

Springhill, Beeches Lane,

Ashurst Wood

West Sussex

RH19 3RN

25 February 2025

Hamish Evans

Planning Officer Mid-Sussex District Council

Dear Hamish

Objections to planning application DM/24/3100

The installation of a 25 metre high slimline lattice tower with 6 no. antennas and 2 no. transmission dishes, 1 no. equipment cabinet, 1 no. electric meter cabinet, and ancillary development thereto including compound fencing.

Land At Beeches Farm Beeches Lane Ashurst Wood West Sussex

Access considerations

I note that in the supplementary information¹ (a report by Perry Williams) rejects two possible alternative sites in the village because of access constraints. These are sites D9 (page 18) and D12 (page 19.) The first is the village recreation grounds, the second is the Ivy Dene Lane Industrial Estate. There is easy access to the recreation grounds for a tractor to mow the grass. Likewise, the industrial estate has numerous heavy goods vehicles visit on a daily basis.

If access restrictions rules out these sites, I cannot understand why this does not rule out the site on Beeches Farm. The sole entrance to the farm is down Beeches Lane which is narrower than that of Ivy Dene Lane, partly unpaved, and has a clear pinch point half way down at the bend just past the entrance to Gorse Bank Farm. I have attached two photos at the end of this letter which illustrate this point.

The application fails to note the entire access route down to the farm is a public bridle path. This is used by horse riders daily at various points of the day. During the summer months, the path is part of a popular route for DofE parties on expedition. It is one of the nice aspects of living where we do, to see frequent parties of unaccompanied children with their rucksacks going along Beeches Lane clearly enjoying the experience of being out in the country. An application which does not address how both horse riders and foot walkers are protected should not be approved.

Furthermore, the existing access ends at the farm itself. Having ruled out sites for poor access, the application makes no mention of how access is to be gained across open fields and up a hill to the proposed site itself. A temporary road for construction would be a significant intrusion into the countryside, especially as it would overlap with the existing footpath. Such a significant

¹https://padocs.midsussex.gov.uk/PublicAccess_Live/Document/ViewDocument?id=DC13EB6BC8CC4199BB4CE31CB435BA54

intrusion should also require further impact studies to see whether it would have a detrimental impact on wildlife in the area. The site itself will require ongoing access for maintenance. If left unpaved, the route up to the site will be inaccessible except to four-wheel drives. Access in wet conditions (i.e. much of the year) will leave a lasting visual impact on the countryside that does not seem compatible with an AONB. A permanent paved road would have an unacceptable level of impact into the countryside.

I have tried to review all the documents supplied by the developer but have failed to find any mention of access to power. The site is remote and there is no current power supply. In discussions with the local power grid operator, it appears there is limited spare capacity in the local network. Power comes to the farm by an overhead line from Ivy Dene Lane, then down Beeches Lane. The Southern Water pumping station located on Beeches Farm has its own power supply by underground cable. The planning application needs to address access to power either by overhead line (with its obvious visible impact) or by underground line (which will bring challenges of avoiding tree root damage).

I was also under the impression that telecom towers require back up power. Is this to be done by battery, or by diesel generator? The latter would add to the access issues mentioned above (maintenance and refuelling), raise noise issues, and not be obviously compatible with the Mid Sussex sustainability agenda. Again, I looked for answers to this question in the numerous submissions by the developer and failed to find an answer.

Viability of small farms and the role they play in the High Weald AONB.

Finally, consideration should be given to the impact the development would have on the farm. Mid-Sussex should carefully consider whether this will threaten the viability of the farm. It is well known that farmers face a challenging backdrop and have to be resourceful because of the fine line between being viable and being financially unsustainable. The current application does not have the support of the owner of Beeches Farm and she has raised concerns with me, as with a number of neighbours about its impact. The council should respect the importance that such farms play in helping preserve the landscape in the AONB. Beeches Farm also plays an additional role in being a buffer between Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead, ensuring the town does not expand to swallow up the villages that surround it.

Yours faithfully,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Photo attachments follow



Looking down the single lane section of Ivy Dene Lane.

This option was discounted as there would be physical access issues for the HGV/crane required for building the site. The overhanging trees on Ivy Dene Lane would cause an issue for tall vehicles and would present a risk of tree strikes which would likely damage the trees and could also damage the proposed equipment. [Supplementary Information p19]



Photo from outside Springhill looking up Beeches Lane. No access issues noted by the developer.