

## Margaret Telfer

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**From:** DC Consultation  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 11:14  
**To:** Rebecca Adams; Margaret Telfer  
**Subject:** FW: Planning Application Consultation 18NP0023 Land at Bell Hill, Blindburn, Northumberland, NE65 7DD

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**From:** Robert Mayhew  
**Sent:** 11 May 2018 16:52  
**To:** DC Consultation  
**Cc:** Rebecca Adams  
**Subject:** RE: Planning Application Consultation 18NP0023 Land at Bell Hill, Blindburn, Northumberland, NE65 7DD

Rebecca,

18NP0023 - Installation of a 20m high lattice mast on a concrete base accommodating 3no. antennas and 2no. 600mm transmission dishes and associated ground based equipment including 1no. generator and 1no. 1200mm satellite dish on a 2.6m high support pole. Creation of a 3m wide, compacted stone access track between the existing access track and the site compound. Installation of a 60mx60m area of additional planting; at Land at Bell Hill, Blindburn, Northumberland, NE65 7DD

Thank you for consulting me on the above proposed development. I would like to make the following observations with respect to the landscape and Dark Sky Park implications for the National Park, of the proposals as set out in the applicant's documentation.

Located in the Cheviots National Landscape Character Area and Rounded Hills Landscape Character Type, guidelines for development stipulate that the remoteness, tranquillity and dark night skies should be maintained and that man-made vertical structures which detract from the open and rounded landform, or adversely affect uninterrupted skylines and unbroken panoramic views, should be avoided. These stipulations clearly apply to this proposed development for a 20m. high lattice communications mast that is proposed to sit atop Bell Hill, which itself stands 480m above sea level.

Having said that, I welcome the applicant's careful choice of location for this proposed infrastructure and note the various other sites that were considered and subsequently rejected as part of their pre-application investigatory work. I believe that early engagement with the National Park Authority at the pre-application stage has helped identify a location that can, despite the guidance for developers stated above, be considered for the siting of this proposed development. The site that they have chosen at Bell Hill already has an existing Airwave network mast which I understand will become redundant and will be removed from the landscape should this emergency services network mast be approved and activated. Additionally, the site that they have chosen sits atop one of the few hills in this area that is not designated priority habitat, mainly because it has been afforested in the past and natural regeneration of Sitka spruce has been taking place over the past 15 years since the first crop of trees were felled. Proposals to establish and plant up with broadleaved trees, an area of 60m<sup>2</sup> beneath the mast are welcomed. The existing natural regeneration, some of which has already reached approximately 8m. in height, and new planting will help screen the 20m. lattice mast from distant receptor sites within this sensitive landscape.

It should also be pointed out that due to its location on the northern edge of the Controlled Access Impact Area of the Otterburn Training Area, publicly accessible receptor sites for this development would be limited to an arc spanning from due west through north to sites to the south east at say Shillhope Law (501m.). Public access is excluded from sites to the south on the grounds of health and safety due to the land being used as a live firing area for modern day field artillery weapons.

In relation to the other infrastructure that is proposed with the 20m. lattice mast, ie the compound fence, antennas, transmission dishes and associated ground based equipment, I am less concerned as to the potential impact that this will have on the landscape character and views of this part of the National Park due to its subservient size compared to the mast itself. I note and welcome the choice of dark green for the colour of the proposed equipment cabinets that will sit beneath the mast. This is considered appropriate for this setting and will blend in with the conifer trees already found on site.

I understand that there will not be any visible lights attached to this structure and as such there should not be an impact upon the Dark Skies status of the National Park.

In summing up, whilst this 20m. mast will be visible from receptor sites located in the Dry Training Area to the west, north and east, including the Pennine Way at some 4.5 km away, I do not believe that it would have a significant effect upon the landscape character or views in this part of the National Park. Due to the distances involved, wide open landscape, careful site location, additional mitigation measures proposed (tree planting, cabinet colour choice), the effect would be less than substantial. As such I do not have any objections to this proposed development.

I do believe that it would be prudent to consider placing some conditions on this application should it be approved, namely;

- Should the mast and its equipment become redundant for a period of six months or more then it should be dismantled and removed from the landscape, including the concrete plinth that everything stands on so that a full site restoration can be achieved.
- The applicant should be asked to tend to the new tree planting and beat up any failures such that an 80% establishment rate is achieved. The trees should then be maintained such that the desired screening effect is achieved for the lifetime of the lattice mast and selective coppice thinning would be deemed appropriate should any tree reach such a height that it then starts to interfere with the successful operation of the telecommunications infrastructure mounted on the mast.
- Any application for a mast extension at this site in the future is likely to be deemed undesirable since trees growing much above 20m will become more susceptible to windthrow in this location.
- As stipulated by the applicant, once this mast becomes operational, the existing Airwave mast should be removed. To leave both structures up would have a cumulative effect upon the landscape character and views and this would be less than desirable. The assessment above is made on this development being seen as a solitary mast atop Bell Hill.
- Should any external lighting be deemed necessary for the safe operation of this installation of this mast in the future, then proposals should first be submitted to the local planning Authority for approval.

I trust that you find the above comments useful and should you require any further clarification or need any further information please do not hesitate to get back in touch.

regards

-----Original Message-----

From: DC Consultation

Sent: 03 April 2018 08:11

To: Robert Mayhew

Subject: Planning Application Consultation 18NP0023 Land at Bell Hill, Blindburn, Northumberland, NE65 7DD

Please see the attached consultation regarding a planning application which has been received by Northumberland National Park Authority. Full details can be viewed at <http://nnpa.planning-register.co.uk/plaPlanningAppDisplay.aspx?AppNo=18NP0023>

DC Consultation, Development Control Consultation