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From "HOLLINGBERY, George" <george.hollingbery.mp@parliament.uk>

Date: 10/06/2016 22:13 (GMT+00:00)

To Tony Higham

RE: The Mobile Infrastructure Project HAM3220

Dear Tony,

Many thanks for your note. I apologise for the delay in replying. I know you have spoken to Owen briefly about this but I wanted to come back to you directly as well.

Let me start by saying that, as someone who lives in a rural area myself, I absolutely understand why many people are angry about the lack of mobile phone (and broadband) coverage in places like Hambledon. It is an issue which both the Government and local authorities have accepted and are working to find solutions to as quickly as possible.

Similarly, I can appreciate why residents of Hambledon are pretty peeved that the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) in the village was cancelled.

Now, having looked into this issue in some detail, I will be absolutely blunt about where we are. The MIP is simply not going to be adding any further sites. As the Minister explained in his letter, the Government has to ensure best value for money and MIP simply wasn't delivering that.

Having looked at the success of the MIP, and the way in which technology has moved on, the department feels that it is just not the best way to get mobile signal to the most remote areas.

Instead, the Government will be working with the mobile phone companies to ensure that they are doing everything possible to get a decent signal to as much of the UK as possible, as quickly as they can.

So what does this mean for Hambledon? Well, simply put it means, I'm sorry to say, that Hambledon will not be getting a 'whole of village' solution immediately. Instead, I strongly suspect that you will see pockets of improved signal spreading across the village over time. Will it be perfect 4G coverage all round? Almost certainly not, but given that we are in the populated south rather than the highlands, I will be doing everything I can to ensure that this doesn't slip off the agenda and is dealt with and I hope my record in moving things forward in a number of areas will give you encouragement.

I appreciate that you will be disappointed that I do not have an immediate solution to the problem.

Yours sincerely

George

George Hollingbery MP, Member of Parliament for Meon Valley

Government Whip, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel: 01962 734076 www.georgehollingbery.com

From: Tony Higham, 12 May 2016 20:43

To: MILLWARD, Owen <owen.millward@parliament.uk>; Bella Birdwood ; Thornton John ; Melissa Thistlethwayte; Tom Wood ; Sarah Wigley

Cc: Clerk - Hambledon PC <clerkhambledon@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: The Mobile Infrastructure Project HAM3220

Dear Owen,

Thank you for forwarding a totally unsatisfactory response from the Minister. It was discussed at the recent Parish Council meeting and we invite him to do better and respond properly. We are villagers without a mobile signal which should have been resolved by a contractor. The contract failed and the Minister should be sorting it out. Please request that he does not treat us like lobby cannon fodder - we are not interested in limited successes elsewhere. He needs to explain why Hambledon has no mobile phone reception, who is going to sort it out (in the absence of the failed contract) and when. We have identified a location - all that is required is somebody to install a mast.

Our village has regularly been subjected to flooding, we need a mobile phone signal to run this operationally and we don't have one. In addition, on safety grounds, it is not acceptable in 2016 to be unable to summon emergency services to an incident. It would not be acceptable in Westminster - it is not acceptable in Hambledon either.

Most grateful if the Minister could send a more bespoke response about future planned coverage in Hambledon.

Best wishes,

Tony

Tony Higham, Parish Councillor

On behalf of Hambledon Parish Council