

By email to: planning.olandi@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Ms Judith Stephen
Planning Officer
Argyll & Bute Council

12 February 2025

Dear Ms Stephen

Erection of telecommunications equipment compound with 15 metre high lattice mast and installation of 84m ATV track, Land At Grianan, Glen Ure, Appin, Argyll And Bute

Planning Reference: 24/02131/PP

1. Mountaineering Scotland **objects** to the proposal under the Shared Rural Network initiative for a new 4G digital telecommunications mast in the upper reaches of Glen Ure, due to the potential adverse visual impact on the landscape qualities of Wild Land Area 6 Loch Etive Mountains, and its proximity to the approach to the edge of the Ben Nevis & Glen Coe National Scenic Area, specifically on the route to and from Beinn Sgulaire, from Elleric.
2. Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with 16,000 members and is the recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and snowsports tourists 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 hillwalking interests, specifically in this case the visual impact on landscape of the proposed mast and compound in the upper reaches of Glen Ure. It will potentially be an obvious and uncharacteristic feature in the views from the ascent and descent of the Munro Beinn Sgulaire.
4. It is our opinion that this telecommunications mast at this location is inappropriate in the landscape, nor is it essential for digitally connecting residences and business premises. It would stand out as a cluster of metal cabinets with a generator and a tall lattice mast in an open mountain landscape, with the narrow ATV track the only signs of human development in an extensive area beyond Glenure itself. This 15m tall steel lattice and its compound infrastructure would be a jarring and obvious intrusion in a perceptually remote landscape, very close to the walkers' route leading into mountainous terrain, and detracting from the qualities of the Wild Land Area and the approach and setting of this part of the National Scenic Area.
5. The applicant fails to provide any analysis of the visual and amenity impacts of the proposed development, merely providing some photographs of the landscape from random locations. Nor does the applicant provide a Wild Land Assessment to demonstrate any potential impacts on the wild qualities of this area, although there is a statement that one will be supplied. This is unacceptable within the time available for a public planning consultation and the proposal should be withdrawn or refused. Any assessment would need to take into account the length of time it will be in view from walkers moving slowly through the landscape – it is certainly not a passing glimpse as

from, for example a vehicle moving at speed along the road. The mast and compound would be in the view of the landscape for many minutes as walkers moved along the route through the glen.

7. The powering of this proposed mast is a consideration that needs to be assessed. If a generator is used, noise pollution in this remote glen will be a significant impact on the wild qualities of the location, along with visual landscape impacts.

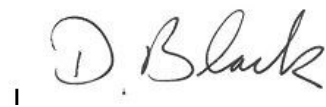
8. We support the policy aim of digital connectivity for local residents and businesses, and the public road network. We question the suitability of this mast proposal at this location to serve that need. The relevant national policies are NPF4 Policy 4 and Policy 24.

9. It is our contention that this proposal fails the test of Policy 4 c) and g) in that the objectives of designation and the integrity of the surrounding area will be compromised by this mast; and that its significant adverse effect on the landscape is not outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

10. It is our contention that this proposal fails the tests of Policy 24 d) and e) in that there are vanishingly small benefits of this connectivity for communities and the local economy; the applicant's own map of potential signal coverage clearly demonstrates that there are no local residences, business premises or public roads beyond the cluster of buildings at Glenure, and which therefore do not require this mast at this location to provide 4G coverage. This is not the right development in the right place to serve those needs. At best there would be a convenience for occasional passing hillwalkers, and such digital connectivity cannot be justified as being of national importance in either a social or economic sense.

11. It is our opinion that the significant local effect on the environmental and cultural qualities of upper Glen Ure cannot be substantially overcome by the siting, design or appearance mitigations offered by the applicant. Mountaineering Scotland **objects to this proposal** and urges Argyll and Bute Council to reject it as being inappropriate development at this location.

Yours sincerely



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