

Andrew Tait [via email]

Senior Planning Officer

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

22 February 2024

**Objection to Planning Application: C/44/304 Cam Houses Oughtershaw**

**Full planning permission for the installation of a 20m lightweight lattice mast with 3 no. radio antennas, 3 no. 600mm dishes, radio equipment housing and ancillary development within a new compound area of previously undeveloped land (Site Ref: 23184)**

Dear Mr Tait

Friends of the Dales wishes to **object** to this application.

This mast will be sited in a highly visible location in open moorland. The plethora of documentation provided by the applicant, on behalf of Shared Rural Network, fails to properly assess the very high visual impact this mast will have on the landscape and scenic beauty of this remote and tranquil part of the national park landscape. Given the applicant states the mast has a lifespan of only twenty years, it seems extraordinary that such a short-term solution is being proposed to the questionable need to provide 4G coverage in this incredibly remote area.

In their Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) the applicant notes that the Pennine Way is "located close to/directly adjacent to" the site. Despite this proximity, and given the open nature of the landscape, the applicants claim that there will be a *negligible visual change* to people using this Public Right of Way.

Similar claims of negligible impact from a Shared Rural Network (SRN) and Emergency Services Network (ESN) mast in the Lake District National Park have recently been scrutinised by the Planning Inspector. In this case, the PI determined that the potential impact of visual change on users of recreational route (at Buttermere, a similar area of national and international designation) would be *greater than claimed by the applicant*. For this reason, and the impact on landscape and scenic beauty, the Appeal was dismissed (APP/Q9495/W/23/3334950 – 18 January 2024).

We estimate there have been 12 mast applications submitted to YDNPA since July 2022 under the government's Shared Rural Network scheme. One, S/05/49 at Barbon Low Fell, Casterton, was rightly refused and is currently subject to Appeal. Another three have been withdrawn, possibly awaiting the outcome of that Appeal before re-applying.

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Only one of these 12 masts has been approved, at Buckden Rake (C/13/204). The officer's report clearly indicated the very fine balance between policy objectives for rural connectivity against protecting landscape quality. It is now clear that this mast was part of an intended suite of six masts under Shared Rural Network which would require Line of Sight between them to be operational.

We urge national park members to refuse this particular application – C/44/304 Cam Houses - due to the significant impact on the prime purposes of the national park – conservation of landscape quality and recreational use.

We also urge members to disregard the irrelevant argument from the applicant that this mast must be approved in order for the sequence of masts (C/35/45, C/46/290A, R/48/169, R/53/36) linked by Line of Sight to work. The potential impacts of each application must be assessed separately, and a decision reached on a case-by-case basis.

Chair, Policy and Planning Committee  
On behalf of Friends of the Dales

*Friends of the Dales is a working name of the Yorkshire Dales Society which was founded in 1981 and is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Friends of the Dales is free of political and financial affiliations. We work to ensure that the Government, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and other relevant agencies deliver their obligations to care for the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales, an internationally important area. We do this by considering major planning applications and policy development affecting the Yorkshire Dales and adjacent areas. We offer a year round programme of walks and talks so that everyone can enjoy and learn more about this beautiful area and why it needs protection. We have a membership of around 1,300 individuals, families, businesses and organisations.*