

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

1. Site Details

Site Name:	Small Bore Rifle & Pistol Club	Site Address:	Small Bore Rifle & Pistol Club, The Dowry Hill, Groby, Leicestershire LE6 0DJ
National Grid Reference:	E 452622 N 307801		
Site Ref Number:	CS 11356128	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: The industry site database was considered to be a more up to date source.		
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:	
Name of contact:	
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised:	
A pre-application consultation letter was issued to the local planning authority on 05/11/2025 detailing the proposed works. At the time of submission no specific comments have been raised in regard to the proposal. Given the minor nature of the proposed works the applicant has sought to proceed with the prior approval application.	

¹ Macro or Micro

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Annual area wide information to planning authority

Has annual area wide information been provided?	No
If no explain why: Cornerstones commercial relationship with VMO2 has changed, effectively increasing our independence to work with other companies in the deployment of mobile infrastructure. It means we no longer have visibility of VMO2's full update plan. However, Cornerstone is fully committed to working closely with Local Planning Authorities and following best practice guidance.	
Summary issues raised: N/A	

Community Consultation

Rating of Site under Traffic Light Model:			Green
Outline of consultation carried out: Pre-application consultation letters were issued on 05 November 2025 to local district councillors (Councillors Martin Cartwright and E Hollick), local county councillor (Councillor Ozzy O'Shea JP) as well as Gorby Parish Council.			
Summary of outcome/main issues raised (include copies of relevant correspondence): At the time of submission no specific comments have been raised in regard to the proposal.			

School/College

Location of site in relation to school/college (include name of school/college): None in close proximity
Outline of consultation carried out with school/college (include evidence of consultation): N/A

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

N/A

Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence or the operator of the civil safeguarding area or defence safeguarding area notification (only required for an application for prior approval)

Will the proposed development be on a civil safeguarding area or a defence safeguarding area?		No
Has the Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/operator of the civil safeguarding area or defence safeguarding area been notified?		No
Details of response:		
Site not within safeguarding area or defence safeguarding area.		

Developer's Notice

Copy of Developer's Notice enclosed?	Yes	
Date served:	20 November 2025	

3. Proposed Development

The proposed site:
Background Information Cornerstone is the UK's leading mobile infrastructure services company. Cornerstone acquire, manage and own over 20,000 sites and are committed to enabling best in class mobile connectivity for over half of all the country's mobile customers. Cornerstone oversee works on behalf of telecommunications providers and wherever possible aim to: • promote shared infrastructure; • maximise opportunities to consolidate the number of base stations; and • significantly reduce the environmental impact of network development. Cornerstone are in the process of improving their service provision and have identified an existing site that is suitable for an equipment upgrade on behalf of

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VMO2 UK Limited. As part of the operator's continued network improvement program, there is a specific requirement for a radio base station upgrade at this location to replace existing equipment with the latest technologies, which will improve existing coverage provisions for better signal strength, capacity and speed. 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 and upgrade works are necessary to ensure that old equipment and apparatus is replaced with newer versions that will cater for current and future network demands. These radio base stations are essential to ensure that operators can meet the ever-growing demand on their networks and continue providing the services required for customers to use their devices as intended, whenever they want and wherever they are. Without this upgrade, there will be insufficient coverage and capacity, leading to buffering, dropped calls, and an overall unreliable service in the area, ultimately creating a gap in network provision. This aligns with the operator's code licence obligations to provide high quality coverage to its customers around the UK.

The NPPF and Code of Practice guidelines advise a sequential approach to site selection whereby operators are encouraged to upgrade existing base stations wherever possible before exploring alternative site options for new installations. This approach seeks to prevent undue site proliferation, which has been achieved in this instance as an existing site has been identified as requiring an upgrade meaning a new site is not needed to satisfy coverage objectives.

3G (and eventually 2G) will be switched off by the operators in order to repurpose these radio frequencies for faster and more energy-efficient 4G and 5G services. 3G is primarily used for mobile data services. It is being switched off first because it has already largely been superseded by 4G, hence the increased importance of providing the latest 4G and new 5G services provisions in areas where there is no such coverage. 3G has already been switched off by VodafoneThree and EE in early 2024. VMO2 began switching off its 3G services in April 2025 and is continuing the process across its network. As a result, it is imperative that operators build resilience into their networks.

5G service provision is not just about coverage, it is also about capacity through the many layers of technology that the operator provides to their customers to deliver a better-quality experience, greater data speed upload and download, as opposed to waiting for a file to download or a map to get from A to B (on the network) due to congestion.

Public Benefits

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High quality coverage has become an essential part of society that benefits residents, businesses and visitors within a local community. In today's society the utility provisions for digital communications are an integral part of everyday life as it facilitates a variety of tasks such as phone calls, access to the internet, map navigation, video/music streaming, gaming, online banking and ecommerce. Virtual meetings can also be held with doctors, banking advisors, colleagues and other entities, which have proved necessary as a result of the global pandemic. Consequently, the proposal for telecommunications development submitted herein will contribute to the development and growth of the local area as part of the national strategy. The UK Government recognises the vital role of telecommunications as part of critical national infrastructure and the importance of ensuring these networks are resilient to prevent significant national risks. This underpins the high value of public benefits that would be provided as a result of this application.

In order to achieve these aims it is necessary for existing infrastructure to be upgraded with the latest equipment and technologies to ensure the robustness of each base station. In some instances where there is a significant shortfall in the network the applicant will also explore opportunities for new sites to fulfil network requirements. This overall strategy allows for greater improvements to the service provided as it can:

1. Improve the size of coverage area targeted;
2. Increase signal strength which results in faster speeds; and
3. Maximises capacity to handle ever-increasing volumes of data traffic throughout the day.

It is evident that mobile phone usage has grown exponentially over recent years as more than 90% of the population now own a mobile phone. Customers expect to be able to use their mobile phones and tablets in all locations as these devices have become intrinsic to our personal and professional lives. UK operators are continuously trying to improve their network infrastructure in order to adapt to the changing environment and keep up with customer demands. The consequences of the global pandemic also led to an increase in home-based working which highlighted the inadequacies of coverage provisions in non-urbanised areas where improvements are much needed. As part of the applicant's ongoing network programme, there is a requirement for infrastructure improvements in this area, which experiences a large volume of data traffic. The proposed works will also help towards futureproofing the network to reduce the frequency of works required at the site. Further technical justification can be found later in this statement.

Sustainability

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Following COP26 there is a greater emphasis on considering the effects of future developments on sustainability and climate change. This is a material consideration for local planning authorities, and it is therefore essential to highlight the positive effects of telecommunications development on such environmental matters. Ongoing network improvements will contribute to several industries to help mitigate climate change such as healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture, transport and energy to reduce their environmental footprints. For instance, there are innovative technologies being explored that can allow greater agricultural monitoring that collects data to help create more efficient farming strategies. In a general sense a greater efficiency can reduce the potential overconsumption of energy and resources in a variety of aspects, which will contribute to the overall reduction of carbon emissions.

Furthermore, mobile operators are also making efforts to use renewable energy in their operations with a global ambition of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. Each individual code operator has set their own goals and business models for low carbon emissions to target innovative ways to reduce the dependency on fossil fuels. Such initiatives include adoption of zero carbon vehicles, increase the use of renewable energy, reduction of single-use plastic and other active engagement with suppliers and customers to reduce their overall footprint.

Proposed Site and Surrounding Area

The application site is located within Leicester and District Smallbore Rifle and Pistol Club adjacent to a car park. The site is to the north of Markfield Road and Groby village. The immediate surroundings comprises of Leicester and District Smallbore Rifle and Pistol Club grounds with semi-mature and mature trees around the site which provides a degree of screening towards the existing radio base station. Although the wider area is a rural in character, the visibility of the existing mast is limited due to the surrounding vegetation and topography. The wider surroundings consist of fields and trees. The nearest residential properties are located in a distance beyond Markfield Road (A50) over 200m away from the site.

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Figure 1. The site location.

The site accommodates an existing base station which has been in situ for some time and is an established feature within the surrounding area. This site serves as an important base station within the operator's wider infrastructure network due to the high volumes of phone and data traffic experienced throughout the day. As technological advancements continue to develop, it becomes necessary to deploy the latest technologies on existing base stations to improve service provisions that can handle current and future network demands, as well as helping to build each site's resilience and robustness. The proposed upgrade subject to this application therefore forms an integral part of the applicant's strategic objectives.

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Figure 2. View of the existing site from Newtown Linford Lane (Source: Google Maps).

The radio base station is not considered to adversely affect residential amenity, given the separation from the nearest dwellings. The closest residential properties are located over 200m to the south. Given that this is an established site, and the site's distance from nearby properties, the potential visual impact is not considered to be unduly prominent or harmful.

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

N/A

Type of Structure (e.g. tower, mast, etc):

Lattice tower

Description:

Removal of 6 no. antennas and 1 no. equipment cabinet, and installation of a 3m tower extension with the headframe relocated to the top (top height 26.5m), 3 no. new antennas, 3 no. transmission dishes, 1 no. equipment cabinet and ancillary development thereto.

Associated ancillary works thereto including:

- RRUs
- Internal cabinet upgrade

Overall Height:

26.5 m

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Height of existing building (<i>where applicable</i>):	N/A
Equipment Housing: EFF1 Cabinet	
Length:	0.85 m
Width:	0.725 m
Height:	2.1 m
Materials (<i>as applicable</i>):	
Tower/mast etc – type of material and external colour:	Steel – Galvanised
Equipment housing – type of material and external colour:	Steel – RAL 7035

Reasons for choice of design, making reference to pre-application responses:

General Overview

The applicant has sought to cause as little impact on the visual amenity of the area as possible whilst also ensuring that sufficient coverage requirements are achieved. A further explanation of the application's technical justification is explained in a later section of this statement however, it should be acknowledged from the offset that the least amount of equipment and the smallest scale possible has been proposed to achieve the optimum coverage objectives. The resulting benefits will improve existing mobile coverage through stronger and faster connectivity and helps to prevent the need for additional sites in close proximity to futureproof the network for customer demands.

Moreover, the proposed height of the antennas is the lowest possible height to ensure correct signal conveyance whereby a reduction in height may impact on the site's functionality as well as health and safety in relation to ICNIRP compliance. It should be emphasised that intervening elements such as buildings and trees can weaken signal strength meaning that a height increase is often necessary to counter these limitations. 4G signals by their very nature (as they carry high data rates) do not penetrate over long distances (just a few hundred metres), and 5G even less so. Depending on the topography of the land, building clutter and vegetation including trees in the area these factors can further reduce radio signal effectiveness. Since these technologies operate at higher frequencies where attenuation of the radio signal is naturally higher and the effect of clutter are greater, it can often lead to the requirement for higher structures to achieve the same coverage footprint.

The operator's general practice will always endeavour to propose the least impactful design possible to sufficiently achieve the desired coverage levels and it should be recognised that any reduction in height or equipment would significantly compromise the site's effectiveness within the network. There are no

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alternative design solutions available with the required technologies meaning the proposed scheme is the least visually intrusive design for the site's upgrade.

As the applications relates to an existing base station it is not necessary to outline alternative locations however, it should be noted that if an upgrade cannot be progressed at this location a new additional base station within proximity may be required to fulfil technical objectives. This is a mature network which has grown and each site functions in conjunction with surrounding sites to provide blanket coverage. In circumstances when an upgrade cannot be achieved and a replacement site is required, this can lead to technical implications where coverage issues can occur. Consequently, such upgrades can be influential within the context of the wider base station network as it can help negate the need for introducing additional sites in the area to satisfy current and future demands.

The existing base station was deemed acceptable in its inception meaning that no concerns were raised by the local planning authority in relation to its location within the immediate area and any associated sensitive assets. Though it is recognised that changes to a telecommunications site will to a degree be recognisable in any given environment, the visibility of equipment does not automatically lead to detrimental harm as each site must be assessed on its own merits and balanced against the public benefits to be provided in accordance with national planning policy. In this respect significant weight should be given to improving existing coverage in recognition of the government's commitment to this rollout, which will result in socioeconomic improvements for the local community. Digital connectivity is an essential utility provider in today's society and a high-quality service must be provided by the operators in accordance with license obligations. Within the local area, the application site is an established base station, which sets precedence for telecommunications development in principle at this location.

Siting and Appearance

To maintain the overall appearance of the existing site, the applicant has adopted a minimalistic approach to utilise existing apparatus as much as possible, and in this instance the existing tower will be utilised. However, a tower extension is required to provide the necessary levels of coverage and capacity. A new 3m extension is required, with the existing headframe being relocated to the top of the proposed extension. As a result, the height of the structure will increase by 3m. The tower extension will resemble the existing parts of the tower, allowing it to assimilate with the existing structure. As the proposed upgrade will appear similar to the current structure, which has become an established part of the area, the only visible change will be the height increase. Considering the

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tree coverage around the site and in the wider area, the proposed changes will assimilate with the surrounding area's character.

The new antennas are proposed to be located onto the headframe at the top of the tower resembling the current solution. As part of Best Practice guidance, each operator seeks to ensure the total number of antennas is kept to a technical minimum to limit the potential for undue harm whilst also allowing the technical objectives of the site to remain achievable.

The transmission dishes are essential to ensure that the network is linked together to allow seamless transmission of connectivity from one mast to another. In order to communicate with each other, transmission dishes must have a clear line of sight and be above surrounding natural or built form, otherwise the signal will be disrupted.

The required height of the mast and equipment is determined by technical data with consideration for land topography and the target coverage area, which is discussed at a multi-site visit (MSV) with a specialist team. Each proposal opts for the minimum height possible to achieve these objectives and is in line with Best Practice guidance to reduce the potential for undue harm. In this instance, the proposed dishes require a height of 17.25 and 16.75 metres above ground level (measured to the centre line of the dishes).

At a localised level, the upgrade equipment is capable of being absorbed into the immediate surroundings as the new tower extension will match the existing tower, and the new cabinet is positioned within the existing site compound to replicate the current site arrangement and ease the visual transition as much as possible. Taken as a whole the proposed alterations are considered minimal compared to the current context as the design layout strikes a balance between the site's technical requirements and visual amenity aspects. The proposed extension will blend with the existing structure, and the existing headframe will be relocated to the top of the tower keeping the current visual appearance. As a result of these considerations, it is thought that visual amenity is not detrimentally impacted by this upgrade scheme but would in fact be maintained as a result of the minor development works. Although the base station is more discernible at a localised level, the simplistic design of the upgrade scheme will mimic a similar visual appearance to the current situation. As a result the applicant considers the proposal to be acceptable in regard to its siting and appearance.

Following on from this, it is recognised that the proposed mast height might lead to increased visibility from wider vantage points, however, when taking into account the established nature of the existing tower and the surrounding natural

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form around the application site, it is thought that such views are softened as a result. In terms of long distance views, the surrounding trees will offer a degree of screening towards the site, furthermore the topography of the area will further limit the visibility of the mast from long terms views, resulting in the tower to appear small in profile and arguably insignificant within the wider landscape perspective. This is due to the relatively isolated location of the base station, as it is positioned away from the public highway and any residential areas where visibility would be more prominent and frequent. Only the top parts of the tower might be visible from the A50; however, considering that this is a busy road with no pedestrian access, these views will be infrequent for vehicular users. This context should be taken into consideration in the assessment of this application.

As mentioned previously the proposed works will offer a minor visual change to the existing base station which is not demonstrably overbearing in its current state as illustrated in the below images. Whilst the base station is a recognisable feature, the overall profile is small in scale due to the narrowness of the monopole and the low level height of the equipment cabinets. The site appears inconspicuous when read in conjunction with the surrounding area, thus maintain the existing character and setting of the broader landscape perspective. The congruent nature of the current base station is a transferable point that should be applied to the assessment of this application given the minor alterations proposed. These arguments should therefore be materially considered in the determination of this submission.



Figure 3. View of the existing site from Newtown Linford Lane (Source: Google Maps).

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Figure 4. View of the existing site from A50 (Source: Google Maps).

Following on from this, the proposal is not considered to adversely impact residential amenity due to the distance between the site and nearest properties, which are located over 200m to the south. The equipment is situated away from residential windows meaning there is no direct influence on the natural enjoyment of daylight, privacy or outlook for the local community. Given the relatively slim profile of the mast, the low height of the equipment housing and the site's distance to the nearest properties, the potential for impact is not considered to be detrimentally prominent. Additionally, it should also be reiterated that the application site accommodates an existing base station which sets precedence for telecommunications equipment at this location and is also befitting of the surrounding urban environment. As well as this, the applicant's decision to upgrade an existing site as opposed to identifying a new additional location is in accordance with planning guidance so as to prevent undue harm to visual amenity and proliferation. It is also important to emphasise the necessity of the proposed upgrade to ensure that old equipment is renewed in line with technological advancements. This allows the base station to operate at its optimal functionality in order to handle current and future network demands.

In conclusion the proposed design is considered to be respectful of the surrounding elements and does not cause detrimental harm to the visual amenity of the immediate environment. The siting and appearance of this proposal is therefore within the boundaries of acceptability as it will cause minimal interruption to the current landscape and is in line with national planning policy to utilise existing sites and buildings. When taking into account the existing precedence for telecommunications equipment, the proposed upgrade

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displays a level of consistency with the current site which results in a similar extent of visual impact as the equipment presently in situ. Therefore, the applicant strongly believes the scheme demonstrates a sympathetic design that would not detract from the setting and character of the surrounding area and the proposed works are capable of being absorbed into the wider landscape.

Summary

A requirement for improved network coverage has been identified in this area. This is an upgrade of an existing site which will provide essential services for residents and businesses within the immediate vicinity. It was therefore not required to explore alternative sites in line with National Planning Policy. In today's society there is a strong reliance on connected services which demonstrates a necessity for high-speed coverage in all areas of the UK. The effects of the global pandemic have also led to increased home-working where current network infrastructure is in much need of improvement.

The proposed works have been designed sensitively in consideration for the character and appearance of the surrounding area in which the least impactful scheme has been proposed to minimise the visual impact of the proposal whilst also ensuring the coverage objectives can still be achieved. A reduction in equipment or scale would therefore substantially impact the quality of signal provided and the overall functionality of the site.

The applicant has also demonstrated efforts to respect the existing visual amenity of the surrounding area in which the proposal is capable of preserving the local character and setting. Additional regard has also been given to the proximity of any historical and natural assets to ensure these are duly protected as far as practicable.

The site will be valuable in the Government's desire for high-speed connectivity and ensuring its accessibility throughout the UK wherever and whenever required. It is considered that the proposal complies with national and local policy. It is therefore considered that the public benefits provided by the proposed upgrade would outweigh the minimal visual change in the appearance of this site.

The applicant considers the proposal to be an acceptable development which should be viewed favourably by the local planning authority.

Health and Safety - including ICNIRP compliance

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All Cornerstone installations are designed to be fully compliant with the public exposure guidelines established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). These guidelines have the support of UK Government, the European Union and they also have the formal backing of the World Health Organisation. A certificate of ICNIRP compliance has been included with this application.

4. Technical Justification

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

In the assessment of this application, material weight should be given to the public benefits that will be provided to local residents and visitors in this area. The site will form part of an improved coverage network to allow for faster download speeds and better signal.

The consequences of the global pandemic have also highlighted the inadequate nature of infrastructure in suburban and rural areas in particular as a result of increased home-working and e-learning for school. Existing base stations have struggled to handle increased data traffic demands which demonstrates the importance of improving digital connectivity in all parts of the country. In addition to improving signal strength, speed and capacity for current demands the proposed works will also aid in futureproofing the quality of the network through its greater robustness. As a licensed code operator, the applicant has a legal obligation to ensure a high-quality service is accessible to the public throughout the UK as it contributes positively towards the socioeconomic development at local and national levels. This is particularly apparent in densely populated areas that experience high levels of footfall on a daily basis. In today's climate the existing network has allowed users to video stream at much faster data speeds allowing the integration of smart phones into wider uses than previous generations and continued improvements are necessary to cater current and future network demands. The inevitable consequence of technological advancements means that customers expect tasks to become even quicker and simpler.

Coverage: The licence granted to mobile operators demand strict coverage objectives to be met nationwide. It is essential that the benefits of mobile phones are available across the population. Mobile networks are constantly reviewed to ensure that there is adequate coverage and capacity to meet customer demands. In the current environment there is an expectation for signal coverage to be available at home, in the workplace, while shopping, enjoying leisure activities or in transit.

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Quality: In order to ensure there is sufficient coverage within buildings such as homes, shops, offices etc. the radio signal has to be of adequate strength to penetrate walls. In urban and suburban areas a dense network of base stations is therefore required, which are sometimes less than 1 km apart. The improvement of existing signal in this area will encourage economic advancement in accordance with national policy which seeks to develop and grow connected environments.

Capacity: The upgrade of telecommunications masts across the country is an inevitable consequence of the continued growth of mobile phone usage. More sites are required to address the increasing traffic demands of each mobile user for tasks such as video/music streaming. For instance, each cell or base station is limited to handling a finite number of calls meaning that areas of high usage will require additional cells to meet network demands and avoid congestion.

To keep up with growing demand the operators need to upgrade existing base stations and build new base stations to improve the coverage and capacity of the network so as to improve robustness. Capacity is the maximum data or calls that can be processed by a base station. When capacity is exceeded, users may experience slower internet speeds, dropped calls, or difficulty connecting to the network.

Radio Implication of the Site: Radio signals are transmitted through the network by using fixed links at such frequencies that necessitate an uninterrupted line of sight. To achieve this, the antennas must reach a sufficient height above surrounding buildings and trees. In more rural locations the undulating topographies will also have detrimental implications on signal propagation which require mitigation. The proposed development must also be in a position to provide strong radio coverage to the target area that can also be received inside buildings. As a result, it is integral that antennas have an unobstructed view towards the wider target area as it optimises the quality of signal.

The radio planning tool identifies deficiencies in the network and predicts the location from which the optimum coverage will be provided. Within these areas existing base stations are selected for an upgrade. The proposed installation subject to this application stems from this process where it is imperative for mobile operators to provide high quality coverage to its customers. This is achieved through the improvement of existing network infrastructure and introduction of new base stations to fill in blank spots.

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For these reasons, the proposed upgrade is of paramount necessity which cannot be undervalued and the requirement for this development is fully justified.

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
N/A			

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

In accordance with the sequential approach to site selection encouraged in national planning policy as well as the Code of Practice for mobile operators, the applicant has identified an existing base station that is suitable for an upgrade. Consequently, it was not necessary to explore alternative site options.

Land use planning designations: none identified

Protected land designations: none identified

Additional relevant information (include planning policy and material considerations):

Development Plan Policy Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended requires planning applications and appeals to be determined having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan and other material considerations, and section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Planning Policy

The following local planning policies are relative and have been considered in the submission of this application. It is argued that the proposal is in accordance with the below policies which promote high-quality connectivity and supports

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new telecommunications infrastructure when it can be demonstrated that the design and siting of the base station is respectful to its surroundings.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council – Local Plan 2020 – 2039 (Draft)

Policy PMD01 – High Quality Design

In line with this policy the application is of a high-quality design that is of appropriate scale, height and bulk when considering the minimum technical requirements of the site and the context of the surrounding area. The applicant's general practice endeavours to utilise the least amount of equipment necessary and the smallest scale possible to achieve technical objectives, which in turn reduce the potential impact of the proposal to protect visual amenity.

Policy INF03 – Telecommunications Infrastructure

In line with this policy the scheme is considered to be of acceptable siting and appearance when read within the wider landscape perspective. There is little demonstrable harm caused to existing visual and residential amenity which protects the character and setting of the surrounding area. The applicant has also adopted a sequential approach to site selection in exploring existing sites and structures prior to identifying new base station locations. The application site is not located in direct proximity of any notable heritage assets or ecological assets. An ICNIRP certificate of compliance has been included with this application.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in December 2024. In relation to this policy the following sections are relevant in determining this application:

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 – *“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030.*

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These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection."

The NPPF also encourages the achievement of sustainable development which can provide public benefits to building stronger and more competitive economic areas, as well as enhancing social communities through increased communication and connectivity. These benefits feed into the overarching economic and social objectives of the NPPF.

Section 4 – Decision-Making

Paragraph 39 – "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 brownfield registers and 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."

Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Paragraph 85 – "Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity... This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential."

Paragraph 86 – "Planning policies should:

- a) Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*
- c) Pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics;*
- d) Seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and*
- e) Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances."*

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Paragraph 87 – *“Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for:*

- a) Clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure that are needed to support the growth of these industries (including data centres and grid connections);*
- c) The expansion or modernisation of other industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience.”*

Section 10 – Supporting high quality communications

Paragraph 119 – *“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. 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; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).”*

In relation to these paragraphs, the Government's Industrial Strategy sets out a vision to drive productivity improvements across the UK, and sets out a delivery programme to make the UK a leader in *“artificial intelligence and big data”*. The improvement of telecommunications capacity and provision of the latest technologies is imperative to allow for areas to be connected, and is essential for economic growth which is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time.

Paragraph 120 – *“The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installation, 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. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.”*

In relation to this paragraph, it is demonstrated that a sequential approach to site selection has been adopted to ensure that existing telecommunications

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installations have been explored in the first instance to prevent unnecessary proliferation of masts. In this instance an existing base station has been identified for an upgrade scheme which negates the need to explore new locations.

Paragraph 121 – *“Local planning authorities should not impose a ban on new electronic communications development in certain areas, impose blanket Article 4 directions over a wide area or a wide range of electronic communications development, or insist on minimum distances between new electronic communications development and existing development. They should ensure that:*

- a) They have evidence to demonstrate that electronic communications infrastructure is not expected to cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest; and*
- b) They have considered the possibility of the construction of new buildings or other structure interfering with broadcast and electronic communications services.”*

Paragraph 122 – *“Applications for electronic communications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include:*

- a) The outcome of consultations with organisations with an interest in the proposed development, in particular with the relevant body where a mast is to be installed near a school or college, or within a statutory safeguarding zone surrounding an aerodrome, technical site or military explosives storage area; and*
- b) For an addition to an existing mast or base station, a statement that self-certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection; or*
- c) For a new mast or base station, evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure and a statement that self-certifies that, when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met.”*

In relation to this paragraph, the site is not located within 3km of a statutory safeguarding zone surrounding an aerodrome, technical site or military explosives storage area, or within close proximity of any schools or colleges. The local planning authority was consulted with regards to the proposed upgrade scheme. An ICNIRP certificate is provided with this application to confirm that

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the proposal will not exceed International Commission guidelines. As the scheme is utilising an existing base station, it was not necessary to identify alternative site options.

Paragraph 123 - *"Local planning authorities must determine 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."*

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 131 – *"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."*

In relation to this paragraph, the application seeks to upgrade an existing telecommunications site located within Leicester and District Smallbore Rifle and Pistol Club grounds and the proposed equipment is the least amount possible to allow the site to transmit sufficiently; we therefore consider this design to be respectful to the character of the area. Although the site's change in appearance will to an extent be recognisable in any given context, efforts have been made to limit the visual impact on the surrounding amenity as far as practicable.

Planning Practice Guidance

Design: Process and Tools

In parallel with Section 12 of the NPPF, developments must be well-designed where it can assimilate into its local surroundings and support the broader characteristics of the local authority. The proposed application submitted herein demonstrates compliance with this guidance as the 10 design characteristics have been taken into account in the design considerations of this proposal whilst also balancing the technical requirements of the site to ensure the technical objectives can be achieved.

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England 2022

The Code of Practice is a guidance document created by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which aims to support the government's objective of delivering high quality wireless infrastructure whilst balancing the

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needs of environmental considerations. This document has been developed in collaboration with mobile network representatives, other government departments, public bodies, local planning authorities and protected landscapes. 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 guidance aligns the agreed principles between operators and local planning authorities in respect to the siting and design of network infrastructure to outline the roles and responsibilities of both parties throughout the application process. Within this document it is recognised that digital connectivity is vital to enable people to stay connected and businesses to grow, and there is particular emphasis on the 5G rollout and future mobile generations, which will be vital for a range of uses and future smart city applications. Much of the principles in this guidance reflect those already highlighted in the NPPF however, there are notable excerpts to highlight for the council's considerations in the determination of this application.

With reference to Paragraph 19, the local planning authority is "encouraged to support the deployment of digital infrastructure 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)."*

When considering the siting and design of any given proposal, Paragraph 22 states, "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."

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Moreover, Paragraph 29 states, "There are factors that can affect the type of infrastructure that will be deployed... including location and the coverage and capacity requirements. 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.
- In rural areas, base stations often need to cover wider geographic areas. Operators may need to use tall masts or lattice towers to provide the required coverage. The location of masts can sometimes be dictated by access to transmission links back to the operator's main network and proximity to a power supply. Coverage in some areas can be limited because of the geography, topography and terrain."

The guidance also provides further explanations for technical and operational considerations as below:

Paragraph 64 – "All wireless network installations are principally guided by the technical need for the site and the technical constraints placed upon transmitting a signal. The siting and design of such installations must therefore be balanced between visual impact and these needs and constraints. As set out in the siting and design section above, the three primary technical and operational considerations for installation sites are: ensuring that wireless infrastructure provides an appropriate level of coverage over the intended geographical area; ensuring that sites have sufficient capacity to meet user demand; and, requiring a connection to the wider network 'backhaul'."

Paragraph 65 – "Planning authorities should take account of these constraints, and those set out below, on network deployment and siting and design, when considering proposals."

Connected Nations UK Report 2024 (Published December 2024)

"The availability of mobile 5G continues to expand, with mobile network operators (MNOs) coverage ranging between 61% and 79% outside premises. However, 5G coverage where all MNOs are present outside premises remains low, at 38% for our High Confidence level. We continue to see significant differences across the UK, with 5G deployed in 42% of sites in urban areas, compared with 16% of sites in rural areas.

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4G remains the primary technology for mobile users, reaching outside more than 99% of UK premises and carries 78% of total mobile data traffic. 4G coverage where it is available from at least one MNO has now reached 95% of the UK landmass (delivering early on one of the key targets for the Shared Rural Network programme), with 4G geographic coverage across individual MNOs in the UK rising from a range of 80-87% last year to 88-89% this year. We note the 4G geographic coverage improvements because of the Shared Rural Network programme.

Total monthly mobile traffic overall has grown by 18% this year to 1069 PB⁶, at a slower pace compared to the 25% growth observed between 2022 and 2023. Traffic carried on 5G represents around 21% of total monthly traffic, however it has seen the highest increase by approximately 50%, from 151 PB in 2023 to 227 PB in 2024.

Mobile connectivity has become an integral part of modern living; it enables effective communication, provides access to information and services, enhances productivity, and supports various aspects of daily life... While 5G traffic has increased rapidly, 4G continues to carry most of the mobile data traffic, accounting for c.78% of total monthly data traffic (a decrease from 81% reported last year)."

This application site is located within a vital area where network provisions must be enhanced to allow people to work at home, to allow schools to teach online and to enable better accessibility in all parts of the country, which will in turn relieve pressures for home-working and e-learning. As outlined in the report statistics, there is increased demand on 4G and 5G coverage which has seen annual growth. Such demands will require network infrastructure improvements to adequately serve its customers as well as futureproofing the network for years to come.

The Connected Nations 2024 report also contains an updated interactive map which shows mobile coverage for the local authorities throughout the UK. The below maps show the coverage of landmass, premises and roads by mobile networks for voice, data for 5G (with a High Confidence, and Very High Confidence). The line charts below show coverage over time since May 2022 in relation to 5G coverage levels in Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

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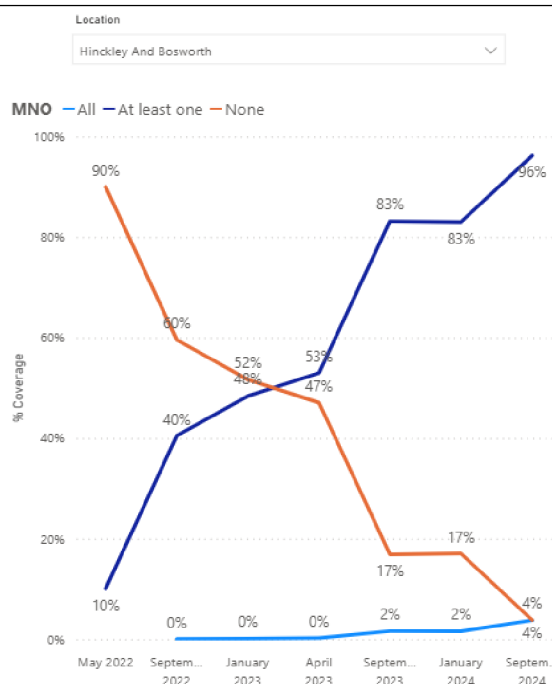


Figure 5. 5G high confidence geographical coverage within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

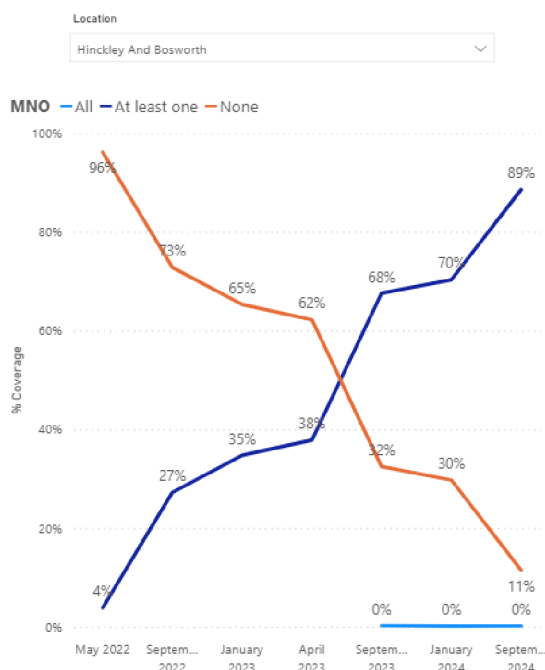


Figure 6. 5G very high confidence geographical coverage within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

As shown in the figures above, 96% of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council area has access to 5G at a High Confidence level from at least one

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operator, and 4% at a Very High Confidence from at least one operator. However, these figures drop to 89%, and 0% respectively, when considering 5G provision from all main mobile operators. The proposed new radio base station at this site will help enhance digital connectivity in the surrounding area.

Ofcom Mobile Matters Report (July 2025)

Using crowdsourced data, this Ofcom report analyses people's experience of mobile networks across the UK to help identify areas of improvement. Ofcom recognises the essential services that mobile coverage enables and how society has become reliant and expectant for continuous high quality mobile coverage throughout the country.

The report has compared the data to results to previous years and it was discovered that across several performance metrics there was year-on-year decline, including data connection success rates. Whilst these performance metrics had no significant impact on the end user, it is still meaningful in illustrating the potential vulnerabilities of existing infrastructure and proves that there is a necessity to improve robustness and resilience.

The public benefits of the 5G rollout was also evident in the data results as download and upload speeds were far better compared to older generation technologies. In video streaming tests along 98.2% of 30-second video streams completed without interruption over 5G. This is compared with 96.6% over 4G and 88.3% over 3G.

Specifically in relation 5G Standalone networks, the data results also demonstrated the benefits of such services as it provided significantly higher download speeds when compared to 5G non-standalone areas (70% of 5G standalone download speeds measuring at 100Mbit/s or higher versus 46% for 5G non-standalone). When downloading file sizes of 2MB, 5MB and 10MB the download speeds via 5G standalone were also found to be 45% faster. These statistics underline the high extent of public benefits that can be achieved through infrastructure improvements such as this application.

Following on from this, the statistical comparisons between urban and rural areas highlight a sharp disparity that sees rural areas requiring vast improvements in order to match the same coverage levels as urban areas. For instance, the proportion of connections via 5G networks in urban areas reaches 29.5% compared to the 18.8% of rural areas.

The report further highlights the capacity challenges of base stations as it states, *"Although 'mobile network coverage' refers to the geographic area where*

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mobile services are available, being within a coverage area does not guarantee a successful connection. Issues such as weak signal strength, network congestion due to high traffic, and service outages can limit or prevent access." Consequently, the operators must build sufficient resilience into their network to help avoid these vulnerabilities that can affect the user experience.

Ofcom Online Nation 2024 Report

This Ofcom report looks at the current online landscape of the UK and outlines statistical evidence that shows how internet use has grown over time. These figures are an indication of the current network demands being experienced and explains why existing mobile network infrastructure needs to be improved to provide high quality coverage that is also fast and strong to its customers. Such network improvements can subsequently allow more users the freedom to undertake a variety of online tasks that are part of our everyday lives such as working from home, online banking, video calling, virtual classrooms, seeking medical assistance, etc. A few key statistics are noted below:

- *In May 2024, UK adults spent an average of 4 hours 20 minutes a day online, across smartphones, tablets and computers.*
- *Search engines are still widely used; 90% of UK online adults visited at least one of the top ten highest-reaching search engines in May 2024.*
- *Over half of UK online adults visited NHS online in May 2024.*
- *Fifty-seven per cent of UK internet users aged 16+ said they had used a cloud storage service in the past week.*

UK Digital Strategy 2022

"Digital infrastructure plays a vital role in our daily lives and is the foundation of a thriving digital economy. Every part of the UK needs world-class, secure digital infrastructure that enables people to access the connectivity and services they need – where they live, work or travel. This is why enhancing digital connectivity is Mission Four of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper. Our goal is to ensure that everyone, wherever they live or work in the UK, can access the connectivity and services they need for the ever-digitising world."

"A competitive and innovative digital economy will ensure the UK continues to be considered one of the most innovative countries worldwide and a competitive environment where technology businesses of all sizes can thrive."

Sir Chris Bryant MP Minister of State Department for Science, Innovation & Technology Letter to Council Leaders (Dated 29th November 2024)

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This letter confirms the importance of fast and reliable connectivity and the Government's commitment to supporting the delivery of next-generation connectivity across the UK by supporting the implementation of the latest technologies and driving towards nationwide 5G coverage by 2030. In order to achieve these objectives there is a call for councils to prioritise and recognise the value of digital infrastructure improvements when engaging with telecommunications proposals.

UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy (June 2025)

This infrastructure strategy sets out a new approach by the UK Government in their long term investment for improved infrastructure across the country, which will have positive benefits in both economic and social capacities. This is in recognition of the important role that infrastructure plays in enabling growth and raising living standards.

"3.37 Digital infrastructure supports productivity growth through lowering costs for firms, underpinning technological change, widening access to labour markets across the country and enabling new and innovative services to be provided.

3.38 Digital infrastructure also increasingly underpins the provision of services critical for the functioning of society, business, and government – including the operation of other infrastructure sectors. In particular, demand for data centre services is projected to surge over the next decade including for AI development and deployment. The government is committed to facilitating the development and expansion of cutting-edge, secure, and sustainable digital infrastructure that meets the needs of both the private and public sectors.

3.43 The UK is currently undergoing a transformation of its digital infrastructure. 5G is being rolled out across the country and old copper broadband networks are being replaced with new gigabit capable connections.

3.46 The government is committed to removing barriers to the deployment of fixed infrastructure so that the commercial market can deliver as far and as fast as possible. This includes:

- Implementing the remaining provisions of the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022 as soon as possible.*
- Bringing forward a more flexible permitting system for street works across England, if the ongoing trials are successful.*
- Easing the process for gigabit deployment for leaseholders in multi-dwelling units, such as blocks of flats, and consulting on proposals as soon as possible.*

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3.49 Businesses and critical national infrastructure also use digital infrastructure connectivity to provide products and services. To enable businesses and infrastructure providers to know when they need to upgrade, the government will work with industry to set out a forward-looking connectivity timeline. This will allow better planning of upgrades as part of regular research and development and/or lifecycle replacement, improving economic efficiency, saving public and private money and reducing the risk to life and critical services from upgrades.

3.50 High quality mobile coverage is now a necessity. Yet in many places coverage remains patchy and unreliable. The government has therefore asked Ofcom to provide accurate, public reporting on mobile coverage and performance. Ofcom have committed to launching their improved online coverage checker in June 2025.

3.52 The government's ambition is for all populated areas to have standalone 5G by 2030, delivered through commercial investment. It will enable a range of new industrial applications across the economy, including in manufacturing, broadcasting, public services, transport and logistics. An Analysys Mason study found that 5G adoption in key sectors could realise up to £37 billion additional Gross Value Added in the period from 2022 to 2035."

The UK Government Resilience Action Plan (July 2025)

This action plan recognises the vital role that digital infrastructure plays as part of the UK's critical national infrastructure. The effects of Covid-19 highlighted the immense public benefits of digital connectivity and our reliance on digital infrastructure to communicate with each other on both a social and economic level. This reliance however, also showed the vulnerabilities of existing systems and technologies that can be more susceptible to significant national risks that affect our everyday lives such as public service disruption and cyber-attacks. It is therefore of paramount importance that utilitarian infrastructure networks such as telecommunications are reinforced and improved to become more resilient and robust.

"Empowering and supporting this network of organisations to operate at their best is fundamental to our approach, and this action plan focuses on where we can maximise their efforts, including through the use of science and technology."

"The resilience of the UK's CNI [Critical National Infrastructure] is of central importance to ensuring that the essential services the public rely on continue to

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operate. Given the fundamental and connected nature of these services, failure has the potential to cause cascading and catastrophic consequences. This could be, for example, power outages impacting other essential functions, like transport or water provision, or a failure in the telecoms or data infrastructure sectors impacting the energy sector - across all four nations."

"Telecoms is part of our CNI and underpins many, if not all, economic sectors."

"The UK government has undertaken a strategic overhaul of its approach to resilient telecommunications, which are paramount to respond to a National Power Outage and other national security risks. This has included a recent investment in ensuring our resilient voice capability, situated across the UK to enable a means of information flow across the local and national level, is fit for purpose and is now exploring opportunities to augment our capabilities with the addition of resilient data provision."

Cluttons: Connecting Today for Tomorrow 2025/2026

"The amount of data we use on our mobile phones has more than trebled since 2019 in the UK and is set to climb further. At the same time, the UK fell to a ranking of 53rd globally for mobile download speeds last year, and it looks like the UK will miss its own targets for rolling out standalone 5G across the country. Data usage over broadband in the UK has risen by more than 1600% since 2013, but the UK sits in 44th place globally for broadband speeds and fibre connections remain an issue for millions of households.

Consumers, industry, and policymakers all know that more needs to be done to make sure the UK has the digital connectivity it needs, not only to service the current demands from homes and businesses, but to future-proof the country with the increasing demands for more data as more services move online, and to be competitive on the world stage."

Some key survey statistics in the report include:

- BT reported that delays in rolling out standalone 5G is costing the UK economy £230 billion.
- Monthly data usage by UK mobile phone users is up from 292 petabytes (PB) in 2019 to 1069 PB in 2024 – a rise of more than 260%. [1 perabyte = 1,000 terabytes = 1 million gigabytes]
- The international organisation representing mobile operators, GSMA, has forecasted mobile data traffic growth to rise four-fold by 2030.

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- Average mobile data download speed is 94.5 Mbps with the UK placing 53rd in the world in 2024. First placed Singapore by contrast provides average speeds of 316.9 Mbps, which is three times faster than the UK.
- 44% of MPs stated that their constituents have raised digital connectivity issues.
- Number of commuters working remotely whilst on the train has doubled since pre-pandemic statistics according to Trainline. However, the quality of internet connection is unreliable which impacts on productivity and can deter commuters from choosing to work whilst in transit.

These statistics illustrate how the UK is falling behind other countries around the world and the extent of improvements that are needed in order to cater for increasing demands from the UK population. Such network improvements also feed into the attractiveness of the UK as a place for global tourism and international business that can help to boost the economy even further.

Practical Applications of 5G Connectivity as Example of Material Socio-Economic Benefit: -

Education:

The relationship between 5G and education is evolving at a massive rate with educators exploring the relevance of Virtual Reality (VR) technologies for education and training. Crucially, VR can support remote learning, allowing students a presence in the classroom even when working elsewhere.

5G's ability to deliver real-time information (low latency), ultra-fast speeds (critical for high definition images and video), increased capacity and heightened security will also allow learning on the job, thanks to technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) goggles, which can give engineers real-time instructions on how to fix a machine on a production line, for example.

Health:

Patients across the country are now becoming accustomed to relying on remote healthcare services such as NHS 111, virtual GP appointments, and ordering online deliveries of essential medical supplies.

5G will prove critical in providing the infrastructure required to deliver remote health services over the next decade. By design, 5G's ability to deliver real-time information (low latency), ultra-fast speeds (critical for high definition images and video), increased capacity and heightened security are going to be fundamental in scaling the patient benefits of remote healthcare and keeping

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medical records secure and private. For instance, trials have shown that connecting ambulance crews to expert resources using 5G allows paramedics to work with doctors and conduct specialist procedures in real time whilst on the road.

The social and economic benefits of providing reliable and high quality mobile broadband connections including 5G support growth in productivity, efficiency and labour force participation across the whole economy. This is fully supported by the NPPF, the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2020-2039 (draft). These benefits are strong material consideration 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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