

The site is an established telecommunications radio base station location, housing the Airwave installation. All the Airwave antennas and dish antennas are located in a general aperture on the telecommunications site.

The proposed upgrade is to install 1no. 600mm diameter radio link dish amongst the existing antennas/dish antennas on site. This is the smallest dish available that will meet Airwave's operational requirements. The proposal is minimalist in nature but is essential in order to maintain the integrity of the Airwave emergency services network. The proposed dish will

blend in with other apparatus on site and will not have any detrimental effect or impact on visual amenity within Northumberland National Park

- Use proposed – the 1no. 600mm transmission dish will replace the existing BT kilostream transmission equipment which is due to be decommissioned. There will be no change of use to the site as a telecommunications radio base station.
- Amount – 1no. 600mm diameter transmission dish in addition to the existing equipment.
- Layout – The layout of the existing site would remain the same. There are no new compound designs included.
- Scale – The proposed 1no. 600mm diameter dish is the smallest available size to meet the operational requirements for the upgrade. In context of the existing apparatus on site the proposed development will have minimal impact.
- Landscaping – No additional landscaping is proposed around the existing site.
- Appearance – The scheme is considered to be minimal in its context and appearance. The scheme is part of an established telecommunications site housing multiple operator apparatus. The planning authority has already accepted the concept of telecommunications development in this location. It is considered that the proposal being only a minor addition to an existing telecommunications site will not result in any adverse impact on the visual amenity within Northumberland National Park.

Access

There will be no change to the existing access route. It needs to be borne in mind that the proposed development is for a secure telecommunications network installation. Works access to the development by definition is limited to the operator and their authorised agents. This is strictly monitored within the relevant businesses. The equipment cabin is extremely secure and incorporate the highest standard of locking and security systems

Northumberland National Park Core Strategy and Development Policies

Policy 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

'In order to deliver sustainable development all development proposals will be required to be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement which will demonstrate the extent to which the development:

- A. Conserves and enhances the special qualities of the National Park;*
- B. Makes efficient use of land, materials, and infrastructure;*
- C. Provides opportunities for all to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park;*
- D. Promotes the local communities economic and social well-being and their ability to access services;*
- E. Reduces the causes and impacts of climate change, particularly by maximising renewable energy generation and energy efficiency in buildings;*
- F. Demonstrates high quality design and sustainable construction;*

- G. Promotes accessibility via public transport, cycling, or walking;
- H. Conserves scarce resources;
- I. Conserves water resources, air, and soils;
- J. Reduces the amount of waste produced and increases the amount recycled; and
- K. Prevents inappropriate development in areas which are at risk of flooding or which contribute to the risk of flooding.'

Policy 3: General Development Principles

'All new development, activities, and uses of land within Northumberland National Park must uphold and promote the principles of sustainable development; new development will be permitted when:

- A. *The special qualities of the National Park will be conserved or enhanced;*
- B. *The proposal demonstrates high quality sustainable design and construction, which protects and enhances local character and distinctiveness through careful integration with the existing built form. This includes but is not restricted to ensuring:*
 - *materials are appropriate to the site and its setting;*
 - *residential extensions are subservient to the main building and do not substantially increase its size;*
 - *development is sympathetic to existing buildings in terms of scale, height, massing, siting, form, materials and colour; and*
 - *the protection of open space which contributes to the amenity, character, and setting of a settlement;*
- C. *The proposal supports the wellbeing of local communities by ensuring: - amenity is not adversely affected in terms of visual impact, pollution, noise and waste; - the development will not have any detrimental effects on highway safety or the rights of way network; - the creation of a safe and secure environment; - the provision of appropriate community facilities to meet the needs of the development; and - that appropriate services and infrastructure are capable of being provided without compromising the quality of the landscape.'*

Policy 20: Landscape Quality and Character

'The natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to landscape change. All proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape character and sensitivity as defined in the Landscape Supplementary Planning Document. Development which would adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape will not be permitted.'

Policy 28: Utilities and Infrastructure

'The development of utilities and infrastructure projects which serve local community and business needs will be supported provided that:

- A. *The proposal does not have an unacceptable impact upon the landscape quality or character, either individually or in combination with other proposals;*
- B. *The siting and appearance of the proposed development seeks to minimise impact on the special qualities of the National Park;*
- C. *Where electricity distribution lines are required they are undergrounded or, where the Authority is satisfied that this is not feasible, they follow a route of least impact;*
- D. *Where the proposal relates to telecommunications development:*

- *the need for the development should be demonstrated in terms of the operator's network;*
- *if proposing a new mast, applicants should demonstrate that they have explored the sites outside the National Park, and if this is not possible, they have looked at the possibility of erecting apparatus on existing buildings, masts or other structures; and*
- *where new apparatus are required it must be sensitively designed in order to minimise the impact of the development on the special qualities of the National Park. Utilities and infrastructure developments which are to serve wider than local needs will be regarded as major development.'*

The proposal for 1no. 600mm dish on an existing monopole which will not materially affect the appearance of the existing structure adheres to policies 1, 3, 20 and 28.

The NPPF under Section 5 supports the need for “advanced high quality communications infrastructure.” The document also stresses that “high speed communications plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services” and highlights that “local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks”. The proposal seeks to upgrade an existing “bespoke” telecommunications installation for use solely by the Emergency Services, by installing an additional of (sympathetically sited) apparatus which will support and enhance the technical capabilities and overall resilience of the wider Airwave network.

Conclusion

It is considered that this proposal, which is to maintain the integrity of the Airwave network for the sole use by the Emergency Services, accords fully with national and local planning policy and guidance. Given its relatively modest addition it is considered that this proposal will not unduly harm the external appearance of the existing monopole, nor will it adversely affect the visual amenity within Northumberland National Park.