

Bullingham L (Liam)

From: Hayne, Peter - UK [REDACTED]
Sent: 31 March 2008 12:49
To: Development Management Consultation 2007
Subject: MODERNISING THE PLANNING SYSTEM: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT -
RESPONSE BY NATIONAL GRID WIRELESS
Importance: High
Attachments: National Grid Wireless - Development Management consultation.jpg

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I respond on behalf of National Grid Wireless on the above Development Management consultation.

Overall, we are not opposed to the changes proposed within the consultation paper. However, we raise a small consideration in relation to **Question 2: "Do you have any comments on the thresholds in Schedule 1 of the DMR on pre-application consultation?"**

We note that Schedule 1 states that statutory pre-application consultation will be required for all local developments on land identified in the development plan as greenbelt. We appreciate that there is a strong policy presumption against inappropriate development in the green belt, reflected in SPP21. However, we are not confident that the inclusion of a statutory pre-application consultation requirement for all local development in greenbelt is either practical, necessary or in the public interest.

To take this consideration further, the General Permitted Development Order 1992 as amended, does not preclude certain types of permitted development within green belt land. Examples might be extending an existing residential property under Part 1, erecting a means of enclosure under Part 2 or installing essential broadcast apparatus onto an existing ground based radio mast under Part 20. Such permitted development rights are, of course, subject to various limitations.

However, where such permitted development rights might be 'marginally' exceeded, resulting in the need for an application for planning permission, then Schedule 1 of the DMR would place such local development in a green belt into a category requiring lengthy pre-application consultation and the various procedural aspects related to that process. This includes as a statutory minimum the need to hold a public meeting and press advertisement.

In such circumstances we consider that the requirement for statutory pre-application consultation would not be in the wider public interest. For the applicant it would be a time consuming and potentially costly exercise to explain and consult on a scheme which in itself could, within minimal change, be permitted development. For the community who might be involved in such pre-application consultations, such an exercise might be seen as having limited benefit and be frustrating. They are probably unlikely to be able to encourage or influence the final form of development proposed and therefore the potential benefits of community pre-application consultations are likely to be lost.

As a further consideration you will be aware that The Digital Switchover (DSO) Project is a major transformation project that will see the UK switchover to fully digital TV region by region between 2008 and 2012. Government and the industry regulator OFCOM are driving DSO. On the 16 November 2006, Scottish Government issued written guidance to all Scottish local planning authorities explaining its implementation by Arqiva and National Grid Wireless and the planned timetable. It also highlighted the significant public benefits associated with the project and how DSO would be based around the use and upgrading of existing broadcast infrastructure network of 1154 sites (in the UK). The DSO project may include alteration to existing broadcast structures within designated landscape areas or other land use designation such as greenbelt and in some instances, alterations to the infrastructure may also require planning permission.

Taking into consideration guidance within SPP21, NPPG19 and PAN62 and the operational and planning considerations of building a completely new broadcast site elsewhere, it is considered that the small alteration of an existing broadcast mast in a green belt, for DSO delivery, is likely to present the optimum choice. With this in mind, we are further concerned that small scale works on a radio mast for digital switchover, requiring planning permission, may fall into the requirement of lengthy statutory pre-application consultation. We are concerned again that this could work against the wider public interest of the timely delivery of important and critical infrastructure necessary for the attainment of DSO.

We suggest that further consideration should be given to this matter so to avoid very minor development in greenbelt (particularly that just falling outside permitted development rights), from falling within a statutory prior consultation process. Such flexibility might include some kind of tolerance/thresholds built into Schedule of 1 of the DMR or identifying specifically those types of local development in the green belt that statutory pre-application consultations would or would not apply. Alternatively, the matter might be addressed through policy guidance.

We would further encourage that publicly important infrastructure, such as that required for radio and television broadcasting and digital switchover, should be excluded from Schedule 1 and associated statutory pre-consultation requirements.

We trust this will assist with your consideration of the DMR.

Yours faithfully

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