1. **APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY** 
   1. The application site is part of RAF Barford and is located to the south of Bloxham and north of Barford St John. The site is part of the military land and houses a large central building and a number of antennae are present across the site. The land is also used for the grazing of animals.
2. **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**
   1. The current application seeks permission to remove two existing sets of antennae which are 20.6 metres high and replace them with 2 sets of new antennae. The proposed antennae to the east of the main building would be in a similar location to an existing antenna which is to be removed. The antennae proposed to the west of the building would replace an existing antenna to the north of the building.
   2. Each antenna would consist of 4 x 36 metre lattice towers with a central lower tower. A series of guy wires support the columns the largest of which are 10mm.
3. **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
4. The site has an extensive planning history dating from the 1970’s and 1980s relating to the use for military purposes.
5. **PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS**
6. No pre-application discussions have taken place.
7. **RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY**
   1. This application has been publicised by way of a site notice displayed near the site, by advertisement in the local newspaper, and by letters sent to all properties immediately adjoining the application site that the Council has been able to identify from its records. The final date for comments was 09.08.2018, although comments received after this date and before finalising this report have also been taken into account.
   2. No comments have been raised by third parties.
8. **RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION**
   1. Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council’s website, via the online Planning Register.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

* 1. BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL: **No comments**

STATUTORY CONSULTEES

* 1. NATURAL ENGLAND: **No comments.**
  2. OCC HIGHWAYS: **No objections.**
  3. OCC MINERALS AND WASTE: **No objections.**
  4. MOD SAFEGUARDING: **No objections.**

NON-STATUTORY CONSULTEES

* 1. CDC LANDSCAPE: **No objections.** For visual receptors the replacement antenna will be experienced as part of the site context of this very open, expansive area. Glimpsed, fleeting views through hedgerows and trees are experienced by road receptor users travelling south-eastwards on Barford Road. However, this experience is not as major as that of the visual receptors/users of the restricted bridleway to the south who will experience a considerably longer period of exposure to the views of the site and the new antenna, but the site and it function has been in existence for some years, and the local visual receptor will have come to accept this and perhaps consider the new antenna appropriate for the site.
  2. CDC ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: **No objections.**
  3. HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE: Have no record of having a licensed explosive site in the vicinity of the proposed planning application

1. **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**
2. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
3. The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031.  The Local Plan 2011-2031 – Part 1 replaced a number of the ‘saved’ policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the development plan. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District’s statutory Development Plan are set out below:

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 2011 - 2031 PART 1 (CLP 2031 Part 1)

* ESD13 – Landscape Protection
* ESD15 - The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 1996 SAVED POLICIES (CLP 1996)

* C7 – Landscape Conservation
* C8 – Sporadic Development
* C39 – Telecommunications
* ENV1 – Environmental Pollution

1. Other Material Planning Considerations

* National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
* Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

1. **APPRAISAL**
2. The key issues for consideration in this case are:

* Principle of development
* Landscape and visual impacts (including residential amenity)
* Other matters

Principle of development

1. Chapter 10 of the NPPF advises that advanced, high quality and reliable communications is essential to economic growth and well-being and planning decision should support the expansion of electronic communications networks. It goes onto state that local planning authorities must determine planning applications on planning grounds only and not question the need for electronic communications systems. Saved Policy C39 is also of some relevance and states the permission will normally be grated for mast and other structure where it has been demonstrated that it is not possible to shared existing facilities and it is not possible to place antennae on existing buildings or structures.
2. The application site forms part of RAF Barford and has been used as part of the operations at RAF Croughton since the 1950s where the USAF opened a transmitter facility on the airfield. The applicant states that the proposed antenna installation is important for upgrading communication standards within the secure facility and directly related to national security. The upgrades are deemed to be required by the Defence Infrastructure Organization and the United States Visiting Forces. They state that the existing antennae are beyond economic repair and unsupportable and are therefore required to be replaced and the proposed antennae offer superior performance and reliability to support the operations on the site.
3. Given the nature of the development and the uses which occur at the site it needs to be located on a secure site within the control of the applicant and there are no buildings on the site of a suitable height to accommodate the antennae. Furthermore the proposal would replace existing antennae albeit the proposed would be larger and more complex. Given the operational requirements of the applicant and the other matters outlined above the principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable subject other material considerations discussed below.

Landscape and visual impacts (including residential amenity)

1. Policy ESD13 seeks to protect the character and appearance of the landscape and prevent development which would cause undue visual intrusion, be inconsistent with local character or harm the setting of buildings or structure. Saved Policy C7 seeks to resist development which would cause demonstrable harm to the character of the landscape and Saved Policy C8 seeks to resist sporadic new development in the open countryside.
2. The application site forms part of an existing military site which consists of numerous existing antennae which significantly alters the character and appearance of the site. The proposals would be located close to these existing structures and experienced in this context. The existing structures are seen in long distance views from around the site and the proposed antennae would also be seen in these views including from Milton Road to the north and the B4031 from the edge of Hempton to the South. Whilst they would be taller than the antenna they replace and would be more visually prominent due to their design, they would be viewed in the context of the existing airfield and located close to the existing antennae and are they not considered to introduce a significant new element into the landscape. The Council’s landscape officer has been consulted and has not objected to the proposal, also noting that many views of the proposals would be in an open and expansive landscape meaning the proposals would only form a small element of these views. Furthermore the visual impacts of the guy wires are likely to significantly reduced with distance, given their small diameter.
3. The proposal would also be visible from a number of residential properties. However, they would only be available in relatively distant views and in many cases would form one element of a wider landscape. There is not legal right a view in planning law and given the scale of the proposal and distance to closest neighbouring properties it is not considered that the proposals would materially impact on their outlook or appear so overbearing so as to justify refusal.
4. Overall it is considered that whilst the proposed antennae would be clearly visible from areas outside of the site and in the surrounding landscape, given the existing context they would be viewed within the harm is limited. Furthermore when weighed against the benefits of the scheme in supporting the operations at the RAF Barford and Croughton the visual and landscape impacts are not considered to be so significant so as to justify refusal of the application.

Other matters

1. Policy ENV1 states development which is likely to cause materially harmful levels of noise or other environmental pollution will not normally be permitted. In this case the siting of the antennae is some distance from the adjacent residential properties and the Councils environmental protection team have raised no objection to the application on noise or other environmental matters.
2. A badger sett exists in proximity to the site however the proposed development would not directly impact on this and given the distance and nature of the proposal it is not considered that the proposal would detrimentally impact upon this in the longer term.
3. No safeguarding objections have been received from the MOD and it is noted that the proposed antennae are a similar height to some existing antennae on the site.
4. **PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**
5. The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 requires that the three dimensions to sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are not undertaken in isolation, but are sought jointly and simultaneously.
6. The proposal development is required to support the existing operations undertaken at the site and upgrade the existing facilities. The proposal would lead to some additional harm to the landscape character and appearance of the area however this is strongly mitigated by the fact that the development would be seen in the context of a number of other antennae on the site. The siting of the proposal is close to these existing structures. The proposal is considered acceptable in all other respects and given the benefits of the proposal is constitutes a sustainable form of development when considered as a whole. It is therefore recommended that planning consent be granted.

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| 1. **RECOMMENDATION**   That permission is granted, subject to the following conditions:   1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.   Reason - To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.   1. Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the application form and the following plans and documents: Design and Access Statement, drawing number 181P 071.00 A 181P 071.004 X, 181P 071.02 A, 181P 071.03 A and 540 Omni-Gain Antenna datasheet.   Reason – For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. |

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| Case Officer: | James Kirkham | DATE: 26 September 2018 |
| Checked By: | Nathanael Stock | DATE: 27.09.2018 |