

Background

We refer you to the letter dated 31 July 2006 from the Communities and Local Government, Culture, Media and Sport and Trade and Industry Departments (for England) advising you about the Digital Switchover of the analogue terrestrial television broadcast network. We also refer you to a letter from either Arqiva or National Grid Wireless (both companies now under the same ownership and trading as Arqiva), providing you with more information about the particular sites that will be affected in your area.

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. This is part of a wider and ongoing policy to improve and take maximum advantage of the many potential opportunities presented by electronic communications in all their diverse forms. A recent example of this support for electronic communications is found within The Digital Britain Final Report published in 2009 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. This forms one of the central policy commitments in the Government's Building Britain's Future plan and draft legislative programme. The enormity of DSO is underpinned in the Report within paragraph 129 of Chapter 3a:

"There are no current major infrastructure issues for cable or satellite TV distribution and other less strategic issues remain with the capabilities of the private sector to resolve. Terrestrial TV distribution on the other hand still provides a huge challenge (and opportunity) for Government, Ofcom and the industry to accomplish the Digital TV switchover".

The existing low powered Relay Station which provides important localised broadcast infilling, now needs to be altered to accommodate the additional apparatus required as part of the Digital Switchover Project. In this case the proposed works are minor as shown on the application drawings, but to assist, comprise the following:

The provision of a 750mm satellite dish (with support apparatus) on the existing lattice mast and the provision of associated ancillary radio equipment housing comprising a replacement equipment cabin and a small scale meter cabinet. An existing equipment cabin is to be removed from the site as part of the proposal.

The dish antenna, equipment cabin and meter cabinet are shown in green on the plans and the support apparatus is shown in blue for ease of reference. The dish shown in green on the headframe at the top of the mast already benefits from planning permission and is in situ on the mast. It therefore does not form part of the current application.

Prior to the submission of this application, an assessment was made for the purposes of establishing the appropriate level of prior consultation that might be carried out. In doing this, we have used a similar approach as the best practice one adopted by the Mobile Operators. We have accordingly carried out a Traffic Light Rating to guide our consultation strategy which was green. In accordance with best practice, in this instance we only propose to rely on the normal consultations associated with the planning process.

Local and National Policy Framework

We have already referred to the Government requirement to switchover broadcasting services from analogue to digital and the letter sent to all planning authorities advising them about this. As UK national planning policy guidance mainly predates DSO, the letter now provides a statement of national policy guidance.

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The additional apparatus proposed has been confined to the minimum that is required to facilitate DSO. The design and appearance of the apparatus is necessarily guided by the technical requirements of DSO and the existing apparatus being added to. Having regard to the installation as a whole, these minor works will not significantly alter the appearance of the broadcast facility.

The Government clearly encourages the reuse of existing sites and this existing site is required by the plan approved by OFCOM, the regulator and as reflected in National Policy. The use of an existing facility also accords with the relevant Local policy, insofar as applicable. These policies apply regardless of any designation.



Design and Access as Part of a National Network

The development proposed essentially involves engineering operations and so is exempt from the requirement to provide a design and access statement under Article 8 (1) (b) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.

However, to assist, the Government clearly advises that material considerations include the significance of the development as part of a national network. The particular role of the site has been explained and there is population dependent upon it for terrestrial television services. Network considerations also guide the shape and form of the development proposed.

The **amount and scale** of the new apparatus has been confined to what is operationally required for DSO. This is important to Arqiva and the BBC to maintain the overall costs of the project, which would be unnecessarily high if the works were over specified.

As the proposals involve the alteration of an existing mast, the **layout, design and appearance** is necessarily guided by that and the associated structural implications. Likewise the new satellite dish must be compatible with both the digital technology and the antennas adopted for the whole new network.

For technical reasons, the broadcast satellite dish must be well clear of trees and foliage, which would otherwise affect viewers' reception. This is not therefore a form of development that can be substantially surrounded with **landscaping**. There is however a reasonable degree of landscaping in the vicinity of the site which helps shield the existing installation.

With regard to **access**, once installed and operational the permanent works should not result in any material change to the existing level of activity and traffic already generated through the lawful use of the site as part of a national television broadcast network.

Please further take this application and the details contained within it as **due notification under the relevant condition of the Electronic Communications Code (Conditions and Restrictions) Regulations 2003**. In particular, you are given notice of our intention to install the electronic communications apparatus that is described in more detail in the application documentation (including the scale drawings) and to be located as shown on the application plans.

To conclude, the development is in accordance with the local development / policy framework and National Policy and we respectfully request that the planning permission sought be granted. The Government clearly indicates that applications relating to this project should be treated as a matter of **PRIORITY** and that delegated powers should be used where possible.

We trust everything is in order, but if you do require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Matthew Waugh at this office.

Yours faithfully

Higham & Co

For and on behalf of Arqiva Services Ltd

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