

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

1. Site Details

Site Name:	Chobham Roac Roundabout SW	Site Address:	Land at Chobham Road Roundabout Frimley Surrey GU16 8QD
National Grid Reference:	E: 487991 N: 158473		
Site Ref Number:	CS_30867000	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 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 site 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: On the 5 December 2023 pre-application consultation letters and drawings of the proposals were sent to the Planning Department for comment, A response was received on 12 December requesting a fee in order to register a formal pre-application enquiry PRE/23/0109. Due to the timescales for receiving a written response, a formal pre-application enquiry was not progressed in this instance.	

Annual area wide information to planning authority

¹ Macro or Micro

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

Has annual area wide information been provided?	No
If no explain why:	
<p>Summary issues raised:</p> <p>Cornerstones commercial relationship with Vodafone has changed, effectively increasing independence to work with other companies in the deployment of mobile infrastructure. Cornerstone no longer has visibility of Vodafone's full update plan. However, Cornerstone is committed to working closely with Local Planning Authorities and following best practice guidance.</p> <p>Cornerstone aims to engage and work with the planning department at the earliest opportunity when we are instructed to deliver new infrastructure within your Local Authority; conduct strategic pre-rollout engagement meetings to discuss our wider rollout. If your Local Authority would like a meeting to discuss wider Cornerstone rollout plans then please advise. Cornerstone recognises the importance of developing long-term partnerships and will always work with you to improve mobile connectivity.</p>	

Community Consultation

Rating of Site under Traffic Light Model:	Red	Amber	Green
<p>Outline of consultation carried out:</p> <p>Pre-application consultation was carried out with the local ward councillors for the Frimley Ward (Councillors David O'Mahoney and Alan Ashbery) and the neighbouring local ward councillor for Parkside Ward (Councillors Rob Lee and Nirmal Kang), and the local MP for Surrey Heath Michael Gove. Pre-application consultation letters and drawings of the proposals were sent to these parties on 5 December 2023.</p>			
<p>Summary of outcome/main issues raised (include copies of relevant correspondence):</p> <p>No specific comments have been received at the time of making the application.</p>			

School/College

<p>Location of site in relation to school/college (include name of school/college):</p> <p>The Grove Primary School is approx. 170m to the north east of the site.</p>
<p>Outline of consultation carried out with school/college (include evidence of consultation):</p> <p>Pre-application consultation was carried out with the school. Pre-application consultation letters and drawings of the proposals were sent to the Head Teacher/Chair of Governors on 5 December 2023.</p>
<p>Summary of outcome/main issues raised (include copies of main correspondence):</p>

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

No specific comments have been received 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 proposed development be on a civil safeguarding area or a defence safeguarding area?	Yes	
Has the Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/operator of the civil safeguarding area or defence safeguarding area been notified?	Yes	
<p>Details of response:</p> <p>Notice sent to Farnborough Airport, Blackbushe Airport and the CAA on the 19 January 2024. Copies enclosed with this application.</p>		

Developer's Notice

Copy of Developer's Notice enclosed?	Yes	
Date served:	19.01.2024	
Copy of Developers notice and proof of delivery including email delivery receipt enclosed with the application.		

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3. Proposed Development

The proposed site:

Cornerstone is the UK's leading mobile infrastructure services company. They acquire, maintain and own over 20,000 sites and are committed to enabling best in class mobile connectivity for over all the country's mobile customers. They oversee works on behalf of telecommunications providers wherever possible aim to:

- promote shared infrastructure
- maximise opportunities to consolidate the number of base stations
- significantly reduce the environmental impact of network development

Background

As part of Vodafone's continued network improvement program, there is a specific requirement for a radio base station installation at this location to upgrade 4G provision as well as new 5G service provision in the area. This follows the planned removal of the existing rooftop site at Siemens, Frimley Square, Cobham Road, Frimley, GU16 8PG which is no longer available to the operator. The site provider has served the operator with a notice to quit to enable their plans to redevelop the site.

As such, Cornerstone needs to find a replacement site to ensure existing connectivity is not lost to surrounding businesses, residents and transport routes in this area of Frimley. In order to avoid a situation where there is no coverage for Vodafone in this busy location, there is a need to provide replacement coverage as soon as possible, as the operator's customers will soon be unable to utilize their handsets in this cell area. A replacement installation in this location will ensure that the latest high quality 2G, 3G, 4G coverage is maintained and new 5G service provision is provided in and around Frimley.

Cornerstone is limited in siting options as there is a requirement to provide equivalent replacement coverage and capacity for this area of Frimley. The replacement of an existing site means the new site has to be located as close as possible to the existing installation in order to fit into the surrounding network and to maintain the provision of equivalent coverage and capacity in the surrounding local area.

The Site

The application site is located within the grass verge on the southern side of Chobham roundabout, at the intersection with Portsmouth Road A325 and opposite Frimley Park Hospital entrance. There is an existing pavement immediately south of the proposed site, along with existing mature trees which surround the site. The site is situated to the north of The Grove, Partridge Close and the cricket ground. The surrounding area of the site is predominately residential and commercial together with green open spaces. The nearest residential properties are approx. 60m to the south of the site.

A number of vertical elements including lighting columns, advertisement signs and flag poles are located within the immediate vicinity of the site, with the lighting columns situated at regular intervals off all roads from the roundabout.

The site is not within a Conservation Area or within any other Article 2(3) land or within the immediate setting of a listed building. Frimley Park a Registered Park and Garden is over 180m away to the south west of the site.

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Image 1a: Aerial view of the proposed application site (Source: Grid reference finder)

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Cornerstone Industry Site Specific Supplementary Information (England) V.7 – 06/09/2023
Registered Address:
Cornerstone Telecommunications, Infrastructure Limited,
Hive 2, 1530 Arlington Business Park, Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4SA.
Registered in England & Wales No. 08087551.
VAT No. GB142 8555 06


 Cornerstone, Hive 2,
1530 Arlington Business Park,
Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4SA



Image 1b: The application site looking west from Chobham Road (Source: Google Maps)



Image 1c: The application site looking east from Portsmouth Road (Source: Google Maps)

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Image 1d: The application site looking south from Chobham Road roundabout (Source: Google Maps)

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

The operator is seeking to provide replacement 3G services as well as new 4G and 5G coverage and capacity to the surrounding area for Vodafone to ensure high quality customer experience is obtained as demands on the network increase and technologies change.

The 3G and 4G provision allows internet access, video calling, data downstreaming, accessible media networks and emailing to name just a few of the benefits. Therefore, to maintain high quality indoor 3G and provide new 4G services into this area would promote activity in line with the general population demand as the ownership of smart devices increases. New 5G service provision will offer faster, more responsive and reliable connections than ever before.

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

Description:

The proposed installation of a telecommunications base station supporting 6 no antennas and 2 no 300mm dishes, together with 3 no ground based cabinet, 1 meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto.

Overall Height: 20.0m Metres

Height of existing building (where applicable): N/A

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Equipment Housing: 1 x Cheshire 'Plus' Cabinet	
Length:	2.723 Metres
Width:	0.600 Metres
Height:	1.722 Metres
Equipment Housing: 1 x Derby Cabinet	
Length:	0.993 Metres
Width:	0.600 Metres
Height:	1.722 Metres
Equipment Housing: 1 x Meter Cabinet	
Length:	0.655 Metres
Width:	0.254 Metres
Height:	1.215 Metres
Materials (as applicable):	
Tower/mast etc – type of material and external colour:	Light grey (RAL 7035)
Equipment housing – type of material and external colour:	Fir green (RAL 6009)

<p>Reasons for choice of design, making reference to pre-application responses:</p> <p>Central Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment & this within Section 12 (Paragraph 126) National Planning Policy Framework (Revised). It states:</p> <p><i>'Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to work and helps make development acceptable to communities'.</i></p> <p>In keeping with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidelines of using: <i>"high quality communications infrastructure"</i>, the proposed design has been selected to minimise visual impact upon the surrounding environment.</p> <p>The design of any communications infrastructure is dictated primarily by operational requirements and secondly by the development's setting.</p> <p>From an operational perspective, the operators must ensure the following when devising a final solution for any site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> antennas are specifically orientated to transmit effectively and efficiently without signal being impeded; dish links (if required) achieve a direct line of site connection with other base station sites on the network; and GPS modules achieve a direct satellite link. <p>To achieve this the operator undertakes panoramic assessment to determine what is the minimum height for transmission equipment to be located in a context of local topography and clutter, including manmade or natural features, and in all cases the operator is committed to limiting the amount of apparatus to an operational minimum.</p> <p>In terms of setting, given that the subject site is located on a grass verge adjacent to public highway, a street furniture style development has been deemed to be the most suitable type of base station. This is the most accepted design for urban, suburban and rural roadside locations throughout the</p>
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The operator carefully considered the design of the proposed column most sensitive design currently available to them which will provide the necessary capacity to the surrounding area. Due to all the technologies that will be available at this local 2G, 3G, 4G, 3 no antennas need to be installed at the bottom of the slim-line monopole. 3 no 5G antennas will be located at the top. These antennas will provide the latest 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G service provision to this area of Frimley. The antennas are unshrouded for technical reasons. Thus if the colt were to be any lower, the antennas would not be able to clear the buildings/trees and as such would not be able to operate effectively.

The proposed height at 20.00m is essential in order to clear the mature trees and urban clutter in the area and provide infill coverage to the target coverage area.

The pronounced headframe is essential in order to fit all the operator's multi technology a within the same installation. This is the slimmest design possible which will enable all technologies supported from this site. If the column and headframe width were to be any slimmer the technology would not fit in the one column. Similarly, if the column were to be a throughout then the overall width would have to increase which would appear prominent in the streetscene, than the proposed design.

The proposed design is more visually sensitive and much easier to assimilate into a streetscene lattice towers or pole designs with bulky headframes. These traditional designs are preferred operators as they are structurally capable of hosting more equipment and give great antenna orientation and are thus more efficient structures. However, such designs would appear in this location. Therefore, the operator has compromised on obtaining maximum coverage in to better assimilate in to the streetscene. Indeed, as previously stated street pole successfully assimilated into the streetscene over recent years.

The design of the column resembles as closely as possible the other existing vertical structure the immediate area including street lighting columns. These vertical structures will help the proposed radio base station assimilate with the surrounding area.

The operator has therefore carefully considered the design of the proposed column. The column proposing the most sensitive design currently available to them which will provide the coverage and capacity to the surrounding area. Due to all the technologies that will be available at this location, 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G, 6 antennas need to be installed at the top of the slim-line monopole.

The mast will be coloured light grey to blend in with the existing street furniture and often grey skies, minimising the impact upon the streetscape. The cabinetry will be coloured fir green to blend in with the surrounding grass verge and trees close to the site. Although both the mast and cabinetry can be coloured any other colour the LPA consider appropriate.

The proposed pole will ensure replacement and new mobile telecommunications service within the locale meet the expectation of residents, businesses and visitors, while minimising the visual impact of the infrastructure on the surrounding environment and meeting all ICNIRP certification requirements

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Technical Information

Health and Safety - including ICNIRP compliance
An ICNIRP certificate is provided as part of this application.

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

Enclose predictive coverage plots if appropriate, e.g. to show coverage improvement. Proposals to improve capacity will not generally require coverage plots.

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 network, creating a patchwork of overlapping coverage 'cells' across the country. As 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 number 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 in coverage and ensure that people can use their phones whenever and wherever they are.

There is a specific requirement for a replacement radio base station at this location to allow Vodafone to provide replacement 3G services in and around this area of Frimley whilst also providing the latest 4G technology and new 5G service provision to the local area. This ensures high quality indoor service provision is maintained.

Whilst it is the case that Cornerstone remains committed to the promotion of shared infrastructure maximising opportunities to consolidate the number of base stations required in operating a single grid network to provide 2G 3G and 4G coverage, this can no longer be the case with all sites due to the provision of 5G service.

Mobile connectivity and service is required where customers live, work and play. 5G coverage and superfast mobile broadband data capacity demand will continue to increase exponentially. The introduction of IoT (Internet of Things), machine to machine connectivity, automated transport/infrastructure and other 'smart' applications. To this end, the existing shared infrastructure within the local environment has had to be reviewed and adapted as appropriate.

It is critical to understand that the UK's four Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), including Vodafone, all utilise different technology spectrums to provide their mobile service. The spectrums the Operators utilise are allocated by Ofcom, as industry regulators on behalf of UK Government, through agreements with each of the individual MNOs. As such, each MNO must utilise the spectrum licence allocated to them. Each part of the RF spectrum has variations in terms of RF propagation. Therefore, the four individual MNO networks, and their sharing arrangements, cannot be compared directly and there will be variations in how all four networks are deployed and developed. For this reason, all MNOs, including Vodafone, who continue to be competitors but share base stations where possible, have a completely different network configuration they need to fit within and build 5G service around. Therefore, the network has to be built differently, with different antennas and equipment, to take account of the different spectrum and licence variations and this will lead to necessary infrastructure variations depending on site specific demand, local constraints and requirement. As such, the various network operators will have variations in how their infrastructure is deployed and developed.

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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)

In accordance with the licence obligations and advice in the National Planning Policy Framework and the 'Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England' the applicant's network rollout team investigated the following siting and design options using this sequential approach to site selection:

- Upgrading their own existing base stations;
- Using existing telecommunications structures belonging to another communications operator i.e. Mast and/ or site sharing, co-location;
- Installations on existing high buildings or structures;
- Using small scale equipment; and finally **Erecting a new ground based mast site – (1st) Camouflaging or disguising equipment.** (2nd) A conventional installation e.g. a lattice mast and compound.

The applicant's site selection strategy is to keep the overall environmental impact to a minimum. Utilising existing masts is always progressed where it is technically and legally possible and where it is the planning authority's preferred environmental solution. New sites are only developed where there are no viable or accessible alternatives or it is the local planning authority's preferred approach. The feasibility of the acquisition, build and maintenance of the site also needs to be taken into account.

In accordance with the above sequential approach, the proposal is to install a replacement radio base station in this location to provide replacement 3G and 4G coverage and new 5G service provision.

Site Type	Site Address	National Grid Reference	Reason for not choosing site
Existing Telecoms Site – Rooftop NTQ	Siemens, Frimley Square, Cobham Road, Frimley, GU16 8PG	E488168, N158419	This is the NTQ site where the operator is currently located. However, it is no longer available due to the NTQ being served on the operator due to planning redevelopment of the site.
Streetworks (D1)	Chobham Road, Frimley, GU16 8QD	E488152, N158520	A mast at this location is not viable due to a physical lack of space with shared use path in order to deliver the required level of coverage to the target area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Greenfield (D2)	The Grove Primary Academy, Chobham Road, Frimley, GU16 8PG	E488117, N158540	Whilst there is adequate space to build an installation at this location, there are other alternatives that exist that are more appropriate in order to deliver the required coverage to the target area. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Streetworks (D3)	Chobham Road, Frimley, GU16 8PA	E488042, N158468	Whilst this location would otherwise be appropriate to host a telecoms installation, it does not best fulfil radio planners requirements at this time. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.

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Streetworks (D4)	18-14 Chobham Road, Frimley, GU16 8PQ	E488253, N158575	A mast at this location is not viable due to a physical lack of space with shared use path and school crossing in order to deliver the required level of coverage to the target area. It is also within close proximity of overhead lines which would make the installation of a radio base station in this location problematic. This site has therefore been discounted for these reasons.
Streetworks (D5)	Bret Harte Road, Frimley, GU16 8DJ	E488398, N158189	Whilst this location would otherwise be appropriate to host a telecoms installation, it does not best fulfil radio planners requirements at this time. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Streetworks (D6)	168 Middlemoor Road, Frimley, GU16 8DQ	E488476, N158042	Whilst this location would otherwise be appropriate to host a telecoms installation, it does not best fulfil radio planners requirements at this time. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Streetworks (D7)	7 Ansell Road, Frimley, GU16 8BS	E488080, N157912	Whilst this location would otherwise be appropriate to host a telecoms installation, it does not best fulfil radio planners requirements at this time. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.
Streetworks (D8)	1-11 Barnes Road, Frimley, GU16 8BZ	E488262, N158007	Whilst this location would otherwise be appropriate to host a telecoms installation, it does not best fulfil radio planners requirements at this time. This site has therefore been discounted for this reason.

Grid Reference Finder Link of Map of discounted sites:

https://gridreferencefinder.com/#gr=SU8799158473|Application_s_Site|1,SU8815258419|D1|1,SU8811758540|D2_1,SU8804258468|D3|1,SU8825358575|D4|1,SU8839858189|D5|1,SU8808057912|D7|1,SU8826258007|D8|1,SU8847658042|D6|1,SU8816858419|NTQ_s_Site|1

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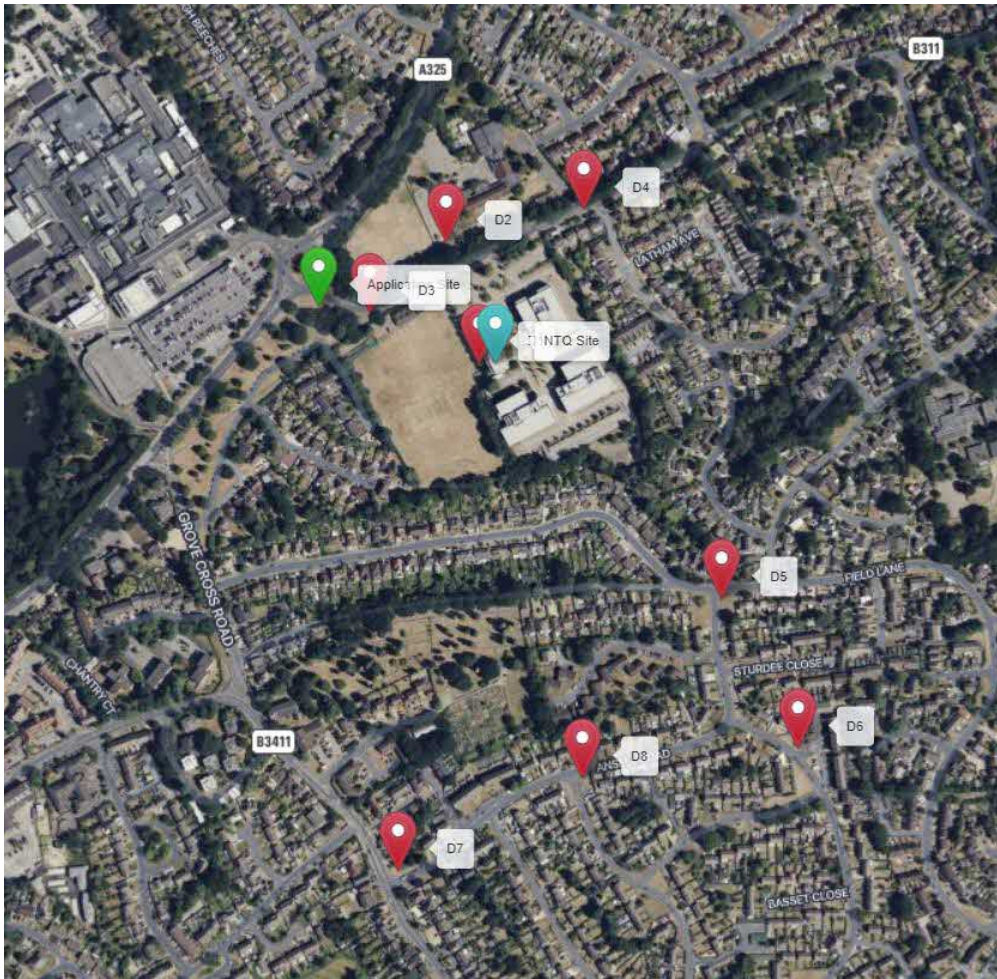


Image 2: Map of discounted sites (red pins), application site (green pin) and existing site (blue pin)
(Source: Grid Reference Finder)

<p>If no alternative site options have been investigated, please explain why:</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Environmental Information (refer to Section 2 of Site Finder Report):</p> <p>No specific environmental considerations identified to date.</p>
<p>Land use planning designations (if Heritage Statement is required then include here or make reference to attached Heritage Statement):</p> <p>There are no specific land designations known at the time of making the application.</p>

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

National Planning Guidance

Planning policy is provided at the national level by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is a material consideration in planning decisions.

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

National Planning Policy Framework (September 2023)

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in 2023. In February 2019 the NPPF was revised again, with minor alterations to wording relating to housing supply and not any parts relating to telecommunications. In July 2021 the NPPF was revised again. Overall, it's been revised to strengthen other sections including requirements on improved design quality, a new requirement for Councils to produce local design codes and an emphasis on using trees in new developments, revised policies on plan-making, removing status and opting out of PD rights relating to residential conversions. The Government's latest thinking continues to strongly support communications infrastructure. The NPPF remains 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. This wording echoes guidance set out in paragraph 42 of the 2012 version of NPPF. However, it also includes the importance of *reliable* communications infrastructure for both economic growth *and social well-being*.

The NPPF continues to support the expansion of electronic communications infrastructure. 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 digital infrastructure and seeks planning decisions to take account of this. 5G technology provides increased speed and more capacity in the network, to ensure that handheld devices can continue to be used for their intended 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 but also includes being consistent with the needs of consumers and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion.

Paragraph 118 of the NPPF retains the guidance set out in paragraph 46 of the 2012 NPPF version which relates to determining applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to create artificial 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 to electromagnetic fields.

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At the heart of the NPPF is the retained presumption in favour of sustainable development (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 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 effects of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when taken 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 proactive 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 meet 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

'Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses 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, address its weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain is a global leader in driving innovation⁴²...

Footnote 42 of the NPPF states:

'The Government's Industrial Strategy sets out a vision to drive productivity growth in 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 for the future.'

Paragraph 203 relates to non-designated heritage assets and states a balanced judgement is required when considering harm to the significance of the heritage asset:

'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that may indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England.

The Code of Practice provides guidance to Code Operators (referred to as Code of Practice), including the Mobile Network Operators and wireless infrastructure providers, 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 a

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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 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 provisions 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 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 be better connected and that fast, reliable digital connectivity can deliver economic, social and environmental 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. It specifically states that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technologies (such as 5G) 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 mobile 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 becoming more 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 speed, allowing thousands of devices in a small area to be connected at the same time. 5G network"*

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future mobile generations, will be vital for a range of Internet of Things uses (IoT) applications”.

The CoP establishes ‘Principles and commitments’ by which operator 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: operators should participate in dialogue with local planning authorities, along with other stakeholders such as the highways authorities, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 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 in the costs 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. All 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 reasonable time frame (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 land 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 buildings, 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,

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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 and digital infrastructure is even more evident in the revised CoP. The CoP recognises the 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 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 local considerations and context. Both can create better places in which to live and work and development acceptable to communities'*.

The Code provides guidance on siting and appearance principles. It sets out in respect of telecommunications development and acknowledges that the options for development 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 Paragraph 22 *'the choice over the site selection and design of equipment is primarily dependent upon the site and capacity requirements and technical constraints of a specific location, although operators make efforts to reduce visual impacts where possible'*.

Paragraph 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 parties 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 Paragraph 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 5G. Once an operator has identified a requirement for a new cell site, a suitable site needs to be identified. Elements that make a site favourable include: having existing or ready access to a public road, access to fibre optic cables, vehicular access, and, other buildings and developments that provide a level of existing screening. Operators will typically look to upgrade existing infrastructure before considering a new deployment, in particular for initial 5G deployment'*.

Paragraph 25 notes that *'When selecting sites for mobile infrastructure, operators should examine local planning designations for the area, as well as carrying out an in-person site search to identify potential sites'*.

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options which meet their requirements. Operators should follow these general siting and site s 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 address capacity issues as opposed to providing coverage); and
Mast and/or site sharing (including redevelopment of a site to enable upgrade sharing with another operator)'.

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

Coverage: wireless infrastructure needs to provide an appropriate level of c over the intended geographical area. This involves ensuring that , elevated sufficiently (often via masts) to provide clear lines of sight for signals.

Capacity: where existing network infrastructure can no longer meet the de network capacity in a particular area, additional sites may be require coverage area to meet the demand. This is more likely to be require populated areas or areas of high footfall.

Backhaul: the radio access network requires a connection to the c Backhaul is sometimes provided by a microwave link, which requires a clear line of between the two ends of the link.

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

In respect of 'Design', the CoP at Para 28 acknowledges that the siting of wireless infrastr influence which design options are most appropriate for reducing the visual impact includin

Protecting visual amenity
Mitigating visual impacts

Para. 29 acknowledges that these factors along with location and the coverage and c requirements can influence the type of infrastructure structure that is deployed and c '*planning authorities should be aware of these constraints when considering proposals. In par*
In urban areas, where there is a high level of demand for mobile data, mobile i stations are likely to need to be deployed more densely. In these settings you ca 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. Oper may need to use tall masts or lattice towers to provide the required coverage. ;

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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 CoP establishes radio equipment housing (cabinets) principles. 1
"cabinets protect radio transmitters and receivers, provide the power source for mobile and are connected to antennas via cables. Equipment cabinets are likely to be needed at all sites. The cabinets must be of sufficient size to facilitate hosting various operating equipment whilst allowing air circulation to reduce the potential for overheating". The CoP establishes the principal 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 Act, 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:

The Local Plan for the Surrey Heath area comprises the Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2011-2028 (Adopted 1st February 2012)

Surrey Heath Borough Council Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2011-2028 :

The overarching vision of this Core Strategy has been informed by analysis of the characteristics of the Borough along with the key challenges and issues it is facing. The Vision states:

'By 2028 residents will continue to enjoy a prosperous and high quality of life based around sustainable growth and a strong economy supporting a healthy, safe and diverse society that enjoys a high quality environment in which the natural heathland environment and character of towns and villages (including their green areas) is protected and enhanced. New development will be climate change resilient and will continue to be well designed and of a high quality. This will include housing that meets the needs and aspirations of all sectors of the local community. The community will continue to have good access to high quality employment, healthcare and education. Rates of economic activity will remain high, the local community will be more active with improved access to leisure and recreational facilities and a network of green infrastructure.'

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The Objectives represent the key outcomes required to deliver this Vision with an overarching objective of achieving sustainable development the remaining objectives have been grouped in themes, these including (inter-alia):

Housing Infrastructure and Environment

- o Protect and enhance biodiversity.
- o Ensure new development contributes to environmental infrastructure and serv improvements and minimises impacts upon the natural and built environment.
- o Maintain and protect Green Spaces.
- o Minimise impact on climate change.

Economic Development

- o Maintain the economic role of the Borough within the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region.
- o Maintain the role of Bagshot and Frimley as district centres for local shops, services and community facilities.

Children and Young People, Health and Well Being and Safer and Stronger Communities

- o Support the community through: protection from crime and the fear of crime, reflectior of cultural diversity, improved facilities for health, well being and life-long learning.
- o Provide and support high quality leisure and cultural facilities that are accessible to all.

The following policies are relevant to the proposal:

CP2: Sustainable Development and Design

CP12: Infrastructure Delivery and Implementation

DM9: Design Principles

DM17: Heritage

Policy CP2 relates to 'Sustainable Development and Design' and states that the strategy for sustainable development will not only direct it to the most sustainable locations and it will be expected to promote a safe, healthy and sustainable lifestyle. Development will be require to (inter-alia): reduce th Borough's carbon dioxide emissions, ensure efficient use of land within context of its surrounding and respect and enhance the quality of the area. Create sustainable communities that are safe and f easy access to a range of high quality services, promote health communities through improved acce: and promote smart economic growth which aims to supply a range of accessible oyment opportunities, life-long learning and skills training which enables flexible work practices.

Policy CP12 relates to 'Infrastructure Delivery and Implementation' and states

'Working with partners, the Borough Council will ensure that sufficient physical, social and community infrastructure is provided to support the development identified in this Core Strategy and subsequent DPDs through use of integrated demand and asset management or new infrastructure provision.'

Policy DM9 relates to Design Principles which identifies a number of principles development has achieve to be acceptable, these are:

- i) High quality design with layouts;
- ii) Respects and enhances the local, natural or historic character of the environment, with regard to scale, materials, massing, bulk ad density;
- iii) Respect amenities of occupiers and neighbouring properties;
- iv) Protect trees and other vegetation;
- v) Reduce potential for crime and fear of crime;

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- vi) Incorporate measures for waste storage where appropriate;
- vii) Be accessible to all and flexible for future adaption;
- viii) Facilitate provision of IT and other communications technology which allow flexible working practices including employees working from home or from remote locations; and
- ix) Reduce water consumption.

Development will be expected to reflect design and character measures set out in either general or area specific SPD.

Policy DM17 relates to 'Heritage' and states:

'Development which affects any Heritage Asset should first establish and take into account its individual significance, and seek to promote the conservation and enhancement of the Asset and its setting. In determining proposals for development affecting Heritage Assets or their setting, regard will be had as to whether the Asset is a Designated Heritage Asset or a Local Heritage Asset in determining whether the impact of any proposed development is acceptable.'

Surrey Heath Borough Council Economic Development Strategy 2023 - 2028

This strategic framework for economic development for the Borough until 2028 includes the need to address spatial priorities, improved digital and physical connectivity and address climate imperatives.

The strategy states that new fast growing business sectors are emerging with a reliance on advanced digital technologies. Digitalisation will continue to affect every aspect of work and the skills required.

Para 4.6 states *'Attracting Young Professionals and Ensuring Access to Talent*
The borough has an ageing population and to achieve future economic vibrancy a balanced demographic profile needs to be obtained. Surrey Heath needs to maintain the supply of young talented workers so many more young people in their mid-20s and early 30s need to be attracted and retained to keep its businesses functional. To achieve this, the borough needs to deliver a wide range of housing at affordable prices, access to high quality job opportunities locally and in neighbouring areas, high quality retail experiences, cultural, entertainment and leisure opportunities, good transport, digital connectivity and community infrastructure.'

Para 4.7 goes on to discuss *'Accelerating High Speed Digital Connectivity Measures and states; to accelerate and remove barriers to the installation of gigabit capability fibre connections to homes and business premises in Surrey Heath are of considerable importance. Tomorrow's industries will be predominantly digitised and data-driven and intensively dependent on high-performance digital connectivity. High speed digital connectivity is key to boosting productivity and wealth creation and Surrey Heath needs it to compete for the types of investment that can deliver high-quality, well-paid jobs. The drive towards net zero, reduced need to travel and constrained supply of commercial property have intensified the need for alternative work patterns, with hybrid working becoming increasingly prevalent.'*

One of the six priority interventions to major transformational impact is Project No. 2 is 'Accelerating high speed digital connectivity' the table below outlines the actions and outcomes of the project which will be led by the Council with support from Parish and Communities Groups.

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Project No 2: Accelerating High Speed Digital Connectivity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with parish councils and community groups in hard-to-reach areas • Relationship building with service providers • Liaison with Enterprise M3 on extension of internet Spine to the rural areas • Protocols with public bodies to get constraints to full connectivity removed 	SH ED	Parish Councils, Community Groups and Partners	Gigabit capability widely available to homes & premises across borough.	Investment in Infrastructure

Table 1: Transformational Project No. 2 and Proposed Actions/Outcomes. Source: SHBC Economic Development Strategy p.30.

Surrey Heath needs to create a strong competitive edge, focusing on attracting retail businesses, creating better operation conditions and promoting better productivity and business performance.

Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper 2022

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) 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 and National Health Service which guarantees care for every citizen; charities and voluntary groups which perform a million acts of kindness daily; globally renowned products and services which bring joy and jobs to so many; and millions 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 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.

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This requires us to end the geographical inequality which is su. UK. It needs to begin by improving economic dynamism and innovation to drive, across the whole country, unleashing the power of the private sector to unlock jobs and opportunity for all. While there are world-leading and enterprising businesses innovators right across the UK, economic growth and the higher product drives it has been over-concentrated in specific areas, particularly the South E of England. A long tail of low-productivity businesses and places explain productivity growth is too low compared to competitors. It is vital that we prese. enhance the economic, academic and cultural success stories of th productive counties, towns and cities. But it is equally critical tha productivity, boost economic growth, encourage innovation, cre. enhance educational attainment and renovate the social and cultural fabri parts of the UK that have stalled and not – so far – shared equally in our nati success’.

The ‘Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper’ states that:

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

Levelling up is not about making every part of the UK the same or pitting one part country against another. Nor does it mean dampening down the succ prosperous areas. Indeed, by extending opportunity across the UK we pressures on public services, housing and green fields in the South East. And levelling can improve well-being in the South East by improving productivity in the No 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, s opportunities for individuals and businesses, and celebrating every single city, town village’s culture. This will make the economy stronger, more equal and more illent, and lengthen and improve people’s lives. The economic prize from le potentially enormous. If underperforming places were levelled up tow 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 similarly-sized benefits. Accumulated over time, those gains could easily surpass a 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 look like? The UK has larger geographical differences than many other countries on multiple measures, including productivity, pay, educational attainment and health. Urban areas and coastal towns suffer disproportionately from crime 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.

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and poor opportunities for the people who grow up there. These disparities 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 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 geographic disparities? Over the past century, many trends have combined to create the patterns seen across the UK today. Globalisation, technological progress, advanced 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 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 improving productivity, increasing wealth and driving up living standards through 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, including lost 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 “capital”

- 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. First, 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 the missions, while being fully respectful of the devolution settlements, will require close and collaborative working with 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 at 99% coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.

The White Paper notes the pivotal role that ‘Digital Connectivity’ has in raising productivity and living standards by ‘Growing the Private Sector’.

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

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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 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 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 regional markets through remote working, making it more attractive for both worker 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. Regional 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 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 areas that are hardest to reach and which would otherwise not be provided 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 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 collect and deliver 4G coverage to 95% by 2025. As a result of this collaboration, the majority of the UK will soon benefit from improvements to digital connectivity.

5G has the potential to radically change the way people live and businesses more productive and competitive. The UK Government's aim for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027. In 2017, the UK Government has provided £200m in funding for 5G Testbed 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).

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In 2022, the UK Government will publish the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy. It will review how far the private sector will go to deliver wireless infrastructure including 5G – across the country, and determine whether there are any major 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 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 addition, WM5G has delivered a number of UK firsts, including a 5G road sensor network, 5G connected ambulance and capsule endoscopy trials, an application accelerator programme called 5sprinG, which has already supported 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 launched in Hull and East Yorkshire in early March. The UK Government will devolve digital skills administrations to consider how best to share the benefits. An evaluation of the programme to help build digital skills capability across the country.

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 of 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 standalone 5G will drive growth in the industries of today and tomorrow, including in emerging areas 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 international competitiveness. 5G can improve our public services, too, in everything from healthcare 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 sets 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

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was reaffirmed in the 'UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy', published in April 2023 which state Executive Summary:

"The next decade will see seismic changes both in terms of how we deliver and how we can use it. The economic and social benefits from these changes 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 academia."

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

"The more our lives are conducted online, the more access to the internet we have, the more social and economic opportunity we have."

This is why delivering world-class digital infrastructure to all Britons is a fundamental mission of government - and our efforts to build it the modern equivalent in scale and ambition to the Victorian 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 bring hard-to-reach communities across the UK with gigabit-capable broadband. It is complemented by the staggering competition now underway between commercial suppliers to supply Britons with gigabit connectivity.

Extraordinary progress is being made on coverage. When I began my role in September 2021 coverage was just over 50%. Now, it stands at almost 75%. With £1bn of Project Gigabit's funds 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 covered by a gigabit contract.

Which is why the time is right to turn our sights to mobile connectivity, where the same sense of urgency is needed to deliver the kind of wireless infrastructure that will transform how we live our lives and 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 smartphones. 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 around cities through access to apps like Uber and Bolt and use public services, such as booking 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

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The Connected Nations Report 2022 was published in December 2022. The UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy (April 2023) in respect of delivering a basic 5G signal to a 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 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. The ranges cover an increasing probability that the coverage predicted by MNOs will be achieved 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 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 an update to the Connected Nations 2022 report. It is based on mobile coverage and fixed broadband across the UK as of January 2023. Ofcom is a measure of mobile coverage in a way that reflects the like-for-like 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 expand its coverage footprint.

“4G: Coverage of 4G mobile networks across the UK has not seen significant changes over 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 Scotland and also in Wales. Wales has benefited by a percentage point drop in geographic not-spots 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 unchanged over the previous reporting periods. The range of predicted coverage by MNOs is now 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 location (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 vehicles. As with 4G, there are marked variations for individual nations; for example, geographic notspots in 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’ is now at 67-77% of the UK landmass, up from 42-57% in our December 2022 report.

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MNO' now ranges from 73% (very high confidence) to 82% (high confidence) of premises outdc 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 foll

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 ad 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 :

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 2020 to only use a smartphone to go online (21% vs 11% in 2020)^[2]. There could be many but this may be because people were spending more time at home in late 2020 and ea than in late 2021, and therefore used a wider range of devices. It may also reflec screen size and better-optimised app functions of many smartphones, making them easier 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 smartphone. UK online adults are also spending slightly more time using tablets than com, 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, follo 35-44s (80%); 15-24s (78%); 45-54s (74%) and those aged 55+ (55%).^[3]"

Therefore, without the improved network coverage and c: infrastructure will bring, Vodafone's network users living, working and travelling in the local area those of the associated MVNOs, will not benefit from reliable mobile digital connectivity w their smartphones for business, education and personal purposes.

Planning Issues

The main issues arising from this prior approval notification ar cabinets due to their scale and siting would be a visually obtrusive feature which would be det to the character and appearance of the area and residential amenity. Whether any perceived har would outweigh the significant social and economic benefits associated with the increas provision attributed to the proposal and other valid material considerations as outlined within NPPF, UK Wireless Digital Infrastructure Strategy, the Core Strategy, the Local Plan and the LEP.

Principle of Development

^[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 surv y) – 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.

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The principle of development has been established by the Government. Development rights came into force in November 2016 and were subsequently amended in April 2017, which enabled sites such as this one to be built under the operators permitted development 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 standard application at paragraph 28. It states that:

'The statutory requirements relating to prior approval are much less stringent 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 treated as 'permitted development' and subject to prior approval from the local planning authority. This 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

There are numerous specific constraints associated with site placement in mobile network planning, as touched upon above. Notably, each radio base station can only cover a limited geographic area, known as a cell and that cells are designed to overlap to form an unbroken network.

Site placement is always critical in network planning and becomes even more so when one is seeking to provide replacement coverage within an established cellular pattern. There is a very specific and unique gap in the network, like a piece from a completed jigsaw would, which needs to be filled. This will enable users living, working within and passing through that area to use their mobile phones and other wireless devices. This places even greater limitations on the potential siting opportunities as not all locations will enable this specific gap to be adequately filled without compromising the network.

When seeking to identify a location for a replacement base station site in this instance, the applicant's Agent applied the sequential site selection process, as is advocated within the Code of Practice.

The applicant's stakeholder guidance from it in the siting and design of all their new sites and upgrades meant that the initial cell search investigation focused on an exploration of existing telecommunication sites, then buildings and other suitably tall structures that may have been appropriate for the accommodation of the 'infill' apparatus, subject to the technical constraints placed upon them and planning constraints imposed by the development plan. Once these had been identified, potential locations for a new base installation were explored.

As set out above siting considerations for a new ground-based mast include:

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Height of the site in relation to the surrounding land
Topography of the site and vegetation
Openness and visibility of the site
Designated areas
Relation to existing base stations
Proximity to residential properties

The main instigator for a new installation at the application location follows the requirement Cornerstone and Vodafone of progressing a replacement site in the Frimley area of Surrey Heath for a replacement radio base station capable of providing their latest 4G and new 5G technologies

The application site is required to provide replacement coverage to support the applicant's adjacent sites and improve this area of poor mobile coverage and contribute to the Government 'Up' agenda and ensure the good quality critical infrastructure to support strong inclusive growth and contribute to economic opportunities to deliver the UK Wireless Digital Infrastructure Strategy.

3G and 4G signals by their very nature (as they carry high data rates) do not penetrate distances, just a few hundred metres, 5G even less so depending on the topography, building clutter and vegetation including trees in the area which can reduce their effectiveness. Therefore, the new 5G radio base station needs to be close to their customer demand where the case is the Frimley area of Surrey Heath.

The applicant's have exhausted all feasible potential alternative siting options within and in reasonable proximity to the cell area. The application site remains the best available solution for a replacement installation to ensure continued coverage provision in this area. The comprehensive efforts undertaken during site selection and lack of any more suitable, feasible option is considered a thorough assessment of the application proposals.

The siting of the proposed radio base station has been carefully considered. To this end, the equipment has been located within a wide grass verge on the southern side of the Chobham Road roundabout, adjacent to the existing footpath and the mature trees which surround the site and act as sufficient screening of the development from the wider area. The surrounding area of the site is predominantly residential and commercial together with green open spaces, with the nearest residential property approx. 60m to the south of the site.

There are a number of vertical structures within the immediate area, which will help the installation assimilate with its immediate environment including lighting columns, advertisement signs and poles. These vertical structures are similarly designed i.e. to be simple, functional vertical structures. These structures will help the column and associated cabinets from appearing prominent in the streetscene. Consequently, the visual impact of the proposed radio base station will be minimal within the streetscene. This is in full accordance with policies CP2, CP12 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Borough Council Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Document.

Frimley Park a Registered Park and Garden is over 180m away to the south west of the site, due to the separation distance and the numerous mature trees surrounding the application site the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the park. This is in full accordance with policy DM17 of the SHDC Core Strategy & Development Management Policies.

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The proposed equipment cabinets, do not require planning permission the operators permitted development rights. In order to remain fully transparent, the included on the plans and in the description. The operator's equipment cabinets are similar to the of other statutory undertakers which are commonplace in urban areas including BT Openreach and are also present in this highway verge. Their limited height and scale will ensure that these cabinets not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area and will be finished in a fir green colour, to blend into the grass verge as much as possible.

The applicant therefore considers that the application proposal will have a very limited impact on the amenity of the area as any views of the proposed installation are limited to users of the roundabout and pedestrians using the adjacent pavement. The mature trees adjacent to the site ensure the proposed development will only be visible in short views within the immediate vicinity.

Furthermore, in line with the requirements of NPPF, there are no existing telecommunication installations for the operator to share, that would provide the necessary coverage coverage area. Similarly, there are no buildings which are suitable and available that they could utilise to operate their equipment. The discounted options are set out in Section 5 at their reasons for being discounted are fully explained.

Appearance

The design of the monopole has been carefully considered. To this end a slim-line monopole, with the main column being split in to two sections. This column width is essential in order to safely support the antennas at the top of the column. The column is proposed to be light grey similar to the nearby vertical structures. However, it can also be painted green to blend in with the mature trees and vegetation.

In order to reduce the visual impact on the surrounding area the antennas are proposed to be at the top of the column, rather than on an open head frame which would appear more prominent in the streetscene. Therefore, the operator has compromised on optimising the coverage in this area of Frimley 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 in this location to provide replacement high quality indoor 3G as well as new 4G / 5G service provision to be linked into the operator's network configuration.

The presence of the linear structures including the lighting columns, advertisement signs, flag poles and the mature trees in the immediate area will ensure that the proposed column will not appear incongruous within the streetscene. Thus, there will be no detrimental loss of visual amenity to the area or environmental intrusion in line with the Core Strategy.

The telecommunications mast is proposed to be a slim-line simple, vertical, functional structure. The column is relatively slender and similar in design to the existing vertical structures in the immediate area on the public highway albeit taller in height. As a result, this installation would not appear incongruous within the streetscene in line with the requirements of the Core Strategy.

The installation of this 20.0m slim-line column designed to be as similar as possible to the other structures found in the immediate area and lighting columns on the public highway will be no different in appearance on odds with the streetscene and character of the area than the other vertical structures within the immediate locale.

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

Telecommunications apparatus by their very nature must be taller than surrounding built form to ensure its efficient operation. The Code of Practice explains this requirement fully '*radio signals operate like light and must "see" over the target coverage area...*' To suggest that it is inappropriate because it is taller than adjacent lighting columns or road signage is no more than suggesting that street lighting columns are inappropriate because they are taller than signage or traffic lights. They are all essential pieces of infrastructure within a streetscene that carry 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 there would be a reasonable consideration, but this is clearly not the case. As such, the proposal should be considered negatively due to it being taller per se than other vertical structures. The consideration of the proposal in the context of nearby street furniture can only consider the presence of other vertical structures in the immediate area only seeks to provide a setting in which a radio base station may appear more congruous from which to provide an important service to a wider area.

The proposed height at 20.0m is essential in order to clear the mature trees and urban clutter in the area and provide infill coverage to the target coverage area of Frimley and the wider area of Surrey Heath.

If the column and headframe were to be any slimmer, then the required technologies would not be able to fit in the same installation and an additional radio base station would be required which would be contrary to national planning guidance. It would also not be structurally capable of supporting the technologies including the latest 4G and 5G service provision.

The equipment cabinets are designed to appear like other statutory undertakers equipment often found in urban areas. They are small for telecommunications equipment. The minimum number of 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 in the development under the operators permitted development rights. They have only been included in the description and on the plans in order to remain fully transparent. In order to help blend in with their surroundings they are proposed to be coloured fire green, although they can be coloured any colour that the council considers to be appropriate.

The design of the radio base station is one of the most sensitive designs available to the industry and is designed to resemble typical existing urban linear street furniture. This is in line with the requirements of the NPPF which supports equipment which is sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate [paragraph 115], The Code of Practice as well as the aspirations of the UK Wireless Digital Infrastructure Strategy, the Surrey Heath Local Plan and its Economic Development Strategy.

The proposed new site accords with NPPF because the equipment will resemble other linear structures within the area and will ensure high quality communications infrastructure is maintained in the area. Placing masts near similar structures such as telegraph poles, powerlines and road signage, simple and unfussy designs is acknowledged in the Code of Practice on Wireless Network Development in England to be less likely to dominate and be in discord with the streetscene and as a result less likely to have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

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Lack of Coverage – Material Consideration

In accordance with the NPPF, the proposed installation is significant to enable continuous replacement coverage of the telecommunication network, ensuring that this area of Frimley continues to get the mobile coverage it needs for Vodafone customers as well as new 5G coverage. It will also maintain and improve coverage for the Mobile Virtual Network Operator's (MVNOs) which use the Vodafone network. So, the proposal will not only provide replacement as well as improved and new service provision for one operator but those who buy network space off them. This will provide a choice for those customers who consider the level of coverage in their area when selecting which operator to agree future contracts with.

The current proposals will facilitate the development of an advanced broadband telecommunication infrastructure in line with National Government guidance contained within the NPPF which includes infrastructure especially where growth takes place.

Trials have already begun across the UK to demonstrate the potential of 5G and how it can help to drive productivity and efficiency. In June 2019, West Midlands 5G partnered with BT and Univ Hospitals Birmingham to trial the UK's first 5G Connected Ambulance. Real-Time communication between the paramedics and the hospital doctors enabled the effective diagnosis of the patient at an early stage of care. The trial showed how a paramedic performed a remote-controlled ultra-sound scan on a patient in an ambulance over a public 5G network. These trials show how connectivity and technology can reduce patient waiting times and save lives (Source: WM5G)

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

Without this replacement radio base station, the operator's customers would experience increased numbers of dropped calls and buffering unable to access the internet on their handheld device; they would also not be able to access the 5G network, a demand which is increasing rapidly as customers update their handheld devices to ones that are 5G compatible. If the 5G network is not available then the customers' would not be able to utilise these handheld devices for the purposes in which they were purchased. This would be contrary to the aspirations of Central Government which aspire to everyone having access to the superfast highway network wherever they are and to the UK being a leader in 5G.

The proposed installation will help improve the area's economic prosperity, strengthen the local economy's by supporting local businesses to start, grow, adapt and diversify. It will support a vibrant environment for today and tomorrow by reducing the need to travel and in turn minimise car emissions, a key ambition of the NPPF and of both the Surrey Heath Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy aspirations. The radio base station will support the delivery of the service provision and accessibility by enabling people greater access to online services, NHS app reminders (every missed NHS appointment costs the NHS approximately £160 source: NHS), reminders to take medicines, make appointments etc. As well as assisting hospital outpatient appointments, emergency consultations carried out remotely via video link, connected ambulances, live streaming of CCTV footage etc.

By replacing the existing 3G services and providing new 4G and 5G service provision into the operators network this would fully support the Surrey Heath Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy aspirations.

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The Councillor's Guide to Digital Connectivity notes that a survey conducted by the Confederation of British Industry found that 81% of firms said that they see more reliable mobile connectivity as essential. Studies have also shown that mobile broadband is associated with positive impacts nationally, including higher GDP and increased employment.

Therefore, the Government fully supports high quality communications infrastructure, even with the advent of 5G. Indeed, The NPPF continues to strongly support telecommunications connectivity and states at paragraph 114 that local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks. It acknowledges that advanced, high quality telecommunications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.

The demand for mobile data in the UK is increasing rapidly, and as households and businesses become increasingly reliant on mobile connectivity, the infrastructure must be in place to ensure supply does not become a constraint on future demand.

To emphasise the Government's strong support for 5G and the important role that local authorities play in supporting its roll-out, Matt Warman former Minister for Digital Infrastructure wrote a letter to all Local Authority Chief Executives, CCoing all Local Authority Chief Planning Officers highlighting the importance of facilitating the roll-out of next-generation infrastructure and prevent misleading claims becoming a barrier to rollout. The letter (see Appendix 2 for a copy) highlighted the growing importance of digital connectivity:

'Digital connectivity is – now, more than ever – vital to enable people to stay connected and businesses to grow. The demand for mobile data is increasing rapidly, and the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how important it is that we all have access to reliable, high quality digital connectivity'.

The letter goes on to state the Government ambition for 5G roll-out:

'The Government is committed to extending mobile networks, providing uninterrupted mobile signal on all major roads, and our ambition is for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027'...

The Government is also investing £200 million in a programme of 5G testbeds to encourage investment in 5G so that communities and businesses can benefit from the technology. The increased capacity, reliability and functionality offered by 5G is opening-up the potential for new innovative services for individuals and increased productivity for industry'.

The planning system plays a key role in delivering the infrastructure that we need as households and businesses become increasingly reliant on mobile connectivity. Following our consultation on the principle of reforms to permitted development rights to support 5G deployment and extend mobile coverage we recently published a technical consultation on the details of our proposed changes.

The National Planning Policy Framework ("The Framework") for England states that local planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications infrastructure including next generation mobile technology, such as 5G.

A replacement installation in this location will ensure the lack of new 5G high quality service provision is filled and will enable Vodafone and MVNOs who buy network space off this operator to maintain access to their handheld devices wherever they are for the purposes in which they were purchased.

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This is fully in line with the Government's aspirations that ever communications network, the NPPF and the Core Strategy.

Access to the internet in whatever medium now impacts every facet of our lives but only benefit who can access and use it. The benefits of internet connectivity are key for both businesses alike and a new radio base station in this location providing the latest 2G, 3G, 4G and technologies will support the areas aspirations towards achieving sustainable prosperity, growth and increasing digital inclusion, so all people can access services.

The Code of Practice acknowledges that upgrading and improving mobile network possible without the necessary infrastructure on which we rely. With increasing consumer demand the Government's aspirations for high quality communications infrastructure it is ever more important to improve connectivity and capacity.

The Code of Practice acknowledges that there will be times when there is a need for a new radio station, where sites have been lost, where areas have limited or no coverage and where and capacity need to be enhanced. This application is one such example where there is a enhance 3G and 4G provision and provide new 5G services within this area due to the redevelopment of the existing site.

In the Code of Practice it acknowledges *'the pressure on networks to upgrade and improve networks through changes to existing sites and the development of new sites is constant. With the increasing consumer demand and the Government's ambitious aspirations it is becoming more improve connectivity and capacity. This is due to the ever increasing demand for applications to be available to a range of connected devices, such as smartphones and computers. However, The Code notes that upgrading and improving mobile networks will possible without the necessary infrastructure on which they rely'*. Therefore, there is a significant need to locate the replacement equipment in this area.

The operator not only has a license requirement to provide a certain level of 2G/3G/4G coverage to the population the operators' are obliged to meet the growing consumer demand for 5G especially as more people are purchasing 5G enabled devices, in line with their license obligations and the operators competitive market driven "requirement" to provide a high level of coverage. Customers expect to be able to access their portable hand held devices wherever they are that be indoors or outside. The proposal will provide replacement coverage for the area.

It is imperative that the operator continues to invest in ensuring that the latest technology is available on its network, so that customers are able to continue to use their hand held devices wherever they are, for whatever reason, for the purposes in which they were purchased.

Economic and Social Benefits

The NPPF strongly supports sustainable development as does the UK Wireless Digital Infrastructure Strategy, the Surrey Heath Local Plan and the Economic Development Strategy. 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 and downloading data to name just a few of the benefits of being able to use an internet handheld device. It also allows people to work from home or on the move without needing to be in the office. Residents and businesses will enjoy better accessibility, assisting home-based working by

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improving the electronic means of communication and the roll-out of high-speed broadband help 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 to mitigate the effects of climate change reducing the need to travel and therefore the carbon footprint.

In such instances, as described above, the NPPF supports development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Enhancing the 2G, 3G and 4G capacity in this area and providing new 5G services will fully meet this national policy objective. Continuing to transform the digital connectivity of the Frimley area to drive economic growth, innovation, working to meet national targets of full roll-out of 5G technology for most people by 2025 will comply with the ambitions of the Core Strategy and Economic Development Strategy.

Mobile connectivity is essential to the future success of the economy. The combined value of 5G mobile connectivity is estimated to add £18.5bn to the economy by 2025 (Connectivity Sept 2018). 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. Innovation such as artificial intelligence and connected cars will change how we work, spend our leisure time and access our public services.

The enclosed Cornerstone Local Authority Engagement Brochure September 2020, emphasises the benefits of high quality mobile connectivity including: promoting economic growth by attracting investment from business, which creates jobs and regional prosperity in line with national and local economic strategies; helps local businesses to offer a broader range of services, boosting the local economy; helps local Councils to offer online services such as school admissions and local information for residents supports local companies by facilitating working from home, offers social benefits such as being able to connect with vulnerable family and friends (a life line during COVID 19 lockdown), allows contact the emergency services 24/7, and helps local councils to offer online services such as paying council tax bills which provides a more efficient service to name but a few benefits.

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

Paragraph 38 of the 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 in the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for such development where possible'.

Providing replacement 3G and new 4G and 5G coverage and capacity in this area will fully meet the aspirations of paragraph 38 of the NPPF, the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Economic Development Strategy. These strategies and the Framework also support strengthening digital infrastructure, and using data to help address challenges.

The social and economic benefits are a significant material consideration which should be weighed against the minor amendments of the existing radio base station in this location. HM Treasury outlines such benefits in its report 'Fixing the Foundations: Creating a More Prosperous Nation' – July 2015.

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Paragraph 7.1 of the plan stated that reliable and high quality fixed and mobile connections support growth in productivity, efficiency and labour force participation across the 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

‘ by reducing red tape and barriers to investment, the Government will support the delivery of the internationally competitive fixed and mobile digital communications infrastructure that 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 country 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.’

Indeed, MPs have noted in parliament that the UK’s Superfast Broadband connectivity was ‘poor’ and businesses were losing out from patchy coverage.

The Government recognises that widespread coverage of mobile connectivity is essential for individuals 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, providing continuous mobile connectivity provided to all major roads and to being a world leader in 5G. This will allow everyone in the country to benefit from the economic advantages of wide mobile coverage. As well as improved mobile signal, 5G networks are also crucial to drive productivity growth across the sectors that local areas are focusing on through their emerging Local Growth Strategies. Enabling and planning for 5G implementation is central to achieving the Government’s objective to deliver prosperity at the local level and enable all places to share in that growth.

The Government is determined to ensure the UK receives the coverage and connectivity it needs. At this end, the Government wants to be a world leader in 5G, the next generation of mobile connectivity, and for communities to benefit from the investments in the new technology.

The case for 5G is compelling as it will bring faster, more responsive and reliable connections than ever before. More than any previous generation of mobile networks, 5G has the potential to improve the way people live, work and travel, and to deliver significant benefits to the economy and industry through the ability to connect more devices to the Internet at the same time, creating the so-called “Internet of Things”. This will enable communities to manage traffic flow and control energy consumption, monitor patient health remotely, and increase productivity for business and farmers, all through the real-time management of data.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has produced a Councillor’s Guide to Digital Connectivity and sets out some of the benefits of 5G technology:

Faster mobile broadband and a more consistent experience in congested areas with a very high number of devices.
Industrial applications, enabling businesses to improve their productivity, for example through predictive maintenance and real-time analytics.
Internet of Things (IoT) services, many of which will help councils and businesses deliver services more efficiently including:

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- Transport and logistics: connected parcels and fleet tr
- Health and social care.
- Environmental monitoring: sensors monitoring air quality and water pollu real-time.
- Smart agriculture and smart animal farming, smart retailing.
- Connected and autonomous cars: allowing cars to communicate other, other road users and even the road infrastructure.

On the 23 September 2020, the former Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman MP spoke about ongoing work by the Government and telecoms industry to boost the UK's connectivity in his keynote speech at Connected Britain 2020²

...'I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the industry for their tireless e keeping us all connected through an unprecedented period of disruption.

..COVID has altered the way we live, work and most importantly, stay connec family and friends. The digital infrastructure that keeps us all connected was essentia daily way of life under lockdown – and is now more important than ever as we he recovery. Many of these changes– such as increased working from home – will stay with us for the foreseeable future.

People have referred to the internet as “the fourth utility” – and it's true. For countless people across the country, having fast and reliable broadband and a good mobile conn essential and vital to our daily lives as gas, water and electricity.

That's why I'm committed to working with you to ensure the entire nation has access t class, next generation gigabit connectivity that is secure and resilient enough to de sorts of future challenges.

This Government is ambitious for the UK's digital infrastructure.

And because we know that more citizens are increasingly living their lives online, we will t of the earliest adopters of 5G coverage, with the majority of the population able to access t by 2027.

... We know how important local authorities are to the delivery of digital infrastructure, why I have written to them, together with the Local Government Minister, to outline can work more effectively with the industry...

... .Turning to 5G, while the commercial rollout of 5G continues at with plans to make sure all sorts of industries benefit from this game-changing technology.

...since the start of the 5G Testbeds and trials programme, we've now funded 24 5G across the UK. Between them, those testbeds have trialled almost 70 different 5G technol products and applications. And more importantly than ever, we are investing in a r; sectors to foster, build and grow 5G cross wider industry...

² https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/matt-warman-keynote-speech-at-connected-britain-2020?utm_source=01ad07cc-6884-4d9b-a0ca-8c212f0a4289&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

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... The world is in the middle of a digital revolution. COVID has accelerated this process, digitising almost every part of our everyday lives and making the infrastructure that supports it more important than ever. That's why it is at the top of the government's agenda...

This Keynote Speech by Matt Warman MP highlights the importance that Government places on advanced, reliable, high quality 5G technology. To prevent this technology from being brought into the area would be contrary to the Government's key aims.

On the 1 October 2020, as part of the Speed up Britain Campaign, The Centre of Policy Studies published '*Upwardly Mobile: How the UK can gain the full benefits of the 5G revolution*'³. The report identifies what the 5G opportunities are and what the Government needs to do so we can benefit from this vital new technology. It states that delays to the rollout of 5G could cost the country tens of billions of pounds in lost economic output. The former Government advisers Alex Jackman and King argue that Government's 'levelling up' agenda and the UK's recovery from the pandemic is at risk without a faster 5G rollout – to the tune of £41 billion.

The report highlights that if delays continue at their current rate, by 2027, over 11 million households and businesses could be missing out on vital digital connectivity. Improving digital infrastructure supports the Government's 'levelling up' agenda, by helping local areas to reach businesses and talent as well as by reducing regional inequalities.

The report states that '*the UK must have a functioning network to now support the recovery from the pandemic, empowering businesses and communities with wider coverage, and preparing them for the services that 5G can provide*'.

Using analysis by the independent consultancy Policy Points, the report estimates that if 5G coverage reaches a quarter more of the population than the Government's current target of 51%, it will realise GDP gains of £41.7 billion by 2027. It highlights that the difference between the UK being a leader or a laggard in 5G adoption could be as much as £173 billion in incremental GDP over a decade, as estimated by the Future Communications Challenge Group.

The manufacturing, construction and agricultural sectors have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic, and these would benefit significantly from improved connectivity. However, onerous planning rules and loopholes in existing legislation are slowing down the infrastructure needed to make the most of this mobile revolution in these much-needed industries.

Digital networks and services have underpinned our resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic and they will drive our recovery. By expanding them, we deliver not only immediate benefits but also the essential foundation stone for future prosperity.

The report highlights that while 5G promises to create economic benefits through increased reliability and speed – vastly improving business productivity and removing barriers imposed by a lack of digital connectivity – the system is plagued by red tape.

The report acknowledges that the gains are not just at national level. A more extensive digital infrastructure helps local areas to attract and retain businesses and talent, thereby playing a key role in reducing regional inequalities. Providing a supportive environment for digital infrastructure is one of the key priorities for the Government.

³ <https://www.cps.org.uk/research/upwardly-mobile>

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the few things the Government can do that costs little, boosts growth and helps level up the key is speed. **The faster a network is built, the bigger the regional c** (emphasis added). The telecommunications industry faces challenges on this front. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased demand on networks but delayed the availability of new spectrum to provide additional c

The report notes that the reliability and reach of 4G is more important than ever. It is needed both to quench immediate demand, and also to facilitate future 5G rollout, as the underlying infrastructure will initially support both technologies. Every failure to provide better coverage not only presents an immediate opportunity loss for local business and consumers but also has a downstream economic impact. It acknowledges that productivity gains to business, equality gains in regions and economic gains for the country are only as achievable as the networks they can

The report recommended that the Government should reform the strategic planning framework to compel local authorities to ensure that the needs of future mobile connectivity are addressed in Local Plans and that new developments are assessed on how they might impact and how they could support, local connectivity.

The Government's ambition for the majority of the UK population to have access to 5G signal was repeated in the letter to all the Councils Chief Execs and Chief Planning Officers from the Minister for Digital Infrastructure Matt Warman. This letter also acknowledged that the demand for 5G is increasing rapidly and the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how important it is that we have access to reliable, high quality mobile connectivity to stay connected and for businesses to c

The proposed installation in this location will allow the operator to provide new and improved quality 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and capacity and new 5G service provision. The Government's aim of '*focusing on ensuring that everyone is connected to the superhighway*' and 'for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027' This fully meets the aspirations of the NPPF, and the Core Strategy.

A replacement installation in this location providing 5G will ensure that the expansion of the telecommunications network is facilitated and that high quality communications infrastructure is in place to the immediate area.

Good connectivity allows people to access a wide range of essential services. An explanation on some of these key benefits is provided below:

Economic benefits

Creating more productive and cost efficiencies for businesses
Businesses offering online services can extend their products to a broader audience
Local areas and businesses can benefit from tourists and visitors as hotels, attractions and restaurants can be booked online from anywhere in the world
Business owners and services like doctors can provide a faster and more cost-effective service by offering both online appointments and ordering
Digital connectivity facilitates economic growth, something which the Government has keen to progress and promote
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 also facilitate learning on the job procedures, thanks to technical
Augmented Reality (AR) goggles, which, for example, can give the likes of employees real-time instructions on how to fix a machine on a production line.

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Social benefit

Mobile communications can help people to stay in touch wherever and which can help improve social wellbeing

Convenient access to online commerce or businesses

Contacting emergency services is easier, especially in remote areas

Giving the ability to manage our personal finances and information 24/7

Using a mobile wherever you go can provide better personal security

Having access to social networking sites and applications can be entertained with their lifestyles and interests

Access to real-time transport information or timetables

Smart meter reads for utilities such as gas or electric

Contacting local authorities

Promotion of smarter and productive ways of working. For example, working from home can help minimise commuting which can provide better work and home life

Sustainability and Environmental benefits

Facilitating remote access to services, education, and commerce, reducing the need to travel and in turn minimising carbon emissions.

Better monitoring and control of energy consumption through smart technology, smart metering and smart energy grids.

5G infrastructure requires fewer heat generating electronic components.

5G enabling of the Internet of Things (IOT) sensor deployment can manage a us to pollution risks, health hazards and flood risk.

Provision of smart technologies within the agricultural sector will facilitate more efficient and less wasteful practices helping to limit negative impacts.

5G networks allow monitoring of traffic flow resulting in less congestion and better air quality. They also make driverless cars possible; a means of transport that offers fuel efficiency.

Smart cities and buildings can rely upon 5G networks to enable infrastructure to use automated energy saving through better and more efficient lighting, heating, cooling and other operations.

Health benefits

Support the delivery of healthcare provision and accessibility by enabling greater access to online services, NHS appointment reminders, remote medicines, make appointments etc.

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

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

Education benefits

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Facilitates access to educational establishment databases or booking & securing places for the likes of school dinners, field trips, extra-curricular activities, student/teacher reviews, etc.

Provides access to school/college/university apps for setting and submitting homework/coursework, ensuring news and notifications are delivered efficiently for parent/student/teacher interactions.

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. The relevance of Virtual Reality (VR) technologies for education and training. Crucially, VR can enable 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 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 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 medical services secure and private. For instance, trials have shown that connecting ambulance crew resources using 5G allows paramedics to work with doctors and conduct specialist procedures in real-time whilst on the road.

Summary

The proposed replacement site has been carefully sited within a grass verge to the southern side of the Chobham roundabout, adjacent to a public pavement. There are other vertical structures in the vicinity of the proposed installation including lighting columns, advertisement signs and flag poles which will provide some context. These together with the surrounding mature trees aid in assimilating the proposal well into the site. As this is a prior approval application, the Government confirms this is permitted development, akin to outline planning permission, with just the finer details of site appearance to be considered by the local planning authority. The vertical structures help the proposed replacement installation assimilate with the streetscene and not appear out of the immediate area.

To ensure the effective operation of the site within the network, and to ensure compliance with requirements, the minimum height of pole that could be deployed at this location is the 20.0m installation.

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Site selection was progressed in accordance with the applicants licence obligations, advice in the NPPF and the Code of Practice and represents the least environmentally intrusive, technically suitable, available option. It has been demonstrated that there are no more suitable sites that could provide this essential service to this cell area.

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 is a strong material consideration in the determination of this application. It is fully supported by the NPPF, UK Wireless Digital Infrastructure Strategy, the Surrey Heath Borough Council Core Strategy & Development Management Policies. 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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