

Our Ref: EE TNS 85663

10th November 2023

Durness Community Council

C/o Highland Council
Council Headquarters
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX

WHP Telecoms Ltd
Building 8, Unit 6
Carryduff Business Park,
Comber Road,
Carryduff,
BT8 8AN

ads@durness.scot

Dear Sir/Madam,

PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS INSTALLATION AT Loch Eriboll, A838, Lairg, Highlands, IV27 4UL E: 239143 N: 952896.

The Shared Rural Network is a £1bn programme led by the mobile telecoms industry, supported by a mix of private and public funds. The aim is to extend geographic 4G coverage to 95% of the UK by 2025. Investing £530m of their own money, the programme sees the four UK mobile network operators, EE, O2, Three and Vodafone, work in partnership with the UK Government, who will supply a further £500m, to deliver 4G coverage to rural communities across the country. The work we are carrying out in your area is part of the publicly funded element of the programme.

The Shared Rural Network aims to close the digital divide between those areas with poor levels of connectivity and those areas with access to strong mobile phone signals and broadband connections. Lack of coverage in these remote parts of the country is caused by only certain operators being active in the area, or as is often the case in rural areas, no operator presence at all. The new extended coverage will result from the operators working together to share new and existing masts in those areas where there is already some coverage but not from all operators. This will save operators needing to build duplicate infrastructure, helping make cost savings, as well as limit environmental impacts. In areas where there is no coverage at all, the operators will come together and build completely new masts which will house equipment from all four operators.

The programme will deliver improvements across the UK with all home nations seeing increases in coverage. Scotland specifically will see coverage from all four operators increase to 74% of the country and coverage from at least one operator rise to 91%. The programme will provide essential coverage to the residents and business owners across the country and to those visiting our rural areas. The benefits of reliable mobile connectivity are far reaching and have positive impacts on many aspects of day-to-day life, making for a safer, more connected and more prosperous rural community.

The TNS nominal falls within the remote landscape of Land East of Strath Beag River.

The operator EE Ltd have identified a suitable location near Land East of Strath Beag River to host the proposed critical infrastructure, which will be further shared by operators VMO2, Vodafone and Three UK. The search was well attended by Acquisition, Design, Construction, Radio, Drone Team & the Landowner. All agreed it was the best location for all operational dependencies and from a planning and visual amenity perspective.

We aim to work with you to progress a proposal that is both acceptable to your authority and meets the SRN project's technical network requirements. This approach demonstrates the commitment to ensure consultation with Local Planning Authorities and other appropriate key stakeholders.

Mobiles can only work with a network of base stations in place where people want to use their mobile phones or other wireless devices. Without base stations, the mobile phones and other devices we rely on simply won't work.

This letter therefore invites you, in accordance with planning policy guidance and Best Practice Commitments, to enter into pre-application discussions with regard to our preferred site option prior to a formal planning submission.

The technical network requirement is as follows:

EE TNS 85663 'Land East of Strath Beag River'

- Proposed EE 25.0m high lattice tower on proposed concrete foundation
- Proposed 3no. shared antennas
- Proposed 3no. BOB's
- Proposed 3no. shared SBC's
- Proposed 3no. RRU's
- Proposed 6no. RFM's
- Proposed cabinet and ancillary equipment to be installed on concrete base
- Proposed 1no. 10.00m X 4.00m compound for generator
- Proposed meter cabinet (painted RAL7008 Khaki Grey), to be installed on concrete base within fence line
- Proposed 1.8m wooden deer fence c/w single access gate
- Ancillary development there to
- Existing ATV Route

It is of note that the identified location does fall within designated land but not within close proximity to any statutory or locally registered historical assets. Additionally, it does lie within the Foinaven-Ben Hee Wild Land Area.

From early engagement with NatureScot the location has been flagged as 'Amber' and recommended that a Wild Lands Assessment is undertaken to understand the extent of potential impact on the local landscape character.

All SRN installations are designed to be fully compliant with the public exposure guidelines established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). These guidelines have the support of Government, the European Union and they also have the formal backing of the World Health Organisation. A certificate of ICNIRP compliance will be included within any future planning submission.

Finally, we would be interested in any local stakeholders or groups that you consider would like to know more about our proposals.

We enclose a copy of our supporting documents and welcome your suggestions.

We look forward to receiving your response within 14 days of the date of this letter.

Should you have any queries regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me (quoting EE TNS 85663 Shared Rural Network Project)

Yours faithfully,

Caitlyn Richmond

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Enc.
Drawings
Consultation Plan
Supporting Project Information