

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

1. Site Details

Site Name:	ESSO Bond Street	Site Address:	Esso Bond Street 68 Upper Bond Street
National Grid Reference:	E:442715 N:294477		Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 1RJ
Site Ref Number:	HAB055	Site Type: ¹	Macro

2. Pre Application Check List

Site Selection (for New Sites only)

(Would not generally apply to upgrades/alterations to existing site including redevelopment or replacement of an existing site to facilitate an upgrade or sharing with another operator)

Was a local planning authority mast register available to check for suitable sites by the operator or the local planning authority?		No
If no explain why: No mast register available		
Were industry site databases checked for suitable sites by the operator:	Yes	
If no explain why: N/A		

Site Specific Pre-application consultation with local planning authority

Was there pre-application contact:	No
Date of pre-application contact:	N/A
Name of contact:	N/A
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised: A pre-application consultation letters and drawings of the proposals were sent to the Local Planning Authority on 09.06.2023. No response to pre-application at the time of making the application.	

Community Consultation

Rating of Site under Traffic Light Model:	Red	Amber	Green
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¹ Macro or Micro

Outline of consultation carried out:

Pre-application consultation was carried out with the ward Councillor for Hinckley De Montfort and local MP Luke Evans. Pre-application consultation letters and drawings of the proposals were sent to these parties on 09.06.2023.

Summary of outcome/main issues raised (include copies of relevant correspondence):

No response to pre-application at the time of making the application.

School/College

Location of site in relation to school/college (include name of school/college):

- Hinckley Parks Primary School
- St Marys CofE Primary School
- St Peters Catholic Primary School

Outline of consultation carried out with school/college (include evidence of consultation):

Pre-application consultation was carried out with the schools. Pre-application letters and drawings were sent to the head teachers via email on 09.06.2023.

Summary of outcome/main issues raised (include copies of main correspondence):

No response to pre-application at the time of making the application

Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/Aerodrome Operator consultation (only required for an application for prior approval)

Will the structure be within 3km of an aerodrome or airfield?		No
Has the Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/Aerodrome Operator been notified?		No
Details of response: Stoke Golding Airfield is some 8km away. The site is not in a Safeguarding area.		

Developer's Notice

Copy of Developer's Notice enclosed?	Yes
Date served:	Developers Notices sent via Tracked Email 27.06.2023

3. Proposed Development

The proposed site:

Background

Freshwave on behalf of MBNL are in the process of identifying a suitable site in the Hinkley area for a radio base station that will improve service provision for EE and 3UK.

As part of EE and 3UK's continued network improvement program, there is a specific requirement for an installation at this location to provide enhanced 4G coverage and capacity, and new 5G coverage ensuring that this area of Hinckley has access to the latest technologies.

EE and 3UK are seeking to enhance their network services in the area by installing infrastructure that will allow them to fulfil their licence obligations and deliver new 5G technologies to this area. However the nature of 5G and the network services it provides, means the equipment and antennas it uses are quite different to previous and existing service requirements.

Mobiles can only work with a network of base stations in place where people want to use their mobile phones or other wireless devices. Without base stations, the mobile phones, and other devices we rely on simply won't work.

Improving digital infrastructure supports the Government's 'Levelling Up' agenda, by helping local areas to retain and attract businesses and talent as well as by reducing regional inequalities. The proposed site will provide additional 4G coverage and capacity which is much needed for reliable connectivity as well as new 5G services and will ensure good quality critical infrastructure to support strong inclusive communities and contribute to economic opportunities.

The proposed site is located on private land on the of the forecourt of a petrol filling station. The surrounding area is mixed use in character comprising vehicle repair/MOT centres and residential. Upper Bond Street runs to the east of the site is a classified road and provides a strategic route through the area. It is used by public transport with bus stops at regular intervals along the road. The site backs onto other light industrial commercial uses with residential properties also nearby.

The site of the proposed installation is at the edge of the petrol filling station's forecourt. It is adjacent to signage advertising the price of fuel and other goods sold on the premises. The existing air and water pump is on the site of the proposed installation and will need to be relocated to another area.

There are a number of linear structures within the wider street scene including lighting columns, telegraph poles and commercial signage which will help the equipment assimilate with its surroundings.



Image 1: The Application Site



Image 2: Aerial view of the application site (Source: Grid Reference Finder)

Enclose map showing the cell centre and adjoining cells if appropriate:

In the first instance, all correspondence should be directed to the agent.

An installation at this location will provide enhanced 3G, 4G coverage and capacity for EE and 3UK as well as new 5G service provision.

The 3G and 4G provision allows internet access, video calling, data downstreaming, accessing social media networks and emailing to name just a few of the benefits. Therefore, to improve and enhance high quality 3G and 4G services into this area would promote activity in line with the general population demand as the ownership of smart devices increases. 5G will deliver unparalleled speeds and capacity, with significantly reduced latency, which will be needed to deliver numerous innovative applications from autonomous cars to Internet of Things.

A new site in this location will ensure that the security of the latest technologies will be provided into the network particularly for the data hungry applications of the latest smart hand-held devices. The operator has followed a sequential approach to site finding and identified this site as part of this process.

3G and 4G signals by their very nature (as they carry high data rates) do not penetrate over long distances, (5G even less so), just a few hundred metres, depending on the topography of the land, building clutter and vegetation including trees in the area which can reduce their effectiveness.

Type of Structure (e.g. tower, mast, etc): Phase 7 Monopole	
Description:	
The proposed installation of a 20m monopole supporting 12 no antennas and 2 no dish with 1 wraparound cabinet at the base, 3 no ground based cabinets and ancillary development thereto.	
Overall Height:	20 metres
Height of existing building (where applicable):	N/A
Equipment Housing: 1x Wraparound Cabinet	
Length:	600mm
Width:	1200mm
Height:	1600mm
Equipment Housing: 1x Wiltshire Cabinet	
Length:	750mm
Width:	2000mm
Height:	1850mm
Equipment Housing: 1x 6130 3UK Cabinet	
Length:	700mm
Width:	650mm
Height:	1100mm
Equipment Housing: 1x Bowler Cabinet	
Length:	600mm
Width:	1900mm
Height:	1752mm
Materials (as applicable):	
Tower/mast etc – type of material and external colour:	Galvanised

Equipment housing – type of material and external colour:	Grey
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Reasons for choice of design, making reference to pre-application responses:

The operators carefully considered the design of the proposed column and is proposing the most sensitive design currently available to them which will provide the necessary coverage and capacity to the surrounding area. Due to the technologies that will be available at this location, 3G and 4G, and 5G services 12 antennas need to be installed at the top of the slim-line monopole.

The proposed height at 20m is essential to provide improved coverage to the target coverage area of Hinckley.

The antennas are proposed to be unshrouded. This therefore, does not restrict the efficiency of the antennas from providing maximum coverage to the surrounding area as shrouding the antennas would.

The proposed design is essential in order to fit all the operators' multi technology antennas within the same installation. This is the slimmest design possible which will enable all technologies to be supported from this site. If the column and antenna width were to be any slimmer then the technology would not fit in the one column and another radio base station would be required, which would lead to the proliferation of masts contrary to national Government guidance set out in the NPPF and The Code of Practice. Similarly, if the column were to be a uniform width throughout then the overall width would have to increase which would appear more visually prominent in the street scene, than the proposed design.

The proposed design is more visually sensitive and much easier to assimilate into a street scene than lattice towers or pole designs with bulky headframes. These traditional designs are preferred by operators as they are structurally capable of hosting more equipment and give greater scope for antenna orientation and are thus more efficient structures. However, such designs would appear alien in this location. Therefore, the operator has compromised on obtaining maximum coverage in order to better assimilate into the street scene.

The design of the column is a simple, functional, vertical structure which will not appear incongruous within the street scene. The column will be coloured grey to assimilate with an often grey sky. Although it can be coloured any other colour the LPA consider appropriate for example green.

The cabinets are designed to appear like other statutory undertaker's equipment cabinets. The proposed equipment cabinets are small for telecommunications apparatus and proposed to be coloured grey like those in the immediate vicinity and others commonly found equipment cabinets on the roadside across the country.

The transmission dishes are required in order to provide a link into the network. A clear line of sight is required in order for it to meet its design brief. As such, a centre line height of 13.29m is proposed.

The operator is proposing to install a structure which will be capable of delivering high quality indoor 3G/4G services as well as new 5G services provision to the surrounding area for EE and 3UK.

It is therefore considered that the proposal before you strikes a good balance between environmental impact and operational considerations. The proposed height and design represents the best compromise between the visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding area and meeting the technical requirements for the site. Taking all matters into account it is considered that this proposal, to

provide the latest 3G, 4G and future 5G service provision, delivering the capability required from a single network installation, would not appear out of place within the street scene.

Health and Safety - including ICNIRP compliance

An ICNIRP certificate is provided as part of this application.
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International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection Declaration attached (see below) International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection public compliance is determined by mathematical calculation and implemented by careful location of antennas, access restrictions and/or barriers and signage as necessary. Members of the public cannot unknowingly enter areas close to the antennas where exposure may exceed the relevant guidelines. When determining compliance, the emissions from all mobile phone network operators on or near to the site are taken into account. In order to minimise interference within its own network and with other radio networks, EE and 3UK operate their networks in such a way the radio frequency power outputs are kept to the lowest levels commensurate with effective service provision As part of EE and 3UK's network, the radio base station that is the subject of this application will be configured to operate in this way. All operators of radio transmitters are under a legal obligation to operate those transmitters in accordance with the conditions of their licence. Operation of the transmitter in accordance with the conditions of the licence fulfils the legal obligations in respect of interference to other radio systems, other electrical equipment, instrumentation, or air traffic systems. The conditions of the licence are mandated by Ofcom, an agency of national government, who are responsible for the regulation of the civilian radio spectrum. The remit of Ofcom also includes investigation and remedy of any reported significant interference. The telecommunications infrastructure the subject of this application accords with all relevant legislation and as such will not cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest.	Yes	
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4. Technical Justification

In the first instance, all correspondence should be directed to the agent.

Reason(s) why site required e.g. coverage, upgrade, capacity

A mobile phone transmitter is designed to cover a specific area and links its coverage to the next site in the network, creating a patchwork of overlapping coverage 'cells' across the country. So, if a person is on the move, the network will transfer their calls from one site to the next. However, in certain areas there will be gaps between these cells, resulting in a loss of coverage. This can be for a variety of reasons, the most common being topography or buildings which block the path of the signal. The operators' network rollout programme is designed to identify and address these gaps within their coverage and ensure that people can use their phones whenever and wherever they are.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should not question the need for the telecommunications system, which the proposed development is to support. However, for the avoidance of doubt as set out below the proposed installation is needed for EE and 3UK to improve existing 3G/4G coverage and capacity whilst also providing new 5G services to this area of Hinckley.

The area within which an installation needs to be established in order to meet the coverage requirement is constrained by the location and extent of the coverage provided by existing installations in the surrounding area.

5. Site Selection Process

Alternative sites considered and not chosen (not generally required for **upgrades/alterations to existing sites** including redevelopment of an existing site to facilitate an upgrade or sharing with another operator)

Site Type	Site name and address	National Grid Reference	Reason for not choosing site
Greenfield	Harris Place Car Park Garden Road, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, England, LE10 0DX, United Kingdom	E:442561 N:294447	A mast at this location is not viable due to a physical lack of space in order to deliver the required level of coverage to the target area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Greenfield	Well Lane car park, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, England, LE10 1QH, United Kingdom	E:442681 N:294359	A mast at this location is not viable due to a physical lack of space in order to deliver the required level of coverage to the target area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Rooftop	Hinckley Building Society, Upper Bond Street, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, England, LE10 1RJ, United Kingdom	E:442595 N:294309	Due to the construction of the building there is no design available to support the operator's apparatus and provide the necessary coverage to the target coverage area.
Greenfield	Factory Road car park, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, England, LE10 0DW, United Kingdom	E:442570 N:294358	A mast at this location is not viable due to a physical lack of space in order to deliver the required level of coverage to the target area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Greenfield	Black Horse car park, Upper Bond Street, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, England, LE10 1RH, United Kingdom	E:442650 N:294439	A mast at this location is not viable due to a physical lack of space in order to deliver the required level of coverage to the target area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Rooftop	Upper House, Upper Bond Street, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, England, LE10 1RH, United Kingdom	E:442685 N:294401	The rooftop is too low in order to deliver the required level of coverage to the target coverage area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Rooftop	Empire Fitness, Spencer Street, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth,	E:442717 N:294328	Due to the construction of the building there is no design available to support the operator's apparatus

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	Leicestershire, England, LE10 1RB, United Kingdom		and provide the necessary coverage to the target coverage area.
Rooftop	Graphic House, Druid Street, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, England, LE10 1QH, United Kingdom	E:442731 N:294359	The rooftop is too low in order to deliver the required level of coverage to the target coverage area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Rooftop	Factory Road rooftop, Hinckley, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, England, LE10 0DW, United Kingdom	E:442622 N:294437	Due to the construction of the building there is no design available to support the operator's apparatus and provide the necessary coverage to the target coverage area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.

If no alternative site options have been investigated, please explain why:

N/A

Land use planning designations:

None identified at the time of making the application.

National Planning Guidance

Planning policy is provided at the national level by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF is pro – development with a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' being seen as a golden thread, running through both plan making and decision taking'.

The thrust of this guidance is positive and a reminder to LPAs that we need to build the requisite infrastructure to enable economic growth.

It is not necessary to quote extensively from this document but the following points are highlighted.

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

The NPPF is very supportive of high quality communications. Indeed, a whole chapter is dedicated to high quality communications, emphasising the importance that the Government attaches to digital connectivity. Paragraph 114 states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.

The NPPF continues to support the expansion of electronic communications networks at paragraph 114. It notes that policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time. The economic and social benefits of providing high quality and reliable communications infrastructure are well documented and can be found later in this Supporting Information Statement.

The NPPF makes reference to 5G:

'Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G)...'

With the above in mind, the Government is already forward thinking the evolution of data networks and seeks planning decisions to take account of this. 5G technology provides increased speed of data and more capacity in the network, to ensure that handheld devices can continue to be used for the purposes in which they were purchased. This will bring even greater economic and social benefits to the area.

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF retains the requirement to minimise the number of installations consistent with the efficient operation of the network and also includes being consistent with the needs of consumers and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion.

Paragraph 118 of the NPPF retains previous guidance from an NPPF version which relates to determining applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

At the heart of the NPPF is the retained presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11). For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless the application of policies within the revised Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts

of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the revised Framework taken as a whole.

The NPPF continues to provide guidance on decision-making. At paragraph 38 it states that:

'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including...permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'.

The NPPF builds on the aspiration to build a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 81 states:

'Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking in to account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken, should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation⁴²'...

Footnote 42 of the NPPF states:

'The Government's Industrial Strategy sets out a vision to drive productivity improvements across the UK, identifies a number of Grand Challenges facing all nations, and sets out a delivery programme to make the UK a leader in four of these: artificial intelligence and big data; clean growth; future mobility and catering for an ageing society. HM Government (2017) Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future'.

In order for the UK to benefit from the huge potential of 5G Local Planning Authorities will have to weigh the Public Benefits of such connectivity with the requirements to manage the built environment. Central Government understands that this may present concerns with the design solution proposed but it is important that all Local Planning Authorities understand the technical needs of 5G and better understands the wider advantages of such new technology.

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (March 2022)

The Code of Practice (COP) provides guidance to Code Operators (referred to as 'operators' throughout the Code of Practice), including the Mobile Network Operators and wireless infrastructure providers, their agents and contractors, local planning authorities, and all other relevant stakeholders in England on how to carry out their roles and responsibilities when installing wireless network infrastructure. It is also a useful tool for other interested stakeholders such as community groups, amenity bodies and individuals with an interest in mobile connectivity.

The aim of the Code of Practice is to support the government's objective of delivering high quality wireless infrastructure whilst balancing these needs with environmental considerations. It also has an important role in making sure that appropriate engagement takes place with local communities and other interested parties.

The Code of Practice covers all forms of wireless infrastructure development, including mobile masts and cabinets. It is recommended that other wireless communications operators follow the principles of this Code of Practice, where appropriate.

Unlike previous iterations this Code of Practice has been led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and developed in collaboration with representatives of the mobile network industry, other government departments and public bodies, local planning authorities, and protected landscapes. This document replaces the previous Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development, which was published in 2016 and is now published by DCMS.

The COP sets out the legal and policy framework for the delivery of wireless infrastructure development.

Paragraph 8 of the revised Code acknowledges that connectivity is vital to enable people to stay connected and that fast, reliable digital connectivity can deliver economic, social and well-being benefits for the whole of the UK. The Code continues to acknowledge that as the demand for mobile data in the United Kingdom is increasing rapidly, and that it is important that everyone has access to dependable and consistent mobile coverage where they live, work and travel.

The Government recognises the role of Planning in delivering the digital infrastructure that we need, in a sustainable and well-designed way, especially as households and businesses become increasingly reliant on mobile connectivity.

Paragraph 13 of the Code continues to echo the NPPF guidance in strongly supporting high quality communications infrastructure, which is seen as essential for sustainable economic growth. More specifically that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technologies (such as 5G) in order to support economic growth across the country.

The COP sets out 'How wireless networks function.

Para.16. states "Cellular wireless networks use base stations to provide an area of radio coverage. Wireless technology uses the radio spectrum to broadcast radio waves between base stations and devices. Different radio frequencies have different characteristics which, along with the density of cell site locations, affect the extent of coverage and how much data can be carried over the network. Depending on the radio frequencies used, base stations can deliver coverage over a wide area or provide extra network capacity in areas where there is a high demand for network bandwidth".

Para. 17 sets out that "Wireless technology continues to evolve rapidly, and mobile devices are now capable of much more. Second generation (2G) technology gave us voice calls and text messages, 3G led to the launch of smartphones, and 4G, which enabled faster browsing, allowed us to do things like watching videos on the move. 5G, the latest generation of wireless technology, is much faster than previous generations of wireless technology and can offer greater capacity and lower latency, allowing thousands of devices in a small area to be connected at the same time. 5G networks, and future mobile generations, will be vital for a range of Internet of Things uses (IoT) and Smart City applications".

The COP establishes 'Principles and commitments' by which operators should develop their networks and that Local Planning Authorities should demonstrate their support by.

Para. 18 states “Operators should develop their networks and install wireless infrastructure according to the following principles and commitments:

- **Site sharing and use of existing infrastructure:** make use of existing structures, sites and masts wherever possible to reduce the need for new development. The NPPF states that, when installing mobile infrastructure, the number of masts and sites should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion.
- **Consultation with local planning authorities, local communities and other stakeholders:** participate in dialogue with local planning authorities, along with other relevant stakeholders such as the highways authorities, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty bodies, Historic England, and Natural England, including pre-application discussions, where appropriate. Maintain clear procedures, and high quality communication and consultation with local communities and other interested parties. Operators should agree community engagement with local planning authorities and share information as appropriate (see Pre-application consultation with local communities below).
- **Standardised and high-quality approach to planning applications, and the notification procedure:** provide standardised supporting documentation for planning applications (where appropriate) within the context of national and local requirements. Ensure planning submissions are of high-quality and provide the necessary evidence to support the application (as per the NPPF).
- **Prompt responses to enquiries:** respond to complaints and enquiries within a timely manner (see Review and Enquiries section below).
- **Siting and Design:** wireless infrastructure should be deployed in accordance with the guidance set out within this Code of Practice. Where appropriate, equipment should comply with the principles set out in the NPPF and consider any local planning policies, including any local and national design codes. When located in protected landscapes and other designated land, the sensitive nature of these areas must be considered.
- **Removal of redundant equipment and site restoration:** ensure that when infrastructure is upgraded, any equipment that is made redundant by the upgrade, such as brackets, is removed to benefit the local environment. Where a whole site is no longer in use, the site should be restored to its original state.
- **Compliance with guidance laid out in the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) public exposure levels guidance:** as required by spectrum licences, comply with international guidelines for limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) - including, as set out in the NPPF, providing a statement that self-certifies that ICNIRP guidelines will be met with all applications (see Annex C).

Paragraph 19 states that Local Planning Authorities should demonstrate their support by:

- **“Incentivising connectivity:** support the expansion of telecommunications networks and take a ‘joined-up’ approach to the wireless infrastructure planning process, including ensuring that Local Plans effectively support the deployment of digital infrastructure.
- **Facilitating sites:** engage with operators when new sites have been proposed and discuss site requirements.
- **Engagement with operators:** respond positively to requests for engagement and make decisions in line with national policy and Local Plans. For planning applications, find solutions to issues and ensure timely decisions are made.

- **Information and communication:** ensure that members of the public can access information about any development proposals within their local area. Send communications promptly to an appropriate operator contact (or their representatives)".

The added emphasis on support from Local Planning Authorities in the deployment in digital infrastructure is even more evident in the revised COP. The COP recognises the importance of collaboration and partnership to help drive network coverage across the country. It goes on to state that *'In all instances, it is important for all parties involved in the process to take a positive approach to consultation and engagement'*.

Siting and Design Principles

The government's objective is to deliver high quality, reliable wireless infrastructure whilst ensuring the impact of new network development is kept to a minimum. The siting and design of wireless network infrastructure is central to achieving this. The COP acknowledges that *'good siting and design principles should apply to all wireless network development and take into account any site specific considerations and context. Both can create better places in which to live and work and help make development acceptable to communities'*.

The Code provides guidance on siting and appearance principles. It sets out several design principles in respect of telecommunications development and acknowledges that the options for design used by an operator will be affected by site conditions including requirements to link the site to the network, landscape features and coverage and capacity requirements. The guidance includes at Para. 22 *'the choice over the site selection and design of equipment is primarily dependent upon the coverage and capacity requirements and technical constraints of a specific location, although operators should make efforts to reduce visual impacts where possible'*.

Para. 23 confirms that there should be a **'presumption in favour of facilitating sustainable network development'** and, as such, operators and local planning authorities, as well as all other bodies involved in the deployment process, should work together to ensure connectivity needs are met and find viable solutions to deployment issues (emphasis added).

Paragraphs 24 - 27 sets out general siting and site selection principles which Operators should consider. The COP acknowledges at Para. 24 that *'Operators use a range of sophisticated, computer-based planning tools to predict levels of signal strength and coverage from sites for 2G, 3G, 4G and now 5G. Once an operator has identified a requirement for a new cell site, a suitable site needs to be found. Elements that make a site favourable include: having existing or ready access to a power supply, access to fibre optic cables, vehicular access, and, other buildings and development which may provide a level of existing screening. Operators will typically look to upgrade existing infrastructure prior to considering a new deployment, in particular for initial 5G deployment'*.

Para 25 notes that *'When selecting sites for mobile infrastructure, operators should examine local plans and designations for the area, as well as carrying out an in-person site search to identify potential options which meet their requirements. Operators should follow these general siting and site selection principles:*

- *Installation on existing buildings and structures;*
- *Erecting new ground based masts;*
- *Camouflaging or disguising equipment where appropriate;*
- *Using small scale equipment (although small cells themselves are generally used to address capacity issues as opposed to providing coverage); and*

- *Mast and/or site sharing (including redevelopment of a site to enable upgrade or sharing with another operator)'.*

Para. 26 highlights that the installation of all wireless infrastructure requires a balanced approach between the technical needs and constraints of the proposed site and the potential impact of the development. The three key technical and operational considerations for installation sites are:

- **Coverage:** wireless infrastructure needs to provide an appropriate level of coverage over the intended geographical area. This involves ensuring that antennas are elevated sufficiently (often via masts) to provide clear lines of sight for signals.
- **Capacity:** where existing network infrastructure can no longer meet the demand for network capacity in a particular area, additional sites may be required within that coverage area to meet the demand. This is more likely to be required in densely populated areas or areas of high footfall.
- **Backhaul:** the radio access network requires a connection to the core network. Backhaul is sometimes provided by a microwave link, which requires a clear line of sight between the two ends of the link.

Para 27 requires that Local Planning Authorities consider these issues and consider the need for a site within a limited search area alongside the public benefit of improved connectivity. Para. 27 further considers that in general, it should not, therefore, be appropriate for planning authorities to seek wider evidence of alternative sites (beyond that required by the NPPF), unless they consider the proposed development is unacceptable having regard to the relevant material planning considerations

In respect of 'Design', the COP at Para 28 acknowledges that the siting of wireless infrastructure will influence which design options are most appropriate for reducing the visual impact including

- Protecting visual amenity
- Mitigating visual impacts

Para. 29 acknowledges that these factors along with location and the coverage and capacity requirements can influence the type of infrastructure structure that is deployed and requires that *'planning authorities should be aware of these constraints when considering proposals. In particular:*

- *In urban areas, where there is a high level of demand for mobile data, mobile base stations are likely to need to be deployed more densely. In these settings you can expect to see more use of streetwork monopoles and rooftop installations and, in future, we are likely to see a larger number of smaller units (so-called "small cells") deployed on buildings and on street furniture.*

The COP establishes radio equipment housing (cabinets) principles. The COP at Para. 30 states that *"cabinets protect radio transmitters and receivers, provide the power source for mobile equipment, and are connected to antennas via cables. Equipment cabinets are likely to be needed at most sites. The cabinets must be of sufficient size to facilitate hosting various operating equipment whilst also allowing air circulation to reduce the potential for overheating"*. The COP establishes the planning and visual considerations for siting radio housing. These include:

- Colouring
- Siting on highways and footways:
- Highway safety:

- Listed buildings/ scheduled monuments and Conservation Areas:
- Access
- Trees

Local Policy

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that "If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise".

The statutory development plan as defined by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 comprises:

- Core Strategy DPD (December 2009)
- Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (July 2016)

Core Strategy DPD (December 2009)

The Core Strategy is the key Development Plan Document (DPD) in the Local Plan 2006 to 2026 (formerly Local Development Framework (LDF)) providing the vision and spatial strategy for the borough.

The document outlines the broad locations proposed for housing development and other strategic needs such as employment, retail and transport development. The core strategy will also draw on national and regional strategies that have implications for the future of the borough.

The core strategy is the key Development Plan Document (DPD) for the borough and all other documents within the Local Plan 2006 - 2026 (formerly LDF) must conform to it.

The Core Strategy Vision states:

In 2026 Hinckley & Bosworth will be a thriving, successful borough exemplifying green sustainable development across the East Midlands. More residents will be choosing to work locally as higher paid jobs are provided through the successful diversification of the economy. There will be a lively and diverse rural economy, underpinning thriving village communities and village based services. In particular, the key rural centres of Barlestone, Desford, Groby, Market Bosworth, Markfield, Newbold Verdon, Ratby, Stoke Golding, Bagworth and Thornton will provide the necessary day-to-day services to ensure rural communities have the choice to shop, work and play close to where they live.

Hinckley town centre will be a vibrant and successful sub regional centre with a high quality mix of retail, culture, housing, employment and leisure, with the local urban centres of Earl Shilton, Barwell and Burbage providing local services for their populations. An enhanced public realm for all of these centres will mean people want to spend time in them. Excellent public transport connections and well designed walking and cycling routes between Hinckley, Barwell, Earl Shilton and Burbage will mean that residents can travel to Hinckley for shopping, jobs, higher education, leisure and the night time economy by means other than the car.

A comprehensive and high quality network of green infrastructure, facilities for sports and arts activities, meetings and events will be easily accessible to all and the boroughs unique built, historic and natural environment will have been improved, not just protected.

The disparities in the quality of life apparent in 2007 will be addressed and the fear of crime and tensions between different groups will have reduced. We will see communities where there is greater neighbourliness and where people feel more involved with the decision-making processes that affect their lives, with local people involved directly in the local environment, its study, appreciation, maintenance and enhancement.

Sufficient housing to meet increases in population and changing needs will be provided to ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live. The majority of this housing will be provided in and around the Hinckley sub regional centre, with more limited development in the rural areas, focused on the Key Rural Centres, to support sustainable rural communities and provide local choice. The new development required to meet increased and changing needs will reflect the unique identity of each individual settlement whilst having a character and identity of its own which complements, supports and integrates into existing communities. High quality services and facilities along with quality jobs will have been provided to ensure these developments are true sustainable communities. Improved, more frequent public transport will be provided with improved facilities along with well connected walking and cycling networks to enable residents to travel by alternatives to the private car.

There are no policies within the Core Strategy which are specific to the development of telecommunications.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (July 2016)

This document identifies sites for uses such as housing, employment, retail, open space and community facilities that will deliver the aims, vision and objectives of the Core Strategy. It also contains 25 development management policies which will be used to assess planning applications over the plan period.

Policy DM1 is entitled Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development and states:

Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Borough Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- a) Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- b) Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

Policy DM16 is entitled Telecommunications and states:

The provision of essential infrastructure for telecommunications will be supported where it has been demonstrated that:

- a) There are no opportunities for sharing a site, mast or facility with existing telecommunications infrastructure already in the area; and*
- b) They are appropriately situated in the least visually obtrusive location available and appropriately designed to take account of their surroundings; and*
- c) Technologies to miniaturise and camouflage have been sufficiently explored; and*
- d) The proposal is in conformity with the latest national guidelines on radiation protection.*

The operator will also be required to remove any telecommunications equipment when it is redundant.

A Digital Strategy for the Leicestershire Districts ICT Partnership

The strategy recognises that we live in rapidly changing times with our view of the world increasingly being seen through a digital lens and that social media, smartphones and the internet are creating a new future that is not just about technology but also about social, cultural and business change.

As a shared service partnership the ICT Partnership plays a major role in introducing and managing new technologies that not only support the councils but also demand by customers who are already used to communicating, shopping, banking and organising their lives using digital channels and platforms and making sure they have the confidence to do this in a safe and secure way.

To keep pace with customers' expectation the partnership need to have a clear strategy to introduce, manage and use digital technologies that make it easier than ever before for their residents to access council services digitally. They will deliver the objectives of the strategy through the implementation of a supporting action plan.

The Partnership's objectives are to:

1. Create communities who are digital by choice to enable their customers to have easier access to services that meet their expectations.
2. Support a well equipped, agile workforce with the right skills, tools and abilities to provide efficient and effective services to meet their customer requirements.
3. Empower their residents, businesses and workforce to make the most of digital opportunities.
4. Facilitate and promote the delivery of improved digital infrastructure for residents and businesses.
5. Build safe, secure and strong connected communities by improving access to digital services and infrastructure.
6. Drive efficiency in the development and delivery of effective digital services.
7. Working with partners to maximise the potential benefits of digital opportunities.

Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership – Strategic Growth Plan – Leicester and Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision for Growth

The Strategic Growth Plan is the overarching plan sets out the aspirations for delivering growth in Leicester and Leicestershire.

The nine local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire, including Hinckley and Bosworth and the Leicester & Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) have prepared this plan to ensure the opportunities for growth are realised while keeping Leicester and Leicestershire an attractive place to live and work for all.

The plan has been approved by all councils involved following consultations with residents, businesses, organisations and other key stakeholders.

The Plan sets out the challenges facing the area and the plan for growth. The Plan sets out its commitment to delivery and recognises that connectivity is a significant issue in parts of Leicester and Leicestershire, both rural and urban. High quality communications support remote working and provide access to online service which are an essential part of the infrastructure planning process and need to be funded as such.

UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy, April 2023

In April 2023, the UK Government published the 'UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy'¹, a plan for delivering world-class digital infrastructure which the government identifies as an essential enabler for its 5 priorities of building a better, more secure, more prosperous future for the UK, including growing the economy, and creating better-paid jobs and opportunity right across the country. In her foreword, the Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP, Secretary of State for Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, provides context for the strategy:

*"5G will be the cornerstone of our digital economy. With higher capacity and lower latency, standalone **5G will drive growth** in the industries of today and tomorrow, including in emerging sectors like artificial intelligence where Britain leads the world. Just take smart ports, where 5G-enabled remote operation can help us to move containers more quickly, efficiently, and safely, boosting our international competitiveness. **5G can improve our public services**, too, in everything from education to social care. In transport, for example, we can use 5G to power forward progress in everything from real time travel information to augmented reality navigation and self-driving buses and taxis.... This is an incredible opportunity; widespread adoption of **5G could see £159 billion in productivity** benefits by 2035".*

The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review, 2018 out the ambition of the Government for the UK to become a world leader in 5G technology and ensuring world class connectivity for all. This ambition was reaffirmed in the 'UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy', published in April 2023 which states in the Executive Summary:

"The next decade will see seismic changes both in terms of what wireless connectivity can deliver and how we can use it. The economic and social benefits from these changes promise to be vast, from supercharging growth to accelerating our transition to net zero. But these benefits can only be achieved with concerted action from government, industry, and others".

The Foreword of the 'UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy' by Julia Lopez MP 'Minister of State for Department for Science, Innovation and Technology' states inter-alia:

"The more our lives are conducted online, the more access to the internet becomes critical for social and economic opportunity.

This is why delivering world-class digital infrastructure to all Britons is a fundamental mission of this government - and our efforts to build it the modern equivalent in scale and ambition to the Victorians'

construction of the railways. Our plan is for every corner of our country to get lightning fast connectivity, not only to give people real choices about where to live and work today but so they will not be left out of future technological revolutions because of poor infrastructure.

It is this sense of purpose that underpins Project Gigabit, our flagship £5 billion programme to reach hard-to-reach communities across the UK with gigabit-capable broadband. It is complemented by a staggering competition now underway between commercial suppliers to supply Britons with great connectivity.

Extraordinary progress is being made on coverage. When I began my role in September 2021, gigabit coverage was just over 50%. Now, it stands at almost 75%. With £1bn of Project Gigabit's funding now available to suppliers, our contracts are not just delivering better internet but skilled jobs everywhere from Blandford to Berwick. By the end of next year, we hope to have every part of our country under contract.

Which is why the time is right to turn our sights to mobile connectivity, where the same sense of mission is needed to deliver the kind of wireless infrastructure that will transform how we live our lives and run our economy. This is not simply a matter of improving download speeds as people browse the internet on their phones or dial into work calls. It is far more transformative than that'.

The UK Wireless Strategy states that '4G technology revolutionised the way people use their mobile phones. What today is considered normal, a decade ago was ground-breaking. We have seen the growth of streaming services, like Netflix and Spotify, and gained constant access to high-quality, user-produced content for free on platforms like YouTube, transformed the way we shop online, travel around cities through access to apps like Uber and Bolt and use public services, such as booking NHS appointments through apps'.

The UK Government in the UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy' recognises that 'growth in the digital sector is nearly 6 times faster than across the economy as a whole.

Connected Nations Report 2022

The Connected Nations Report 2022 was published in December 2022 The report confirms in line with the UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy (April 2023) in respect of delivering a basic 5G signal for the majority of the population by 2027, 5 years early that 5G rollout is expanding, stating:

"5G rollout is expanding EE, Virgin Media O2, Three and Vodafone have continued to extend their 5G networks across the UK, and we are reporting individual mobile network operator (MNO) coverage for the first time, based on the High to Very High Confidence range which we established in 2021. These ranges cover an increasing probability that the coverage predicted by MNOs will translate into coverage on the ground. As noted above, the level of coverage provided outside of premises by at least one mobile network operator across this range is now at 67-77% (up from 42-57% last year). The coverage provided outside of premises from individual MNOs ranges from 39-58% at High Confidence, with a range of 31-45% at our Very High Confidence level. Though most 5G sites are focused around busy urban areas - providing additional capacity to existing mobile data services - we're now seeing coverage extending into smaller towns and other high footfall locations. The distribution of this investment remains broadly similar to last year, with 86% of sites in England, 8% in Scotland, 4% in Wales and 2% in Northern Ireland".

Connected Nations 2023

The Connected Nations 2023 was published in May 2023. This is the first interim update to their Connected Nations 2022 report. It is based on mobile coverage and fixed broadband availability across the UK as of January 2023. Ofcom is a measure mobile coverage in a way that reflects the likely experience of people using their mobile phones. The report acknowledges that there has not been a significant increase in coverage since the December 2022, but the industry continues to develop its coverage footprint.

"4G: Coverage of 4G mobile networks across the UK has not seen significant changes over the last reporting periods. Around 92% of the UK landmass is predicted to have good outdoor 4G coverage from at least one operator, and this area includes nearly all of the premises in the UK. This is expected to rise to 95% by end of 2025 as a result of the SRN.

4G not-spots: The UK has both geographic and road not-spots (that is, areas where good 4G services are not available from any mobile operator). Geographic not-spots have remained the same since our December 2022 report at 8%. Road coverage remains largely the same with just 4% of all roads estimated to be an in-vehicle not-spot. This varies significantly across individual nations, particularly in Scotland and also in Wales. Wales has benefited by a percentage point drop in geographic notspots since our December report, which we attribute to the SRN scheme.

Calls and text coverage: As with 4G, predicted coverage for calls and text services remains largely unchanged over the previous reporting periods. The range of predicted coverage by MNOs varies from 85-93% of the UK landmass, depending upon operator. In addition, 99% of all UK premises are predicted to have coverage for outdoor voice calls from all MNOs.

Calls/text not-spots: Areas where people are unable to make a call or send a text from any operator (not-spots) is similarly unchanged, with around 4% of the UK geography estimated as a not-spot, and around 2% of the UK's roads estimated to be a not-spot for calls and texts made or received in vehicle. As with 4G, there are marked variations for individual nations; for example, geographic notspots across Scotland remain higher than for the rest of the UK, at around 10%.

5G: We continue to report on 5G coverage (outdoors premises) from 'All MNOs' and from 'At least one MNO', with coverage confidence levels ranging from high to very high. Coverage from 'At least one MNO' now ranges from 73% (very high confidence) to 82% (high confidence) of premises outdoors, up from 67% and 78% respectively when we reported in our December 2022 report".

Online Nation 2022 Report

The 'Online Nation 2022 Report' produced by Ofcom confirms the following:

- UK adults spend almost 4 hours a day online, 3 hours of which are spent on smartphones. (UK young adults (i.e., 18-24 year olds spend approximately 5 hours online and UK adults aged 55+ spend approximately 3 hours online)
- 73% of time spent online/day by UK adults was via a smartphone
- 1 in 5 people use only a smart phone for online access compared with 1 in 10 in 2020

With regards to increased usage of smartphones only for online access the report suggests:

"More people are using only a smartphone to go online. People were more likely in 2021 than in 2020 to only use a smartphone to go online (21% vs 11% in 2020)^[2]. There could be many reasons, but this may be because people were spending more time at home in late 2020 and early 2021 than in late 2021, and therefore used a wider range of devices. It may also reflect the larger screen size and better-optimised app functions of many smartphones, making them easier and potentially more cost-effective to use as a sole device for accessing the internet.

The Report goes on to states that:

"In September 2021 73% of the time spent online by UK online adults per day was on a smartphone. UK online adults are also spending slightly more time using tablets than computers, demonstrating that there is a clear preference for using mobile devices to go online. Those aged 25 to 34 spend the highest proportion (85%) of their online time using a smartphone, followed by 35-44s (80%); 15-24s (78%); 45-54s (74%) and those aged 55+ (55%).^[3]"

Therefore, without the improved network coverage and capacity that the proposed essential infrastructure will bring, EE and 3UK's network users living, working and travelling in the local area, and those of the associated MVNOs, will not benefit from reliable mobile digital connectivity when using their smartphones for business, education and personal purposes.

Levelling Up the United Kingdom (February 2022)

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published the 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper' on 02 February 2022. Levelling up is a moral, social and economic programme for the whole of government. The Levelling Up White Paper sets out how the Government spread opportunity more equally across the UK.

The 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper' champions that

'the United Kingdom is an unparalleled success story – a multi-cultural, multi-national, multi-ethnic state with the world's best broadcaster; a vibrantly creative arts sector; a National Health Service which guarantees care for every citizen; charities and voluntary groups which perform a million acts of kindness daily; globally renowned scientists extending the boundaries of knowledge every year; entrepreneurs developing the products and services which bring joy and jobs to so many; and millions of citizens whose kindness and compassion has been so powerfully displayed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But not everyone shares equally in the UK's success. While talent is spread equally across our country, opportunity is not. Levelling up is a mission to challenge, and change, that unfairness. Levelling up means giving everyone the opportunity to flourish. It means people everywhere living longer and more fulfilling lives, and benefitting from sustained rises in living standards and well-being.

This requires us to end the geographical inequality which is such a striking feature of the UK. It needs to begin by improving economic dynamism and innovation to drive growth across the

^[2] Ofcom Adults' Media Literacy Tracker 2021: Core survey IN1. Which of these devices do you use to go online? (single coded) Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online at home or elsewhere (excluding those who did not give a response at the postal survey) – 3,577

^[3] Ipsos, Ipsos iris Online Audience Measurement Service, 1 September– 30 September 2021, adults age: 15+, UK. Note: Custom data supplied by Ipsos.

whole country, unleashing the power of the private sector to unlock jobs and opportunity for all. While there are world-leading and enterprising businesses and innovators right across the UK, economic growth and the higher productivity which drives it has been over-concentrated in specific areas, particularly the South East of England. A long tail of low-productivity businesses and places explain why UK productivity growth is too low compared to competitors. It is vital that we preserve and enhance the economic, academic and cultural success stories of the UK's most productive counties, towns and cities. But it is equally critical that we improve productivity, boost economic growth, encourage innovation, create good jobs, enhance educational attainment and renovate the social and cultural fabric of those parts of the UK that have stalled and not – so far – shared equally in our nation's success'.

The 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper' states that:

'The UK Government has made progress towards spreading opportunity around the country since 2019, alongside mitigating the worst effects of the pandemic, with: • £5bn for Project Gigabit to bring gigabit-capable broadband to 85% of the UK by 2025, and the £1bn Shared Rural Network deal with mobile operators delivering 4G coverage to 95% of the UK by the end of 2025; • five-year consolidated transport settlements amounting to £5.7bn in eight city regions outside London, £5bn of funding for buses and active travel over this Parliament; and £96bn for the Integrated Rail Plan delivering faster, more frequent and more reliable journeys across the North of England and the Midlands;

Levelling up is not about making every part of the UK the same or pitting one part of the country against another. Nor does it mean dampening down the success of more prosperous areas. Indeed, by extending opportunity across the UK we can relieve pressures on public services, housing and green fields in the South East. And levelling up can improve well-being in the South East by improving productivity in the North and Midlands. So, it is about the success of the whole country: realising the potential of every place and every person across the UK, building on their unique strengths, spreading opportunities for individuals and businesses, and celebrating every single city, town and village's culture. This will make the economy stronger, more equal and more resilient, and lengthen and improve people's lives. The economic prize from levelling up is potentially enormous. If underperforming places were levelled up towards the UK average, unlocking their potential, this could boost aggregate UK GDP by tens of billions of pounds each year. Levelling up skills, health, education and wellbeing would deliver similarly-sized benefits. Accumulated over time, those gains could easily surpass annual UK GDP. Success in levelling up is about growing the economic pie, everywhere and for everyone, not re-slicing it.

The United Kingdom's Geographical Disparities: Drivers and Potential Policy Approaches What does the economic and social geography of the United Kingdom look like? The UK has larger geographical differences than many other developed countries on multiple measures, including productivity, pay, educational attainment and health. Urban areas and coastal towns suffer disproportionately from crime, while places with particularly high levels of deprivation, such as former mining communities, outlying urban estates and seaside towns have the highest levels of community need and poor opportunities for the people who grow up there. These disparities are often larger within towns, counties or regions than between them. They are hyper-local and pockets of affluence and deprivation may exist in the same district. Indeed, many of the worst areas of deprivation are found in the UK's most successful cities. While change is possible, in some cases, these differences have persisted for much of the last century. And some of the UK's most successful cities – such as Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow and Cardiff – lag behind their international comparators when it comes to productivity and incomes. What are the current and future drivers of geographical disparities? Over the past century, many

trends have combined to create the spatial patterns seen across the UK today. Globalisation, technological progress, advances in transport, logistics and power, and the shift from heavy industry to knowledge-intensive sectors, as well as the rise of foreign holidays and shift from technical training to university education, have had a large and lasting impact on the economic geography of the UK. These dynamics of the global economy have benefited the UK overall, improving productivity, increasing wealth and driving up living standards through more innovation and competition. These dynamics, however, have not had the same positive economic and social impacts across the UK. While London and much of the South East have benefited economically, former industrial centres and many coastal communities have suffered. This has left deep and lasting scars in many of these places, damaging skills, jobs, innovation, pride in place, health and wellbeing. What are the factors that will help drive levelling up? Levelling up requires a focused, long-term plan of action and a clear framework to identify and act upon the drivers of spatial disparity. Evidence from a range of disciplines tells us these drivers can be encapsulated in six "capitals".

- Physical capital – infrastructure, machines and housing.
- Human capital – the skills, health and experience of the workforce.
- Intangible capital – innovation, ideas and patents.
- Financial capital – resources supporting the financing of companies.
- Social capital – the strength of communities, relationships and trust.
- Institutional capital – local leadership, capacity and capability

This White Paper sets out that the new policy regime is based on five mutually reinforcing pillars. Firstly, the UK Government is setting clear and ambitious medium-term missions to provide consistency and clarity over levelling up policy objectives. These missions will serve as an anchor for policy across government, as well as catalysing innovation and action by the private and civil society sectors. These missions are ambitions that the UK Government has for all parts of the UK. Delivering on them, while being fully respectful of the devolution settlements, will require close and collaborative work with the devolved administrations. The missions are rolling decade-long endeavours and will be reviewed periodically by the UK Government. One mission relates to:

"Digital Connectivity Mission: By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population" (my emphasis).

The White Paper notes the pivotal role that 'Digital Connectivity' has in boosting productivity, pay, jobs, and living standards by 'Growing the Private Sector'.

To help drive these improvements, the UK Government is setting four core missions, spanning living standards; research and development (R&D); transport infrastructure; and digital connectivity.

Para. 3.2.4 of the White Paper states 'By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population. This mission is focused on improving digital connectivity'.

The case for 'Digital Connectivity' action states:

'The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of digital infrastructure right across society, from ensuring business continuity to reducing isolation. Improved digital connectivity has the potential to drive growth and productivity across the UK and widen job opportunities through remote working. However, there are significant spatial disparities in the quality of broadband and mobile networks, with rural areas likely to experience worse digital connectivity than urban

areas. Infrastructure is only part of the picture: economic benefits will only materialise if businesses and workers have the skills to take advantage of improved infrastructure.

More broadly, high quality digital infrastructure can deepen local labour markets through remote working, making it more attractive for both workers and companies to locate regionally. It also allows for the development of high-value sectoral clusters, which can drive growth and jobs in new areas. Existing specialisms in the UK regions have the potential to generate strong tech clusters, such as fintech in Scotland and Wales, e-Commerce in the North West and Northern Ireland, and Agri-Tech in Yorkshire and the Humber. The sector also provides opportunities for raising living standards – median earnings for the sector are 50% higher than the UK average.

The policy programme for 'Digital Connectivity' states:

'In 2020, the UK Government published the National Infrastructure Strategy, committing to providing £5bn in public funding to roll out gigabit broadband to at least 85% of the country by 2025, and subsequently to as close to 100% as possible, working with the private sector. Public investment will target premises that are hardest to reach and which would otherwise not be provided for by the private sector, ensuring no areas are left behind. Gigabit coverage has increased from 10% to over 60% in less than two years. Since 2019, coverage has improved across the UK, and the UK Government anticipates the following additional improvements to be delivered as a minimum by 2025.

The UK Government has also agreed a £1bn deal with mobile operators to deliver the Shared Rural Network programme. This will see operators collectively increase 4G coverage to 95% by 2025. As a result of this collaboration, the vast majority of the UK will soon benefit from improvements to digital connectivity.

5G has the potential to radically change the way people live and make businesses more productive and competitive. *The UK Government's ambition is for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027. Since 2017, the UK Government has provided £200m in funding for 5G Testbeds and Trials, supporting over 200 startups and SMEs across a range of sectors – including healthcare, manufacturing, Agri-Tech and creative industries – to better understand how to use the technology to develop new solutions and services (emphasis added).*

In 2022, the UK Government will publish the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy. This will review how far the private sector will go to deliver wireless infrastructure – including 5G – across the country, and determine whether there are any market failures in places that need to be addressed, and how the UK Government could tackle these.

The West Midlands 5G (WM5G) Testbed started in 2018 with the mission of testing and proving the benefits of 5G to public and private sector productivity, creating jobs and boosting growth. The UK Government has invested £21m over three years, alongside investment from local government and the private sector. By working with local authorities and Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), WM5G has accelerated 5G deployment by over six months, resulting in the West Midlands being amongst the best connected places for 5G in the UK. In addition, WM5G has delivered a number of UK firsts, including a 5G road sensor network, 5G connected ambulance and capsule endoscopy trials, and a 5G application accelerator programme called 5prinG, which has already upskilled over 400 organisations on the benefits of 5G and allowed over 60 startups to develop new 5G products and services. We must ensure that people have

sufficient digital skills to reap the benefits and prosperity arising from the digital economy. In 2020, the UK Government introduced a new digital skills entitlement, giving adults with low or no digital skills in England free access to new digital skills qualifications based on employer-supported national standards. The UK Government continues to work with local leaders to develop Local Digital Skills Partnerships. These collaborative partnerships are now operating in seven regions across England, with an eighth formally launching in Hull and East Yorkshire in early March. The UK Government will work with devolved administrations to consider how best to share the insights and evaluation of the programme to help build digital skills capability across the UK'.

The current proposals will facilitate the development of an advanced broadband telecommunications infrastructure in line with National Government guidance contained within the NPPF which supports infrastructure especially where growth takes place. Maximising access and maintaining choice in telecommunications should will people to maintain and enhance economic, social and civic connections. Universal accessibility to telecommunications is vital to help overcome isolation or exclusion of urban life. Accelerating the extension of new communications modes should help to avoid new pockets of exclusion developing.

Further to the Government's commitment to improve digital connectivity, on 04th April 2022 the new permitted development rights for telecommunication operators came into force (SI 2022 No.278). The Explanatory Memorandum to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England)(Amendment) Order 2022 confirms that 'permitted development rights have an important role to play in the planning system. They provide a more streamlined planning process with greater planning certainty, while at the same time allowing the local consideration of key planning matters through a light-touch prior approval process'.

Planning Issues

The main issues arising from this prior approval notification are whether the proposed mast and cabinets due to their siting and appearance would result in harm and if so whether any perceived harm would be less than substantial and would be outweighed by the significant social and economic benefits associated with the improvement of existing service and introduction of 5G provision attributed to the proposal to enable sustainable development and growth across the borough and meeting the needs of its communities.

The provisions of the GPDO require the local planning authority to assess the proposed development solely on its **siting and appearance**.

Principle of Development

The proposed monopole and associated antennas fully comply with the NPPF and the Leicestershire LEP's Strategic Growth Plan, as it will increase overall connectivity for the area of Hinckley. Access to high quality, reliable superfast mobile network is not just a 'nice to have' but an essential part of everyday life. Indeed many, including the former Minister for Digital Infrastructure Matt Warman, consider it to be the forth utility service as important as gas, water and electricity, a life line for many especially during the COVID 19 pandemic where people were able to see their loved ones, speak to friends and family and arrange virtual meetings allowing some form of normality in a very abnormal situation.

The principle of development has been established by the Government when the new permitted development rights came into force in November 2016 and again in April 2022, which enables sites

such as this one to be built, with prior approval for siting and appearance being the only matters that the local planning authority can take into consideration.

Planning Practice Guidance explains how a prior approval application differs from a planning application at paragraph 28. It states that:

'The statutory requirements relating to prior approval are much less prescriptive than those relating to planning applications. This is deliberate, as prior approval is a light-touch process which applies where the principle of the development has already been established (emphasis added). Where no specific procedure is provided in the General Permitted Development Order, local planning authorities have discretion on what processes they put in place. It is important that a local planning authority does not impose unnecessarily onerous requirements on developers, and does not seek to replicate the planning application system' (emphasis added).

The Planning Portal also provides Application Type Guidance. This guidance states that:

'Certain forms of telecommunication development, for example, mobile telephone masts, are known as 'permitted development' and subject to prior approval from the local planning authority. The prior approval procedure means that the principle of development is not an issue. The LPA can only consider the siting and appearance of the proposal'.

Siting

The siting of the proposed radio base station has been carefully considered. To this end, the equipment has been located on private land on the edge of the forecourt of the petrol filling station on Upper Bond Street. The surrounding area is mixed use in character with a number of light industrial uses nearby including vehicle repair and MOT centres as well as residential properties. The base station will be viewed in the context of streetlighting columns, telegraph poles and commercial signage. This is in line with the NPPF, policy DM16 of the Local Development Plan.

There are a number of vertical structures within the area, which will help the installation assimilate with its immediate environment including lighting columns, telegraph poles and commercial signage, all of which are tall structures and seen across the country. These vertical structures are similarly designed i.e. to be simple, functional vertical structures. These factors will help the column and associated cabinets from appearing prominent in the street scene. Consequently, the visual impact of the proposed radio base station will be minimised within the street scene and restricted to the immediate vicinity. This is in full accordance with policy DM16 of the Local Development Plan.

The operators' equipment cabinets are similar to those in the immediate vicinity of the site and other statutory undertakers which are commonplace in urban areas. Their limited height and scale will ensure that these cabinets will not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area and will be finished in a grey colour.

In line with the requirements of NPPF, there are no existing telecommunications installations for the operator to share, that would provide the necessary coverage to the target coverage area. Similarly, there are no buildings which are suitable and available that the operators could utilise to operate their equipment. The discounted options are set out above and their reasons for being discounted are fully explained.

The transmission dishes are essential to provide a link into the operator's network. It requires a clear line of sight and therefore needs to have a centre line of height of 13.29m.

Appearance

Freshwave has carefully considered the design of the new proposed column and are proposing the most sensitive design currently available to provide the necessary coverage and capacity to the surrounding area. Due to all the technologies that will be available at this location, 3G, 4G and future 5G, 12 antennas need to be installed at the top of the slim-line monopole. The antennas will improve the existing 3G and 4G service provision currently being provided as well as new 5G services. If the column were to be any lower, the antennas would not be able to operate effectively and provide the level of coverage required.

In order to reduce the visual impact on the surrounding area the antennas are proposed to be tight to the top of the column, rather than on an open head frame which would appear more prominent in the street scene. Therefore, the operator has compromised on optimising the coverage in this area of Hinckley in order to minimise the environmental impact. However, meaningful coverage will still be provided to the target coverage area, hence the submission of this prior approval application in this location to provide high quality indoor 3G and 4G service provision to be linked into the operators' networks configuration as well as providing 5G services.

The presence of the linear structures including the lighting columns, commercial signage and telegraph poles will ensure that the proposed column will not appear incongruous within the street scene. Thus, there will be no detrimental loss of visual amenity to the area or environmental intrusion in line with the NPPF and policy DM16 of the Local Development Plan.



Image 5: View of the application site looking north east along Upper Bond Street (Source: Google Streetview)



Image 6: View of the application site looking south west along Upper Bond Street (Source: Google Streetview)

The telecommunications mast is proposed to be a slim-line simple, vertical, functional structure. The column is relatively slender and is similar in design to the other vertical structures in this area of Hinckley, albeit taller in height. As a result, this installation will not appear incongruous within the street scene in line with the requirements of the NPPF and policy DM16 of the Local Development Plan.

It is accepted that the height of the proposed installation is taller than other linear structures, but this in itself is not a valid reason to conclude that it is not appropriate at a specific location. Indeed, Inspectors at appeal have noted that by their very nature to be effective masts are required to be taller than surrounding structures.

There have been numerous appeal decisions where the Inspector has attached significant weight to the benefits, alternative options, technical constraints and NPPF in a balancing exercise of all the valid material considerations, including visual impacts and the impact on residential amenity.

In determining APP/U4610/W/17/3186745 Outside the Painted Lady, Longfellow Road, Church End, Coventry, CV2 5HL the Inspector noted that whilst *'the pole would contrast with its surroundings due to its height, I consider that the harm to the street scene resulting from the development as a whole would not be greater than moderate. Balanced against that harm is the need to boost the capacity of the networks in the area including superfast 4G'*. The Inspector concluded at Paragraph 8 *'I consider the benefits of a high-quality communications network facilitated by the proposed development of the site, outweigh the moderate harm the installation would cause to the appearance of the area.'*

To suggest that it is inappropriate development because it is taller than adjacent lighting columns is no more relevant than suggesting that street lighting columns are inappropriate because they are taller than road signage or traffic lights. They are all essential pieces of infrastructure within a street scene that carry out differing functions and therefore cannot be considered on the same merits. Should a street lighting column be capable of the provision of high quality 3G/4G/5G telecommunication services then this would be a reasonable consideration, but this is clearly not the case. As such, the proposal should not be considered negatively due to it being taller per se than other vertical structures. Reasonable consideration of the proposal in the context of nearby street furniture can only conclude that the presence of other vertical structures in the immediate area only seeks to provide a setting

wherein a base station may appear more congruous from which to provide an important service to a wider area.

The proposed height at 20m is essential in order to provide improved and new 5G coverage to the target coverage area of Hinckley and the wider area.

The equipment cabinets are designed to appear like other statutory undertakers equipment cabinets found within the vicinity of the site in urban areas across the country. They are small for telecommunications equipment. The proposed equipment cabinets are the least amount of cabinets that can be installed in this location and enable the radio base station to operate. If the number of cabinets were to be reduced, then there would not be sufficient room to house all the operators' equipment. In any event, these cabinets are permitted development under the operator's permitted development rights, with no prior approval or planning consent required. In order to help blend in with their surroundings they are proposed to be coloured grey, although they can be coloured any other colour that the council considers to be appropriate.

The design of the radio base station is one of the most sensitive designs available to Freshwave, designed to resemble typical existing urban linear street furniture. This is in line with the requirements of NPPF which supports equipment which is sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate [paragraph 115], as well as the aspirations of the Local Development Plan.

Lack of Coverage – Material Consideration

The proposed installation is significant to enable continuous coverage of the telecommunication network, ensuring that Hinckley and the wider area continues to get the mobile coverage it needs. The current proposals will facilitate the development of an advanced broadband telecommunications infrastructure in line with National Government guidance contained within the NPPF which supports infrastructure especially where growth takes place.

Mobiles can only work with a network of base stations in place where people want to use their mobile phones or other wireless devices. Without base stations, the mobile phones and other devices we rely on simply won't work.

Without this radio base station the operator's customers would experience increasing numbers of dropped calls and buffering unable to access the internet on their handheld devices.

The proposed radio base station is in full conformity with the NPPF and the Local Plan. The proposals will promote the enhanced connectivity of the area, by providing infrastructure for high speed telecommunications. Indeed, high quality telecommunications is often seen as the fourth utility service.

The proposed installation will help improve the area's economic prosperity, strengthen the urban economy by supporting local businesses to start, grow, adapt and diversify. It will support a better environment for today and tomorrow by reducing the need to travel and in turn minimise carbon emissions. The radio base station will support the delivery of healthcare provision and accessibility by enabling people greater access to online services, NHS appointment reminders, reminders to take medicines, make appointments etc.

Economic and Social Benefits

The NPPF strongly supports sustainable development, as does policy DM1 of the Local Development Plan. Mobile communication plays a significant role in sustainable development. Being able to access the internet via a mobile device allows people to access a wide range of central and local government services buy groceries, manage finances, apply for jobs/university, and carry out school projects, send emails, download applications, send and receive instant messages, participate in social media, streaming and downloading data to name just a few of the benefits of being able to use an internet enabled handheld device. It also allows people to work from home or on the move without needing to return to the office. Residents and businesses will enjoy better accessibility, assisting home-base working by improving the electronic means of communication and the roll-out of high-speed broadband helping to promote live-work development. This reduces travel time, carbon emissions and increases the speed in which information is processed/shared. The proposals therefore fully comply with NPPF and policy DM1 of the Local Development Plan.

In such instances, as described above, the NPPF supports development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Enhancing the 3G and 4G coverage and capacity in this area and providing 5G services will fully meet this national policy objective.

Mobile connectivity is essential to the future success of the economy. Mobile connectivity is essential to creating a better society. Digital inclusion can help people gain employment, become more financially secure and improve health and well-being. Mobile connectivity is essential to fulfilling the potential of new technologies. Innovations such as artificial intelligence and connected cars will change how we work, spend our leisure time and run our public services.

There is a demand for mobile connectivity in areas where geography, logistics or economics – or a combination of all 3, make it difficult. Mobile network capacity needs to grow to meet the demand of mobile users, who are consuming ever increasing amounts of data.

Paragraph 38 of the revised NPPF states that:

'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including...permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'.

The social and economic benefits are a significant material consideration which should be weighed against the visual impact associated with a radio base station in this location. HM Treasury outlined such benefits in its report *'Fixing the Foundations: Creating a More Prosperous Nation'* – July 2015. Paragraph 7.1 of the plan stated that reliable and high quality fixed and mobile broadband connections support growth in productivity, efficiency and labour force participation across the whole economy. They enable new and more efficient business processes, access to new markets and support flexible working and working from home.

Paragraph 7.2 goes on to highlight strong support for high quality communications infrastructure. It states:

'by reducing red tape and barriers to investment, the Government will support the market to deliver the internationally competitive fixed and mobile digital communications infrastructure the UK's businesses need to thrive and grow, and which will enable the UK to remain at the forefront of the digital economy. The Government is working with business so that the market can play the lead role in delivering against the ambitions set out in the Digital Communications

Infrastructure Strategy, published March, of near universal 4G and ultrafast broadband coverage.'

The Government recognises that widespread coverage of mobile connectivity is essential for people and businesses. People expect to be connected where they live, work, visit and travel. That is why the Government is committed to extending mobile geographical coverage further across the UK, with continuous mobile connectivity provided to all major roads and to being a world leader in 5G.

Further to the Government's commitment to improve connectivity, new permitted development rights have come into force for telecommunication operators, designed to lift the restrictions on mobile operators such as the significance and weight the Government place upon the benefits attached to modern connectivity.

A National Needs Assessment – A Vision for UK Infrastructure was also published in October 2016 ([https://www.ice.org.uk/getattachment/media-and-policy/policy/national-needs-assessment-a-vision-for-uk-infrastr/National-Needs-Assessment-PDF-\(1\).pdf.aspx](https://www.ice.org.uk/getattachment/media-and-policy/policy/national-needs-assessment-a-vision-for-uk-infrastr/National-Needs-Assessment-PDF-(1).pdf.aspx)). It sets out the infrastructure needs for the UK which includes the importance of digital technology. An extract of this assessment can be found below:

'A lack of digital connectivity has a detrimental effect on business operations, productivity and output and hence competitiveness in the global market place. Securing digital connectivity is thus critical to the UK's long term prosperity. A key challenge for the digital sector is a persistent digital divide between those who have access to the latest technologies and those who do not, with resulting social and economic exclusion, particularly as dependence on e-services and digital communications increases'

The Assessment goes on to note that 'Universal digital connectivity would serve as an equaliser of economic opportunity in that it enables participation in a modern digital economy'. Therefore this Needs Assessment further explains the consequences of a lack of coverage and the effects this has on social and economic prosperity. This clearly highlights the importance of maintaining and enhancing high quality 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and capacity and introducing 5G connectivity in Hinckley where the social and economic benefits will outweigh the environmental considerations.

The Government's continued strong support for connectivity is further evidenced by the DCMS who launched their UK wide Digital Connectivity Portal on 20 December 2018. The Digital connectivity portal provides guidance for local authorities and network providers on improving connectivity in local areas. The Government wants everyone in the UK to benefit from world-class connectivity no matter where they live, work or travel. The Future Telecommunications Infrastructure Review outlines a package of measures to create the right market and policy conditions to deliver world-class connectivity for citizens and businesses. As a result, the pressure to provide a radio base station in Hinckley to provide 3G, 4G as well as 5G is significant.

The proposed installation in this location will allow the operator to provide new and improved high quality 3G and 4G coverage and capacity as well as new 5G service provision. This fully meets the aspirations of the NPPF and policy DM16 of the Local Development Plan.

There have been numerous appeal decisions where the Inspector has attached significant weight to the benefits, alternative options, technical constraints and NPPF in a balancing exercise of all the valid material considerations, including visual impacts.

The issue of benefits and a planning balance was also considered in Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/W/18/3197522 Land at junction of Andover Road and Athelsan Road, Winchester. The proposal related to the installation of a 17.5m street works pole and associated equipment cabinet at land at the junction of Andover Road and Athelstan Road, Winchester.

The Inspector found at Paragraph 9 *'The Government places a high priority on the provision of high-quality communications. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) at Paragraph 112 states, "Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections". In this instance, the proposal is not so much seeking to provide significantly higher standards but to maintain recent local provision of 2G, 3G and 4G services as a result of a notice to quit from a nearby site that was providing these services. The Council has commented that service provision would be 'adequate' without the proposal, but the appellant has an obligation to provide not only appropriate coverage but also capacity for the network. I attach significant weight to the public benefit arising from the continuation of local service provision'.*

In March 2020, the decision of Birmingham City Council to refuse planning permission for a proposed telecommunications upgrade was overturned by the Planning Inspectorate (APP/P4605/W/19/324191). Within the decision notice, the Inspector stated:

'In this case, the proposed development would result in harm to the visual amenity of the area, with particular regard to the proposal's scale and siting. As such, conflict would arise with Policy PG3 of the Birmingham Development Plan insofar as the development would not reinforce local distinctiveness with a design that responds to site's conditions and the context of the local area. However, I conclude that this harm would, on balance, be outweighed by the economic and social benefits that would stem from the proposed upgrade which would not be realised whilst reducing the height of the mast. Therefore, in the round, the proposal would accord with saved UDP Policies 8.55 and 8.55A-C, the SPD and Framework paragraphs 112 and 113. Collectively, these seek to support the expansion of shared next generation mobile technology to create a modern, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure that is essential for economic growth and the life of the local community'.

Summary

Freshwave is in the process of progressing a suitable site in the Hinckley area for a radio base station to ensure reliable mobile digital connectivity is provided for residents, businesses and visitors. As part of EE and 3UK's continued network improvement program, there is a specific requirement for an installation at this location to provide improved 3G and 4G coverage and capacity as well as new 5G ensuring that this area of Hinckley has access to the latest technologies.

The proposed height at 20m is essential in order for the antennas to clear the surrounding trees and be able to reach the target coverage area, to maintain and provide new high quality 3G, 4G and 5G service provision to Hinckley and the wider surrounding area. This will fully meet the national Governments aim of *'ensuring that everyone is connected to the information superhighway'* and the national policies set out in the NPPF. If the height of the column were to be reduced then the antennas would not be able to operate effectively, leading to a degraded service for the operator's customers especially for the higher frequency technologies including the latest 4G technology and 5G service provision.

Site selection was progressed in accordance with the applicant's licence obligation, advice in the NPPF and the Code of Practice and represents the least environmentally intrusive, technically suitable, available option.

The social and economic benefits of providing continued reliable and high quality mobile broadband connections including 5G support sustainable growth meeting the needs of the population and strengthening global competitiveness. This is fully supported by the NPPF and the Local Development Plan. These benefits are strong material considerations which outweigh any perceived loss of visual amenity to the surrounding area.

Confirmation that submitted drawings have been checked for accuracy

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