

By email to: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

Mr Roddy Dowell  
Planning Officer  
The Highland Council

17 February 2023

Dear Mr Dowell

**Erection of a 25-metre-high telecommunications lattice tower with associated equipment & ancillary development. Formation of access track. Land 1270M NW Of Shepherds Cottage Drummin Laggan.**

**Planning Reference: 23/00489/FUL**

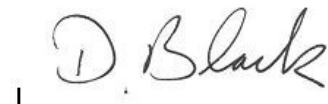
1. Mountaineering Scotland wishes to comment on the proposal under the Shared Rural Network initiative for a new telecommunications mast by Melgarve.
2. Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with more than 15,000 members and is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and skitourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains. We represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering, and provide training and information to mountain users for safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
3. Our interest lies with potential effects on mountaineering interests, specifically in this case the visual impact on landscape of the proposed 2km long installation access track.
4. We find that there is inadequate information in the Design and Access Statement to properly assess this. A full construction method statement is required that states construction and restoration specifications.
5. The information required to properly assess this track proposal would include a commitment that contractors would adhere to the guidance offered in the SNH report Constructed Tracks in the Scottish Uplands.
6. Criteria that would assist assessment of potential impact would include:
  - The design of the proposed route to the installation site, including drainage measures, bank cutting and land forming;
  - The source of crushed stone used, and location of any borrow pit required to supply this – imported stone aggregates may have a different chemistry than the surrounding rock, leading to obviously different vegetation growth;
  - Track width required for installation;
  - Track width required for infrequent maintenance access – since infrequent use is stated, a standard 2.5m wide track for 4x4 access would seem sufficient;

- Restoration techniques, including preparation and turf storage if required for edging on a restored track;

- A requirement for sowing a central vegetated strip to reduce the visual impact of the raw stone and aid vegetation regeneration. Natural revegetation is often slower than expected than in lowland areas, due to the exposed nature of the terrain and the poor soil nutrients to aid vegetation colonisation of raw stone. There is a legacy of run-of-river hydro tracks in Highland that amply illustrate this point.

7. Mountaineering Scotland requests The Highland Council seek this information from the applicant in order to address these issues before considering planning consent and conditions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small vertical line to the left of the first letter.

**Davie Black**  
**Access & Conservation Officer**  
**Mountaineering Scotland**

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