

Phone giant 'will not replace mast'

Sutton Coldfield Observer news paper 22 July, 2005

By John Newton News Reporter

Telecommunications titan T-Mobile has given a written guarantee that it will not replace an illegally-felled mobile phone mast in Wishaw.

Sutton MP Andrew Mitchell secured the promise.

Wishaw has been the most controversial mast hotspot locally, with an antenna in the area leading to the formation of SCRAM – Seriously Concerned Residents Against Masts – a protest group borne out of allegations that communications equipment was responsible for a cluster of nearby cancer cases.

The mast was eventually brought down overnight by unidentified vandals.

Mr Mitchell first contacted T-Mobile in March this year following residents' concerns that the operator was going to site a new mast in the contentious area, with Bulls Lane named as the spot.

Some residents had planned to pay for private security to keep out expected engineers.

"This is great news," said Mr Mitchell, my constituents were particularly concerned about the proposals for the Bulls Lane site and I had been pressing T-Mobile to take their views and concerns into consideration. "After persistent pressure we have now received a guarantee that T-Mobile has no intention of progressing any development at the site."

Local resident and founder of SCRAM Eileen O'Connor added: "I am thrilled at this news. "This guarantee lifts a real weight of our minds. "We were devastated by the thought of a new mast in Bulls Lane. " We do feel that the threat of a new mobile phone mast in our community will always exist until we own the land at Fairview Farm in Bulls Lane and this is something that we are working towards."

John Shaughnessy, T-Mobile's community affairs manager, explained: "T-Mobile as no intention of progressing any development at the site at Bulls Lane. We have no further interest in that location with regard to network coverage. "Neither do we have an interest with regard to the land itself."
