

STATEMENT ON UPGRADE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS MASTS IN SWANAGE

28 April 2023

The mobile telecommunications company, Cornerstone, will soon be upgrading its mast and related equipment at Day's Park. The Town Council has also been notified of Cornerstone's plans to upgrade its other mast at Main Beach Car Park off Victoria Avenue. This statement sets out the Town Council's position in respect of these changes.

The Council is the landlord of both these telecommunications masts. Under the relevant leases the mobile telephone company is able to upgrade their equipment without the need for the Town Council's approval. This has been done previously, most recently in 2016 at Day's Park.

In terms of planning, mast upgrades can be implemented without the need for full planning permission. On 21st December 2022 the Town Council was notified that an application for Prior Approval under the General Permitted Development Order had been submitted to Dorset Council on behalf of Cornerstone. This meant that Dorset Council could not refuse the application, but only determine if 'prior approval' was necessary.

A number of local residents have expressed concerns about potential health implications arising from the upgrading of these facilities to 5G technology. A presentation was made to the Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee meeting on 6th March 2023. Whilst acknowledging the technological benefits that could be delivered via 5G technology, possible risks to public health and wildlife were also highlighted.

Members of the committee listened with interest and empathized with the concern expressed around these important matters. As the 5G rollout is still in its early stages, it was acknowledged that it cannot be proven to be entirely safe. However, it was also noted that there is no clear evidence that the technology is linked to the incidence of serious disease, such as cancer.

Although the Town Council has no means to prevent the upgrade of these telecommunications masts, it would encourage local residents to take steps to inform themselves about the proposed mast upgrades and the impact of 5G. Here are some useful websites:

The Day's Park mast planning application and supporting papers can be viewed by typing the application number P/PAEL/2023/00167 into the relevant search box at <https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/>

Public Health England guidelines on 5G technology can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health>

BBC Reality Check - Does 5G pose health risks? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-48616174>

Presentation to Purbeck Society on benefits and harms of 5G technology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0UojiSGzYk>