

HYDE PARISH COUNCIL - RESPONSE TO APPLICATION 21/00725 LOADERS FIELD

HPC understands that this is an application to determine whether the prior approval of the NFNPA is required for the siting and appearance of the proposed development.

Hyde Parish Council objects to this proposal and recommends: that NFNPA should require prior approval for the Siting and Appearance of the development, and that approval for the details should be refused.

Our comments are as follows:

SITING

Business/Local Economy: NFNPA Local Plan 2016-2026 p100: “*Strategic Objective for a sustainable economy: develop a diverse and sustainable economy that contributes to the well-being of local communities*”. The proposed development is upsetting residents’ wellbeing and would damage the local economy, it therefore does not comply with this objective and it fails to comply with policies SP39 - Local Community Facilities and SP43 - Existing Employment Sites.

Camping: The Parish Council is strongly of the view that the siting of the proposal is unacceptable, in that it would undermine the viability of the current use of the site for camping to such an extent that camping would no longer be possible. Visitors are unlikely to camp under or close to the proposed mast and its associated paraphernalia for various reasons, including fears (whether real or not) about the danger to health caused by radiation (despite the ICNIRP certification); noise disturbance caused by the humming of the equipment; or the appearance of the equipment, etc. The camp site operator would be required to maintain a clear access route diagonally across the site, and space around the equipment for vehicles to manoeuvre, thereby reducing the site’s capacity and further reducing its viability and attractiveness to campers, who want a simple, rural site and not one dominated by an urban telecom mast.

The Foresters Arms: Frogham village’s only pub depends largely on the income generated during the summer months to keep it going during the rest of the year. Without the income generated by the campers, the pub’s viability would be undermined and closure would become a real possibility. This would be disastrous for the parish, and would be contrary to the NFNPA’s aims and objectives for a viable business base in the Forest.

Hyde Garden (Farm) Shop and the Potting Shed cafe: Both are small businesses run by local people and both need the seasonal boost to their trade. The pub, shop and café are sources of local employment.

Frogham Fair: - Loader’s Field, known locally as Harry’s Field, is in some way Frogham’s ‘village green’. The annual Frogham Fair has been held there for 50 years. It is Hyde parish’s most important community activity and generates funds for the maintenance of the village hall and the support of parish organisations and clubs. This is threatened by the proposed development as there is no other suitable site to hold the Fair.

Dwellings: - The proposed site is situated in the most populated area of the parish and will dominate the view from the low-lying two-storey surrounding dwellings and from the road through Frogham. Policy SP16 The Historic and Built Environment, is contravened by this proposal as it does not “*conserve and enhance the significance or special interest of designated or non-designated heritage assets*”. The mast would be an obtrusive, modern, urban structure surrounded by such designated dwellings, as shown on the NPA map in the applicant’s Supplementary Information document (page 21). HPC deplores the risible statement by the applicants that “*continuation and enhancement of mobile network services within the area, would indeed contribute to the character of the area, which is informed by the variety of uses and not simply by the historic or built environment*” (Heritage, p19).

APPEARANCE

The proposal's appearance is, by virtue of its scale, materials, function and form, completely inappropriate, being perhaps the most visually dominant location in the parish, and at odds with all notions of what is appropriate in a village in a national park and a conservation area, surrounded by locally listed buildings.

Visual Intrusion on the Landscape: The mast would rise approximately eight metres above the surrounding trees, and its alien industrial form would be visible from a wide area and blight many cherished views. Councillors are concerned that a mast on the proposed site would contravene so many NFP Policies, such as the following examples, that they are proved to be ineffective: Policy SP15 (5.76) *"Tranquility can be damaged by intrusive sights and sounds particularly from man-made structures"* (the policy gives power lines as one example, but then omits telecom masts which can visually dominate and scar the landscape for miles); Policy DP2e *"development must demonstrate it would not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity in terms of visual intrusion....."*; Policy DP18e *"ensuring development...does not harm key visual features, landscape setting..."*; Policy SP7b development permitted if *"the design, layout, massing and scale of proposals conserve and enhance existing landscape... and do not detract from the natural beauty of the National Park"*.

Parish Councillors hope that Policy SP17 is given great weight when this proposal is being considered: *"Built development.....which would individually or cumulatively erode the Park's local character or result in a gradual suburbanising effect within the National Park will not be permitted"*. We also expect great weight will be given to the NPA Landscape Officer's report: her view is that the proposed mast would be an urban intrusion; and her detailed list of objections.

The National Planning Policy Framework states in paragraph 176: *"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks...which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks.....The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."* The Parish Council considers the proposal to be diametrically opposed to the spirit of this guidance.

NPPF paragraph 177 is also relevant: *"permission should be refused for major developments in national parks other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest"*. Given the overwhelming local opposition to the proposal, it is difficult to see how it could be in the public interest. High speed fibre broadband is available in the parish and people have commented that WiFi supplies good mobile phone reception and they find it reliable and cheap.

The Parish Council is aware of the provisions in section 10 of the NPPF *"Supporting High Quality Communications"*, and remains willing to work with the operators to find a suitable site for a mast.

OTHER MATTERS

As well as the anxieties included above, residents also expressed concerns about: the possible impact on bats (but survey evidence of their presence was not provided); the impact on birds and other wildlife; health; house prices; and the lack of a demonstrable need for a mast in the parish. However, those are not planning matters and cannot be taken into account by the Parish Council.

Over ninety visitors objected to the proposal as well as many residents; one local resident supported the proposal.