**Airband**

Correspondence from Resident in Orchard Close:-

“Notices have been attached to the lamp columns in our Close and part of Brookfield, by a company called Airband stating that they are going to install telegraph poles to assist in 'improving our internet service'.

As you know, being an open plan Close these poles would be an eyesore let alone for a service of little use to an area where the average age of the residents is over seventy.

I have contacted Airband and they are sending me a map of the locations; they did say that they had the approval of the local authorities”.

Email from Chair to Airband in personal capacity and their replies:-

I am Chairman of East Budleigh with Bicton Parish Council, but as we do not have a Council meeting until the end of the month, this communication is in a personal capacity to obtain further information at the moment.

I have been alerted to a proposal by Airband to erect poles in Orchard Close and Brookfield Road, East Budleigh, for the purpose of full fibre cable installation as per the above reference number. At the moment there are no above ground utility installations in these open plan locations and the erection of poles would appear to be a backward step, since, as a parish, we would encourage existing poles to be removed in favour of underground services. Poles and overground cables are considered an eyesore in an AONB area such as our village, which also contains a Conservation Area, and we would certainly not anticipate new pole locations to arise unless the circumstances were truly exceptional.

Please would you clarify the following points to enable our Parish Council to make a considered response:

1: The existing telephone services in Orchard Close and adjacent are provided underground. You have stated in your poster notice that you will use OpenReach infrastructure where possible. Why can’t the existing underground telephone ducts provided by BT / OpenReach, be used for your cabling rather than new overground pole installations?

Whilst we explore all existing infrastructure to reach the premises, we will have to stand new poles from time to time. We currently utilise between 70-80% of existing poles and ducts across the nation.

Airband poles erected in public highways land and are considered as permitted development as they are for the purposes of fixed line communications in accordance with the “Code of Practice relating to Electronic Communications Code and the Electronic Communications Code (Conditions and Restrictions) Regulations 2003 and Part 16 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO)”.

For information Airband are required to submit notice to the planning department as permitted development, any public notification by Airband is for information only. A public objection would only be classified as such should a proposed pole location or stood pole either be on private land or pose a direct risk to health and safety.

Consideration is given to the design of the network, and we do not add additional poles unless necessary. There are several considerations when placing poles, the availability of existing underground duct (which may be full, blocked or collapsed), legal distance between them and the premises that need to be served that must be within 70 metres of that pole. This contributes to the final position to optimise coverage and reduce the need for additional poles.

2: If there is some reason why you cannot share existing underground ducts, why couldn’t you provide new underground rather than overground services?

There are no ducts to use under ground. The underground work currently in place is direct to BT services.

3: Have you consulted with residents to gauge the likely take up and commercial viability of the project?

CDS is not a demand led programme, we exist to deliver on successive government policies on raising the national level of connectivity to an appropriate level*.*

1. If it transpires that you are fully justified in erecting poles despite the preferable alternatives above, are the poles destined to remain indefinitely even in circumstances of company takeover / liquidation or if there is no commercial take up of the service?

Unanswered Kelly Cuthbert Community Engagement Team

Chair’s follow-up letter

Thank you for your response Kelly, but I do not feel that you have actual answered the questions that I asked;

In question 1, you did not precisely explain why you could not use the existing underground ducts in Orchard Close. You simply gave a generic response.

There are no ducts in the close, the existing old lines are direct buried.

In question 2, you didn’t answer the question at all. The question was; In the event that existing ducts could not be used,  why couldn’t you dig new underground trenches for cables rather than overground poles?

CDS receives funding to deliver connectivity to the largest number of premises possible (recognising that they do not have enough money to connect everyone), it is therefore incumbent upon them and their build partners to choose the most cost-effective method of delivery thereby maximising the number of residents and businesses that can benefit.

In question 3, you are saying that you are going to provide all this infrastructure in Orchard Close, even if it subsequently transpires that no-one uses it. I’m sure you are aware of the general infrastructure situation in our village.

Airband are contracted to deliver connectivity to premises within the close.

You did not answer question 4; in what circumstances could poles be removed. I am aware that you have certain permitted development rights, but at the same time you are expected to come up with reasonable solutions. Putting poles and overground cables into an area which has no overground cables at all seems to be quite unreasonable.

The poles would not be removed under any circumstance, all funding, national and regional is spent on delivering this connectivity through this infrastructure.

Correspondence from another Resident:

I notice that Airband are proposing putting a pole next to the notice board by the main Church gates. ( I spoke to someone from the company who said it would be a pole though it doesn’t specify in the notice.) I wonder if this is appropriate in a conservation area and would spoil the view of the church.

Is it something that might be discussed by the Parish Council?

I will also contact the church wardens as it maybe within the Church boundary.

I attach a photo of the notice which is tied to the church notice board in case you haven’t seen it.