

Dartmoor National Park Authority

Development Management Committee

Public Minutes of Friday 4 April 2025

Present: Peter Harper, Gay Hill, Mike Jeffrey, James McKinnes, Sally Morgan, Caroline Mott, Mark Owen, Mark Renders, Lois Samuel, Philip Sanders (Chair), Mary Seddon, Peter Smerdon, Dan Thomas, Mark Williams, Pamela Woods

Apologies: Will Dracup, Peter Harper, John Nutley, Guy Pannell

Non-Attendance: Jerry Brook

Officers in attendance: Dean Kinsella (Director of Spatial Planning), Oliver Dorrell (Senior Planning Officer), Penny Bailey (Minute Taker)

The Chair welcomed Corinne Farrell (Independent Person) to the meeting.

The Chair reminded Members on the use of microphones to ensure a clear recording for any members of the public listening to the broadcast and for those sitting in the public gallery.

1615 Declarations of Interest and Contact

Members agreed to declare those interests set out in the matrix attached to the Agenda (Membership of other Council).

All Members, with the exception of Mr Sanders and Mrs Mott, declared a personal interest in item 0210/24 – Challamoor Field, Buckland in the Moor, due to having received email correspondence from the Chair of Buckland in the Moor Parish meeting.

1616 Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 7 February 2025

The public minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2025, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

1617 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None.

1618 Applications to be Determined by the Committee

Considered: The Report of the Director of Spatial Planning (NPA/DM/25/006).

Item 1 – 0210/24 – Installation of 20m lattice telecommunications tower supporting 9 no. antennas, 2 no. 600mm dishes, together with 1 no. foul weather enclosure, 1 no. generator and 1 no. meter cabinet plus a 1.2m satellite dish and compound fencing for EAS and Shared Rural Network projects - Challamoor Field, Buckland-in-the-Moor, Newton Abbot, TQ13 7TG

Prior to the Officer's presentation to Members, an error within the report was noted - Paragraph 8.43 should read as follows:

"The location of the alternative sites explores by the applicant and an explanation on why these have been discounted has been provided. It is considered that the applicant has provided adequate justification for discounting other sites."

Speakers: Mr David Burke, Chair, Buckland-in-the-Moor Parish Meeting
Mr Norman Gillan, EE Project Planning Lead

The Case officer reminded Members that this application had been due to be determined at the Development Management Committee meeting on Friday 7 March 2025 but had been deferred in order that further consultation could take place with regard to the change in the boundary of the site – the red line now included the access to the main site. He advised that no further comments had been received and confirmed that the developer had served the requisite notice on the owner of the track, Devon County Council, as required by article 13 of the Development Management Procedure Order.

Members were reminded that, at the meeting held on 7 February 2025, officers recommended an additional condition to be added to deal with any new power supply to the site be provided below surface.

The Case Officer proposed a further condition with regard to the access track, as follows:

'Condition 14

A surface condition survey shall be carried out of the access track to ensure that it is capable of accommodating the traffic associated with the construction and on-going maintenance of the development without having a detrimental impact on its stability or significance as a non-designated heritage asset. The results of the survey and any remediation strategy which might be required to restore the track shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing by prior to commencement of construction works on site. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.'

Cllr David Burke (Buckland in the Moor Parish Council) advised that he had sent an email to Members and added to/clarified two points as follows:

- Paragraph 4.5.3 of the published Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2033 states that the applicant must demonstrate that their proposal is the least harmful way to deliver the service and minimise impact, taking into account mast sharing, clustering and avoiding isolated prominent and sensitive locations. In his view, Members should also evaluate other potential sites.
- The code of practice for wireless development in England specifically states that local communities need to be consulted on the siting of a mast – the application before Members has already determined that siting.

Buckland in the Moor Councillors have seen data provided by the Home Office which shows that most of the benefit of the proposed mast at Challamoor will be for the for Widecombe-in-the-Moor. Councillors are very much against the proposals.

Mr Norman Gillan, EE Project Planning Lead noted the comprehensive summary provided by the Case Officer. He also noted the additional information with regard to the airwave

site and the discounted alternatives. He added that operators are advised to consider mast site sharing in the first instance - considering planning policy and their own network code obligations. The airwave site was considered, drawings were produced and, in addition to the more recent assessment undertaken by Planning Officers, a pre-application discussion was also undertaken. The feedback was that the proposed site would not be supported by the Planning Department. At that point, a further site was sought. With regard to consultation, EE had apologized to Buckland in the Moor Parish members when the siting of the proposed mast was re-assessed.

In response to Member questions, Mr Gillan responded as follows:

- In order to provide service and signal to the Emergency Service Network, regardless of any other use of the mast, it would need to be 20m in height in order to ensure effective transmission;
- The expected lifespan of the lattice would be 15 years;
- Other operators would be able to have access the shared rural network antenna subject to them agreeing a contract with EE;
- Both projects are 4G projects. An upgrade to 5G would not greatly change the physical appearance of the mast. If there was a need for it to be upgraded to 5G then notifications or applications through the planning department would be made.
- Improved broadband provision should also be available through the installation of the lattice.

The Case Officer provided some further clarity in terms of how officers assessed the application. The supporting statement which accompanied the application stated: "an installation in this location will ensure that 4G coverage is provided by the four MN OS E H3G Vodafone and VM O2. Thus, this is a shared infrastructure which is in full accordance with national planning policy."

In response to Member questions, the Case Officer and Director of Spatial Planning clarified as follows:

- The track to the site is currently unsurfaced and largely used by agricultural vehicles and other off-road vehicles. It is proposed that the track be gravelled. With regard to equipment being placed on site, a proposed condition, should permission be granted, would be that a Construction Environmental Management Plan be provided. An addition to this condition could be "... and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works taking place;"
- The lattice tower, generator and other equipment will be held within a secure compound with a 1.8m high wire link fence;
- With regard to concerns expressed by the Authority's archaeologists on the impact of the proposed development in the wider landscape, they were taken seriously by officers when considering the application; however, it was determined that those concerns would not impact severely enough to warrant refusal of the application and would be outweighed by the public benefit;
- No works are proposed to the hedgebank. There is a proposed landscaping condition which would address the planting around the compound, together with a requirement of the planting of a replacement tree following the proposed removal of the oak tree.

- With regard to the Code of Practice for Wireless Development, this is guidance, it is not policy. It was, though, considered by officers while preparing the recommendation;
- The agent had again, this morning, apologised to Buckland in the Moor Parish Meeting regarding the lack of consultation in the first instance. Officers have given some weight to this issue and the Parish Meeting's lack of input regarding site location, for example; however other material considerations have attributed more weight.
- The Authority has responsibilities under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) and its duty to conserve and enhance the moor. Impact on the wider landscape must be considered e.g., mitigation via tree coverage, hedgerows, general topography. The second purpose regarding understanding and enjoyment and what the proposal would bring is that the technology would provide the wider community, visitors and residents to improved access.

Members requested that the proposed condition in respect of the electrical supply be displayed, as follows:

‘Condition 13

Prior to its installation, details of the proposed route and method of providing a power supply to the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The power supply shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.’

The Case Officer explained that the agent had accepted that the supply to site within the field itself would be underground.

Mrs Mott proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr McInnes.

Members commented that it was unfortunate that Buckland Parish Meeting had not been consulted in the appropriate manner and hoped that a lesson had been learned by the Home Office and by their agents that they need to ensure that wider communities are fully engaged in these processes. Some felt that a compromise within the planning process should be sought for this type of application as ‘one size does not fit all’ with regard to communication masts / lattice towers, adding that alternatives needed to be found for beautiful rolling landscapes within areas such as National Parks. Others commented that the overall benefit to the wider community should also carry weight; there would never be a perfect mast design.

Resolved: That, subject to the following conditions, permission be GRANTED.

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the development hereby approved, shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following approved drawings: Amended Site Location Plan – numbered 002A-Issue-E6 received 18-11-2024, Amended Proposed Site Plan – numbered 150-Proposed-Site-Plan-E6 received 10-12-2024, Amended Proposed Elevation South – numbered 252-Issue-E6 received 18-11-2024, Amended Proposed Elevation East – numbered 251-Issue-E6 received 18-11-2024, Proposed Elevation North – numbered 250-Issue-E6 received 18-11-2024, Amended

Proposed Elevation West – numbered 253-Issue-E6 received 18-11-2024 and Amended Arboricultural Layout plan – numbered arb-plan-nov-24 received 05-12-2024.

3. No part of the development hereby approved shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall set out, as a minimum, site specific measures to control and monitor impact arising in relation to construction traffic, noise and vibration, dust and air pollutants, land contamination, ecology and ground water. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved CEMP at all times.
4. The mast and equipment attached to the mast hereby approved shall, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, be painted Olive Drab RAL6022 in colour not later than 30 days after the substantial completion of the development.
5. Prior to substantial completion of the development hereby permitted, details of the proposed landscaping and planting scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The landscaping and planting shall include a suitable replacement for the oak tree (T1) and shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme within twelve months of the commencement of the development, or such longer period as the Local Planning Authority shall specify in writing. The landscaping and planting shall be maintained for a period of five years from the date of the commencement of the development, such maintenance shall include the replacement of any trees or shrubs that die or are removed.
6. No vegetation clearance or demolition works shall take place during the bird nesting season (01 March to 31 August, inclusive) unless a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed in writing to the Local Planning Authority that the works will not disturb nesting birds.
7. The development and ecological enhancements hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the recommendations and requirements stated in the Ecological Assessment (Feb 2024, The Ecology Practice). This planning condition shall only be discharged when a suitably qualified ecologist confirms in writing to the Local Planning Authority that the recommendations and requirements have been implemented.
8. The telecommunications mast and equipment shall be permanently removed upon redundancy and the land reinstated to its former condition within a period of six months unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
9. No external lighting shall be installed until a detailed lighting scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, all lighting on the site shall accord with the approved scheme and other than those expressly approved by this grant of planning permission, no external lighting shall be installed at the application site.
10. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved Amended Arboricultural Layout plan, precise details of the construction of proposed gravel access path from the gateway to the compound shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the works being carried out. Thereafter, only the approved method of construction shall be used.
11. Prior to the commencement of development on site, details of a method of below ground investigation to confirm the necessary root protection area for the group of trees growing

on the bank (G1) to the south-west of the site, as shown on the approved Amended Arboricultural Layout plan, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The below ground investigation shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, and the findings of this investigation, together with confirmation of proposed root protection area, shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Thereafter, no excavations or below ground works shall take place in the approved root protection area.

12. Notwithstanding the approved drawings, details of the position of any soakaways shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soakaways and surface water drainage shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
13. Prior to its installation, details of the proposed route and method of providing a power supply to the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The power supply shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.
14. A surface condition survey shall be carried out of the access track to ensure that it is capable of accommodating the traffic associated with the construction and on-going maintenance of the development without having a detrimental impact on its stability or significance as a non-designated heritage asset. The results of the survey and any remediation strategy which might be required to restore the track shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing by prior to commencement of construction works on site. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

1614 Appointment of Site Inspection Panel and Arrangements for Site Visits

None.

The Director of Spatial Planning reported that a Trees and Landscape Officer had been appointed. Reports would be taken to Development Management Committee moving forward.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11.20am.