

Northumberland National Park
Authority
Planning Department

23 APR 2019

Received

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

FOR PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF

**AIRWAVE SOLUTIONS LIMITED SITE (REF: KXR793 NHU033), LOCATED AT LAND AT
KNOCK HILL, NORTH OF CAR PARK, NEAR BRANDON, INGRAM, NE66 4LT.**

This Design and Access Statement is provided in conjunction with the Supplementary Information Template, drawings, and supporting material which 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) 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 thorough assessment of the character of the area concerned.
- That the design shows an appreciation of context.

Northumberland County Council
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15 APR 2019

Central Development
Management Team

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 2017. As a result, Airwave has to replace the existing roof mounted kilostream network with "line of sight" dish antennae.

The proposed development comprises of a 4m high monopole mast to support 1no. 300mm diameter transmission link dish and 1no. 200mm diameter transmission link dish. Without the additional dishes, the site will not provide adequate service for the emergency services.

Pre-Application Discussions and Negotiations

Post-application discussions have been undertaken with the LPA Ref: 18NP0088. Following the approval 18NP0088 the site has now being redesigned to be powered by a permanent LPG generator instead of REC power supply. The site area has been enlarged and the single cabinet has been replaced with a larger cabinet to house the radio equipment and generator and a second as a gas bottle store.

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 located within a grassed agricultural field on the side of Ewe Hill which appears to be used for grazing. There are a few semi-mature trees to the south west of the proposed site which constitute vertical features within the landscape. The site is located on the boundary of Open Access Land but has been intentionally sited off established footpaths such as the Hilltop Trail.

The proposal is to install 1no. new 300mm diameter transmission link dish and 1no. 200mm diameter transmission link dish at 4m AGL to the proposed mast. The proposed additional dishes are the smallest dish available that will meet Airwave's operational requirements and is proposed to be installed at the lowest height that is required to maintain adequate coverage. 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 not have any detrimental effect or impact on visual amenity to the surrounding landscape.

- Use proposed – the 2no. transmission dishes will replace the existing BT kilostream transmission equipment which is due to be decommissioned.
- Amount – 1no. 300mm diameter transmission dish, 1no. 200mm diameter transmission link dish and 4m high timber clad monopole to support. There will be 1no. equipment cabinet which is intended to be finished in RAL6009 (Fir Green), however the applicant is open to alternative colour suggestions from the Local Planning Authority.
- Layout – The site is ancillary to the existing telecommunications site near the Toilet Block to the north west of the proposed site. The proposed mast at the hop site up the hill is to be set within a small compound comprising a boundary treatment of standard stock proof fencing (to match existing fencing nearby) and a gravel base.
- There are 3 no. proposed cabinets (1no meter cabinet, 1 no equipment cabinet accommodating equipment and 1 no LPG generator and 1 no LPG store. The mast will link back up to the existing mast site via the line of sight dish antennae.
- Scale – The proposed 2no. 300mm/200mm diameter dishes are the smallest available size to meet the operational requirements for the upgrade.
- Landscaping – No additional landscaping is proposed around the existing site.
- Appearance – The scheme is considered to be minimal in its context and appearance.

Access

Access to the site will run from an unclassified public road to the site via an existing grass access track. The access route will utilise existing gates and breaks in the wall. Permanent access is not required, therefore no new access roads will be constructed. The site will be accessed by foot between the existing access track and the site. Works access to the development by definition is limited to the operator and their authorised agents. This is strictly monitored within the relevant businesses.

Planning Policy

The Northumberland National Park Local Plan 2009 – 2024 was adopted in March 2009. Policy 28 relates to Utilities and Infrastructure. It states: "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 justification to this policy indicates at, paragraph 4.76, that *“Modern telecommunication systems have grown rapidly in recent years with more than two thirds of the population now owning a mobile phone. With new services such as advanced third generation (3G) services, demand for new telecommunications infrastructure is continuing to grow. The Authority is keen to facilitate this expansion whilst at the same time minimising any negative impacts on the special qualities of the Park.*

Conclusion

The proposed installation is required to provide improved transmission links to safeguard the operational integrity of the Airwave emergency services network. The height (4m AGL) for the new transmission link dishes is required in order for it to 'see' the receiving transmission link on another network site in the emergency services network, in order to carry traffic for the emergency services network back to the main telecommunications switch is the lowest height possible for the transmission link to work within the network and not be obstructed by vegetation or built form which would block the signal.

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 in terms of the dishes and height of the mast, it is considered that this proposal will not unduly harm the appearance of the immediate area or the wider landscape.