

BT AIRWAVE

**ERECTION OF 25 M MONOPOLE WITH 3 NO. DIRECTIONAL ANTENNAE TO TOP OF POLE, EQUIPMENT CABIN IN SECURE COMPOUND AT LAND AT BELMONT FARM, HATCH BEAUCHAMP; ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DATED 19TH APRIL, 2002; AMENDED PLANS DATED 9TH OCTOBER, 2002 REDUCE MAST TO 20 M HIGH**

31070/21640

FULL PERMISSION

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**PROPOSAL**

This is an application for a new 20 m high brown coloured monopole with 12 m x 8 m compound enclosed by chain-link fence with 3 strands of barbed wire, to a height of 2 m . The equipment cabinet would measure 2.71 x 2.71 and 2.79 high and be painted brown. Access to this site would be via a compacted stone track around the edge of the field and reopening of a former access. New tree planting would take place around the access. The site is to the south of Line Wood, and to the north west of Hatch Court. The proposal has been made on behalf of the emergency services, and has been designed to be in full compliance with the requirements of the radio frequency public exposure guidelines, of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICINIRP). The current application was originally submitted as a 25 high mast, and sited in a location within an area of trees but sited closer to the nearest residential property at Crimson Hill. The visual impact of this was considered to be inappropriate and the agent was asked to seek an alternative location. The agent in considering the location in this area also considered alternative locations generally and considered site sharing. However the agent has stated that such options would result in below standard or zero coverage which would not meet the requirements of the Avon & Somerset Constabulary.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY comments on revised position- no objections subject to visibility, hard surfaced area at access point, no drainage onto highway..

LANDSCAPE OFFICER on original plans - the monopole and its antennae will stand proud of the woodland by at least 12 m, the wooded limestone scarp is a superb local feature of high amenity value which would be detrimentally affected by the proposed mast; the woodland is part of a garden on English Heritage's register of listed gardens important for its historical landscape garden. Comments on revised position - technically details are acceptable, but still have concerns about the location and visual impact on the surrounding landscape to the north. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER must meet ICINIRP guidelines.

HATCH BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL on original plans - opposed to the proposal due to its proximity to a recognised wildlife site, its siting in an area of outstanding natural beauty in a position which will make it highly visible over a wide area which

cannot be addressed by landscaping, and it is unnecessary intrusion in the village which already has one mast. It is suggested that the "Airwave" service is a network service requiring a grid of masts, a comprehensive approach is needed. Comments on revised position - objection is maintained, but the Council would be willing to give further consideration to the proposal once the demonstration mast has been erected provided that the model is truly representative of the proposed installation. NORTH CURRY PARISH COUNCIL whilst the Parish Council have sympathy with the neighbouring parish, there is no basis upon which North Curry can object. WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL on original plans- object; should be incorporated into existing radio mast at Thornfalcon and Bickenhall; the area it would service has not been defined; it would be visually intrusive, especially to the residents of Meare Green; access is shown through the woods - this is not acceptable. Comments on revised position awaited.

SOUTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL object - insufficient information in respect of area of search, mast sharing; what is justification for such a tall mast; do the applicants have any control over the existing trees as they are outside the site? Will overhead power cables be required?

CLLR HUGHES Islemoor Ward South Somerset District Council - seeks similar answers to South Somerset District Council views and concerns.

22 LETTERS OF OBJECTION including 1 with 8 signatures - should be away from caravan club site; unknown health risk; visually intrusive; no prior discussion with parish council or nearby owners; will be seen from Wrantage; can be seen from neighbouring property and its business users - caravan club certificated business; cannot be seen by applicant from his house; land is green belt - so unlikely new buildings would be allowed; county wildlife site; loss of business to adjacent property and local businesses used by the caravanners as people won't stay near a mast; justification is that the rent from the mast will be used on a wood project - which is already running and open to the public; plans are inaccurate; loss of heritage; would spoil beauty spot; would affect tourism; how much does the owner receive?; access point eroded; site is in a Special Landscape Area; site at Huish Woods West Hatch in the same area of Special Landscape value was refused and dismissed on appeal; the country roads are becoming more overloaded with notices and road signs - this is another addition.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

In terms of Policy, PPG8 outlines Government Policy including to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. Local Planning Authorities should not question need and it is the Government's view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. If a mobile phone base station meets the ICINIRP guidelines for public exposure, it should not be necessary for a Local Planning Authority to consider further health aspects and concerns about them. Structure Plan Policy 62 states that provision should be made for the establishment of telecommunications facilities in new development and the development of existing and new systems with priority given to the protection of nationally designated areas. Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy C13 advises that masts should minimize harm to the landscape, that there should be no alternative sites with less environmental impact and that existing mast or other structures could not be used. The site is close to a Park or garden of special historic

interest in Taunton Deane Local Plan, but is not within an area of Outstanding National Beauty; it is in the vicinity of Hatch Court a grade I Listed Building. This proposal is now considered to meet the criteria of these guidelines.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The proposal as originally submitted was not considered to be acceptable; the Mast was considered to be visually intrusive from areas immediately adjacent to the mast, from the nearest residential property and from the Meare Green area. This was evident from the siting of a temporary mast installation organised by the agent. Local residents had concerns about the original submission. The agents held a public meeting in Hatch Beauchamp in order to provide information. The agents have considered site sharing but none of the sites in the vicinity were suitable given the particular requirements. Consideration was given to placing the mast within the wooded area but given its various designations this was not pursued. The new site is located close to an existing well defined point of access to the woods, and alternative routes to the proposed new location were looked at, but all necessitated removing mature trees, thus the currently suggested point of access. The revised siting is considered to be more appropriate, and subject to another temporary mast installation to finally access visual impact, is considered acceptable.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That subject to an assessment of the temporary mast installation, that provided minimal or no detrimental visual amenity is noted, the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions on landscaping, trees to be retained, tree protection, no trenches, protection of hedges, surfacing of point of access to be agreed and no drainage to highway. Note re conditions 3 and 6 relate to lane side hedge/trees.

**In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.**

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356460 MS K MARLOW (MON/TUES ONLY)**

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