

2.5 Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding applications by Cable and Wireless for mobile telephone masts:

How many applications, if any, have been submitted by Cable and Wireless for mobile telephone masts? Were any of these received without the written consent of the owner of the property? Have any of these applications been considered or has any indication been given by the department to the applicant about their prospects and have any discussions taken place with other Ministers regarding these applications?

Senator F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

Cable and Wireless have submitted 35 applicants for new telecoms equipment. A further 10 applications are anticipated in the very near future. Three of these applications have subsequently been withdrawn. Of the currently submitted applications, 14 offer new pole-type masts and 3 offer lattice-style masts. All the other applications currently submitted are for equipment either on existing masts or on top of buildings that currently accommodate similar equipment. Cable and Wireless discussed their potential locations with my department but these discussions were without prejudice and involved highlighting likely constraints and concerns on any suggested location. No undertaking of unequivocal support has ever been given for any of the applications. The pre-application discussions also included Cable and Wireless seeking clarification over the status of obtaining landowners' endorsement on a planning application. Endorsement is not required in order to validate an application and its inclusion on applications forms has developed through custom and practice over the years. In the light of this, Cable and Wireless did not include the landowners' endorsement on any of the currently submitted applications. I was unaware of this situation and I have now issued instructions that, in the case of all future planning applications, owners' consent will be required. The current situation is that applications remain to be determined only when, apart from normal planning considerations, a health assessment impact is undertaken on the effects of installation and the fulfilment of an undertaking from Cable and Wireless that all landowners will endorse the applications on their land. I have only had contact with one Minister over the applications. I have exchanged emails with the Minister for Health and have assured him that consent will not be given until we have assessed the health risks. This will include consideration of the Stuart Report carried out in the UK and subsequent research reports.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am delighted to hear the Minister say that he is going to reform the process. This is just what I was after and I would like to thank him for his answer.

2.5.1 Deputy R. G. Le Hérissier:

Can the Minister confirm whether the issue of the Jersey Telecom set of masts has been considered in relation to Cable and Wireless? Why do we need a duplicate set?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

We are concerned that this batch of installations does not prejudice the possibility of mast-sharing with other networks that may wish to establish themselves on the Island at any future date. This could lead to a situation where multiple installations in a small area cause harm to visual amenity. The issue is actively being investigated and will form part of the consideration of these applications.

2.5.2 Deputy R. G. Le Hérissier:

Has his department inquired whether indeed the Jersey Telecom's set of masts, some of which I understand are installed on telephone boxes, for example, are usable by another operator and whether there is any objection, legal or otherwise, to this happening?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

As far as I understand, approximately 18 of the current applications relate to existing masts that are operated by Jersey Telecom. Also, as far as I understand it, you cannot simply put additional masts on top of telephone boxes. So, I presume that the other applications relate to other areas.