TOLLERTON
PARISH COUNCIL

10 October 2018

App Ref 18/01985/GDOTEL - Object

ISSUE 1 VISUAL IMPACT

It is considered that the proposed developments consisting of prominent metal stanchions and ancillary supporting structures will have a significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of this very prominent and sensitive piece of landscape within the Green Belt. Views across open rural countryside are recognised as an important local characteristic of Tollerton and the visual impact that this proposal would make would be detrimental to that characteristic by the nature of its scale, siting and in the choice of materials. All of these factors could be addressed more sympathetically to minimise the visual impact of this industrial style development in the green belt, most notably the structure could be sited lower, be shorter and be clad/disguised as a tree in keeping with the immediate landscape.

The railway is an important part of the local Green Infrastructure and a home to wildlife that may be disturbed temporarily or permanently by this application. Further studies should be conducted on this impact and on the benefits to wildlife of mitigation including reducing the height and using a tree mast structure. In wider terms the Borough Council as Planning authority should be protecting this area to either re-open the railway line to passengers as sought by Melton Borough Council or as a future transport corridor for pedestrians and cyclist to form an important link between West Bridgford, Edwalton, Tollerton, Plumtree, Keyworth, Ruddington and the surrounding countryside. No Application should be permitted that obstructs or is detrimental to these goals.

The areas that are subject of this proposal are at the top of a railway embankment which is already the most prominent landscape feature at the edge of Tollerton and Plumtree. Any industrial infrastructure erected on top of this will therefore appear as a highly incongruous feature within an otherwise rural horizon.

We also second the comments as per Plumtree Parish Council:

The Rushcliffe Core Strategy States in respect of development within the Nottingham and Derby Green Belt :-

"National planning policy expects the Council to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation;

to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land. The Council will do this through the implementation of this plan and in preparing and implementing the Local

Plan Part 2 (Land and Planning Policies)."

It is considered that this development, which could blight this highly sensitive and highly visible area of Green Belt, needs very stringent justification in the context of the above guidance. It is considered that the need to find a suitable test location for 5G masts (when there are undoubtedly many alternatives in less sensitive locations) does not outweigh green belt amenity considerations. It is understood that the existing test track stretches approximately 17.6Km from Tollerton to towards Melton Mowbray and therefore much of the length lies outside the

Green Belt in remote areas that are much less sensitive to this type of development than rural villages in Green Belt locations.

It is noted that the proposed locations lie adjacent to road bridges. It does not appear there is any technical reason for this in terms of mast coverage testing so it is assumed it is to provide road access to save cost on construction, access and maintenance. Protecting Network Rail's profit should not be a primary consideration when exactly the same testing function can be achieved by locating the masts beyond the Green Belt and away from locations where the masts will have a demonstrable adverse visual impact. Access to more remote locations for both construction and maintenance can easily be gained – and here's a revolutionary idea – by rail.

Para 143-144 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 state :-

> *"Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.*
>
> *When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."*

It is considered that the applicant has not demonstrated the 'very special circumstances' that justify the particular location of these masts balanced against the detrimental impact the development will have on the setting of Plumtree and Tollerton and the rural character of this part of the Green Belt.

Para 146 of the NPPF does recognise that some forms of development are appropriate in the Green Belt and states :-

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

a) *mineral extraction;*

b) *engineering operations;*

c) *local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*

d) *the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*

e) *material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*

f) *development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.*

It is submitted that the proposed mast developments could be placed anywhere along the test track to achieve the same purpose for network testing and that Network cannot therefore demonstrate the 'requirement for a Green Belt location' under criterion (c).

ISSUE 2 MITIGATION

In the event that the Borough Council do approve the application we would request the following mitigation measures

1. Temporary Consent

We note that previous similar consents have allowed the masts to be in place for 10 years. There appears to be no justification for this period as testing can certainly be adequately undertaken within 2 years and telecommunication technology is likely to have moved on to the point where the masts will be redundant in 10 years.

As such it is considered reasonable that, rather than blight this part of the Green Belt for 10 years, the apparatus be dismantled and removed after 3 years.