



## The National Trust for Scotland

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS MASTS POLICY

This statement sets out the general policy of The National Trust for Scotland concerning the construction of masts on its properties. It is intended both to guide Regional staff in responding to enquiries regarding the siting of masts on Trust properties and to provide information to commercial telecommunications companies concerning the Trust's objectives. It is also intended as guidance with respect to land over which the Trust holds feudal superiorities or restrictive agreements. It was approved by the Trust's Council on 6 February 1998.

#### Background

The National Trust for Scotland was established in 1931, and has the statutory purposes of promoting the 'permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and buildings in Scotland of historic or national interest or natural beauty' and 'access to and enjoyment of such buildings (and) places ... by the public'. The Trust is Scotland's largest voluntary conservation organisation, with 236,000 members and over 400 permanent staff. It has 126 properties in its care, including over 76,000 hectares of countryside. Over two million visitors are recorded to Trust properties each year, and hundreds of thousands more visit the Trust's countryside properties uncounted. The Trust cares on behalf of the nation for a great diversity of properties, including mountains, coastlines, islands, woodlands, battlefields and historic sites, gardens, castles, mansions and cottages.

#### The Unna Principles

The Trust always bears in mind the Unna Principles in the management of its mountain properties. These were set out in 1937 by the Trust's benefactor of mountain properties Percy Unna, based upon his view that such properties should 'be maintained in (their) primitive condition for all time'. The Trust considers that the erection of masts on its mountain properties is contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the Unna Principles.

#### Inalienability

Parliament has given the Trust's Council the power, unique in Scotland, to declare its properties inalienable. This means that any such property is to be held in perpetuity for the benefit of the nation, and can only be removed from the Trust's ownership against its will by special Parliamentary procedure. Most of the Trust's major countryside properties have been declared inalienable. There is provision, however, for the Trust to enter into feu dispositions or leases of inalienable property, for example where this would clearly be of public benefit.

#### General Principles

The Trust's primary objectives at its countryside properties are the conservation and enhancement of landscapes, habitats and wildlife. The Trust therefore operates a presumption against the construction of masts or other such structures on its properties. However, the Trust recognises the potential benefits of improved telecommunications, in particular to local communities and to mountain rescue teams in remote areas. There may also be advantages for the Trust itself, including improved power supplies for staff, tenants or crofters, safety benefits from shared use of masts for internal radio systems, and rental income for use in conservation work on the property. The Trust will therefore not unreasonably oppose the construction of masts on its properties, in those cases where suitable locations and designs can be agreed which do not prejudice its primary objectives.

In considering the location of masts the Trust will take into account both the development plan policies of local planning authorities and also its own policies as established in property management plans, including any management zones which may have been agreed. This will usually mean that masts will not be permitted in mountain cores, but may be considered in community or peripheral zones. Developers will be required to prove that it is not feasible to share an existing mast.

#### Assessment of Potential Sites

For each potentially acceptable site the Trust will require the submission of a brief environmental statement outlining the potential impact of the proposed development upon geology, soils, water, flora and fauna, landscape, noise, recreation and tourism, human beings, cultural heritage and material assets, and proposing mitigation measures for any potentially damaging effects identified. Trust staff may be able to offer assistance and information in some cases. Once a potentially acceptable site has been identified, the Trust will consider detailed issues such as the location, design, height and colour of the mast and any associated buildings or other structures which may be necessary. The Trust may require a dummy mast to be erected on site or photomontages to be provided, to enable the impact of the proposal to be judged accurately. The construction of new vehicle tracks will not be permitted, and permission for access by ATV should be sought from the property manager on each occasion. All elements of the agreed proposal will be incorporated into a detailed lease between the Trust and the developers. This will include a condition that the developers must restore the site to the full satisfaction of the Trust at the end of the lease or if the mast becomes redundant at any time, and the developers will be required to lodge an agreed financial bond to ensure that such restoration will take place.


#### Consultation

For each site the Trust will consult externally as relevant with the local community, the local planning authority, neighbouring proprietors, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and the Scottish Mountaineering Club. The Trust will consult internally its relevant Regional Committee and Countryside and Nature Conservation Committee, whose consent will be required for any site in a National Scenic Area. The Trust will not give its final consent until it is satisfied that the proposed location is as unobtrusive as possible and that all the details are acceptable.

#### Further Information

Additional technical information and advice is available from:

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