

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

1. Site Details

Site Name:	Rochdale RUFC	Site Address:	Land at Rochdale RUFC, Clubhouse Close, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LU
National Grid Reference:	E: 387248 N: 413268		
Site Ref Number:	CS 30615800	Site Type: ¹	Macro

2. Pre Application Check List

Site Selection (for New Sites only)

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

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

Site Specific Pre-application consultation with local planning authority

Was there pre-application contact:	Yes
Date of pre-application contact:	N/A
Name of contact:	N/A

¹ Macro or Micro

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

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Registered in England & Wales No. 08087551.
VAT No. GB142 8555 06

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1530 Arlington Business Park,
Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4SA

Summary of outcome/Main issues raised:

A pre-application consultation letter, a consultation plan and a set of proposed plans were sent to the Chief Planning Officer of the Local Planning Authority via email, dated 20/11/2024.

No comments have been received to date.

Annual area wide information to planning authority

Has annual area wide information been provided?	No
If no explain why:	
Summary issues raised: Cornerstones commercial relationship with Virgin Media O2 (VMO2) has changed, effectively increasing our independence to work with other companies in the deployment of mobile infrastructure. It means we no longer have visibility of VMO2 full update plan. However, Cornerstone is fully committed to working closely with Local Planning Authorities and following best practice guidance. We aim to engage and work with the planning department at the earliest opportunity from when we are instructed to deliver new infrastructure within your Local Authority area and often 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. We recognise the importance of developing long term partnerships and will always work with you to deliver improved mobile connectivity. Accordingly we conducted a pre-rollout engagement meeting with Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council on 24/01/2020.	

Community Consultation

Rating of Site under Traffic Light Model:	Red	Amber	Green
Outline of consultation carried out: Pre-application consultation letters and sets of proposed plans were sent to the Bamford Councillor's (Cllrs S Anstee, P Beal and A Smith) via email, dated 20/11/2024. A pre-application consultation letter, and a set of proposed plans were sent to the local MP for Heywood and Middleton North, Mr Elsie Blundell via email, date 20/11/2024.			

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

Cllr S Anstee responded via email, copying the other ward councillors into the email dated 21/11/24, stating:

"Thank you for sharing the pre-application consultation letter and proposed plans for the upgrade to the existing telecommunications installation at the rugby club.

As ward councillors, engaging with the community is a priority for us, and we believe that involving local residents in the decision-making process is important for the success of this type of project.

Consequently, we would suggest providing clear and accessible information through various channels, such as newsletters and social media, in addition to offering a contact point for residents to submit their questions and feedback directly".

Cllrs P Beal and A Smith both responded on 21/11/24 via email agreeing with Cllr Anstee's approach.

In accordance with the Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (March 2022), pre-application consultation has been carried out with key stakeholders including local ward Councillors, local MP and Local Planning Authority.

In accordance with Paragraph 84 -

"For some applications, it may be appropriate for the operator to consult with local residents. For example, a greater level of community consultation may be considered for a new site or where there is a high-level of community interest in development, though the type of engagement should be considered on a case by case basis. Operators should discuss and agree this requirement with the local planning authority. Forms of community engagement which may be appropriate include:

- *Consultation/Notification letter to local residents, communities and their representatives, including parish and town councils*
- *Site Notice*
- *Key stakeholder briefing*
- *Leaflets"*

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The site is an upgrade to an existing radio base station on private land, therefore it is deemed pre-application consultation letters to the ward councillors and local MP who represent the local area was appropriate consultation.

There was the acquisition surveyor's signature including contact details at the bottom of the pre-application consultation letter which are available for residents as a point of contact.

Contact with the local councillors via a telephone exchange is set to take place, however due to pressure to deliver the required coverage in this area, it has not been able to occur prior to submission.

School/College

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

Redwood Secondary School, Hudsons Walk, Rochdale, OL11 5EW
Oulder Hill Leadership Academy, Hudsons Walk, Rochdale, OL11 5EF

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

Pre-application consultation letters and sets of proposed plans were sent to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors Redwood Secondary School for via email, dated 16/12/2024

Pre-application consultation letters and sets of proposed plans were sent to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors Oulder Hill Leadership Academy for via email, dated 16/12/2024

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

No comments received to date

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

Will the proposed development be on a civil safeguarding area or a defence safeguarding area?		No
Has the Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/operator of the civil safeguarding area or defence safeguarding area been notified?		No

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Details of response:

N/A

Developer's Notice

Copy of Developer's Notice enclosed?		No – Full Planning application – Article 14 notice served 06/02/2025
Date served:		

3. Proposed Development

The proposed site:

Background

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

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

As part of Cornerstones continued network improvement programme, there is a specific requirement for an upgrade to its existing installation at Rochdale RUFC to provide improved 2G, 3G, 4G and new 5G coverage and capacity, ensuring that this area of the borough continues to have access to the latest technologies. This is in line with its legal obligations, as well as the Government aspirations for the UK to be a world leader in 5G.

In addition, the site has been designed to enable both VMO2 and Vodafone to utilise this radio base station for new 5G service provision as well, whilst also maintaining and enhancing its 2G, 3G and 4G coverage that it is currently providing from this existing radio base station.

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The site is to be located on private land at RUFC land at the far corner of the car park area associated with Rochdale Rugby Union Football Club which is located to the north of the club house. Vehicular and pedestrian access is from Clubhouse Close. Rochdale Golf Club lies to the north and the playing fields associated with Redwood Secondary School lie to the east. The closest residential dwellings to the application site are positioned to the south on Broadhalgh Avenue, Clubhouse Close and Hands Lane.

3G (and eventually 2G) is being switched off by the operators in order to repurpose these radio frequencies for faster more energy-efficient 4G and 5G services. 3G is primarily used for mobile data services. It is being switched off first because it has already largely been superseded by 4G. Hence the importance of providing the latest 4G and new 5G service provision in areas where there is no such coverage. Vodafone has already switched their 3G off and VMO2, whilst providing no firm timescales, plan to switch the remaining antennas off, it is expected to occur by 2025. As a result, it is imperative that the operator builds resilience into the network.

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

To keep up with growing demand the operators need to build new base stations to improve the capacity. Capacity is the maximum data or calls that can be processed by a base station.

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To keep up with growing demand the operators need to build new base stations to improve the capacity. Capacity is the maximum data or calls that can be processed by a base station.

Without this upgrade, the operator's customers will not be able to use their handheld devices as intended. The lack of coverage and sufficient capacity would result in buffering and dropped calls, leaving customers with unreliable service in this area and creating a gap in coverage.

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The site will enable enhanced 4G coverage and capacity to the surrounding area as well as new 5G service provision, to ensure high quality customer experience is obtained as demands on the network increase and technologies change. The operator will be able to enhance their existing 4G coverage whilst also new 5G service provision to the immediate area around south Bagslate Moor.

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

The amendments to the existing, established ground based installation will enable enhanced 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and capacity to the surrounding area as well as new 5G service provision for VMO2 to ensure high quality customer experience is obtained as demands on the network increase and technologies change. In addition, due to the design, Vodafone will be able to maintain and enhance its existing 2G, 3G and 4G coverage whilst also being to provide 5G service provision to the immediate area in and around this area of south Bagslate Moor.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should not question the need for the telecommunications system, which the proposed development is to support. However, for the avoidance of doubt as set out below the proposed installation is needed for VMO2, via Cornerstone to enhance the existing 4G coverage and capacity whilst also providing new 5G services to the south Bagslate Moor area.

Coverage maps are a useful tool for establishing network coverage in an area. They are developed using assumptions regarding the handset use, expected level of call reliability and signal loss within a vehicle or a building. However, plots only tell part of the story as even when the coverage plots provided show good coverage in an area there may still be a requirement to improve capacity and as such local network services. Coverage plots show coverage issues only; they cannot show capacity issues.

The coverage plots attached and below show south Bagslate Moor currently has a hole in coverage for this operator. There is currently no 5G coverage to the in the wider surrounding area, which as shown in the coverage plots will be enhanced to indoor dense urban (high quality indoor 5G coverage) to the north, east, south and west of the site once it is installed.

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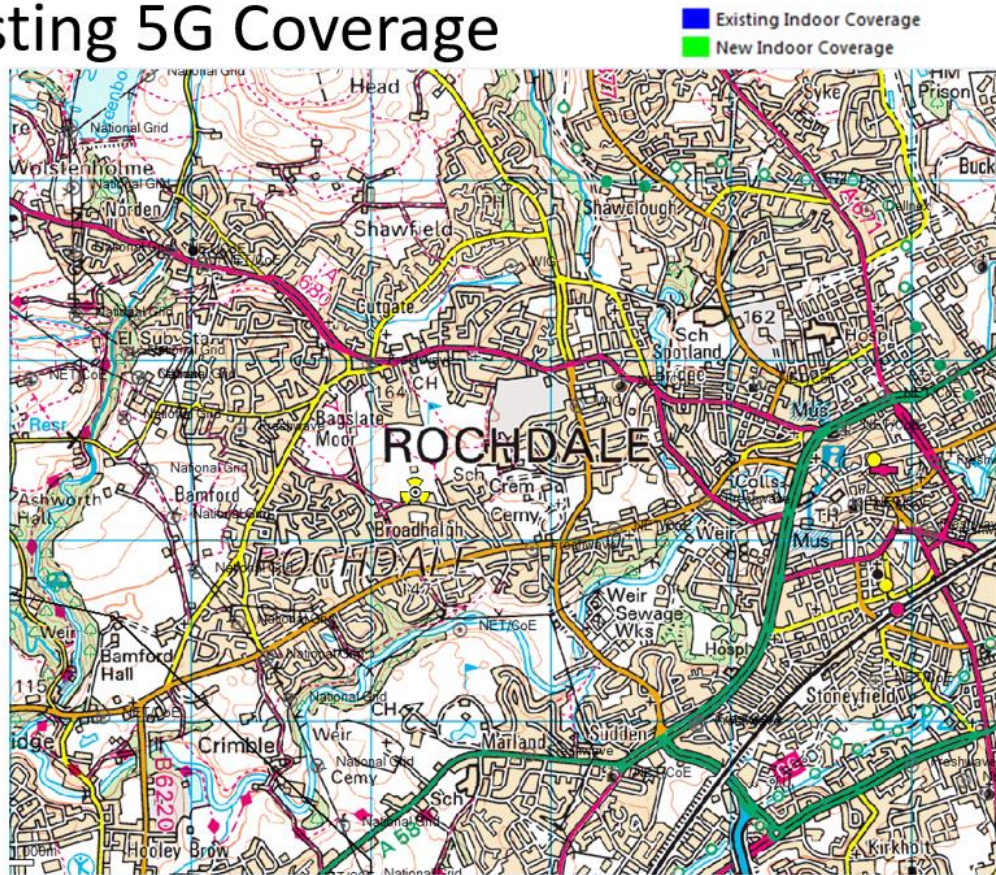
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Existing 5G Coverage



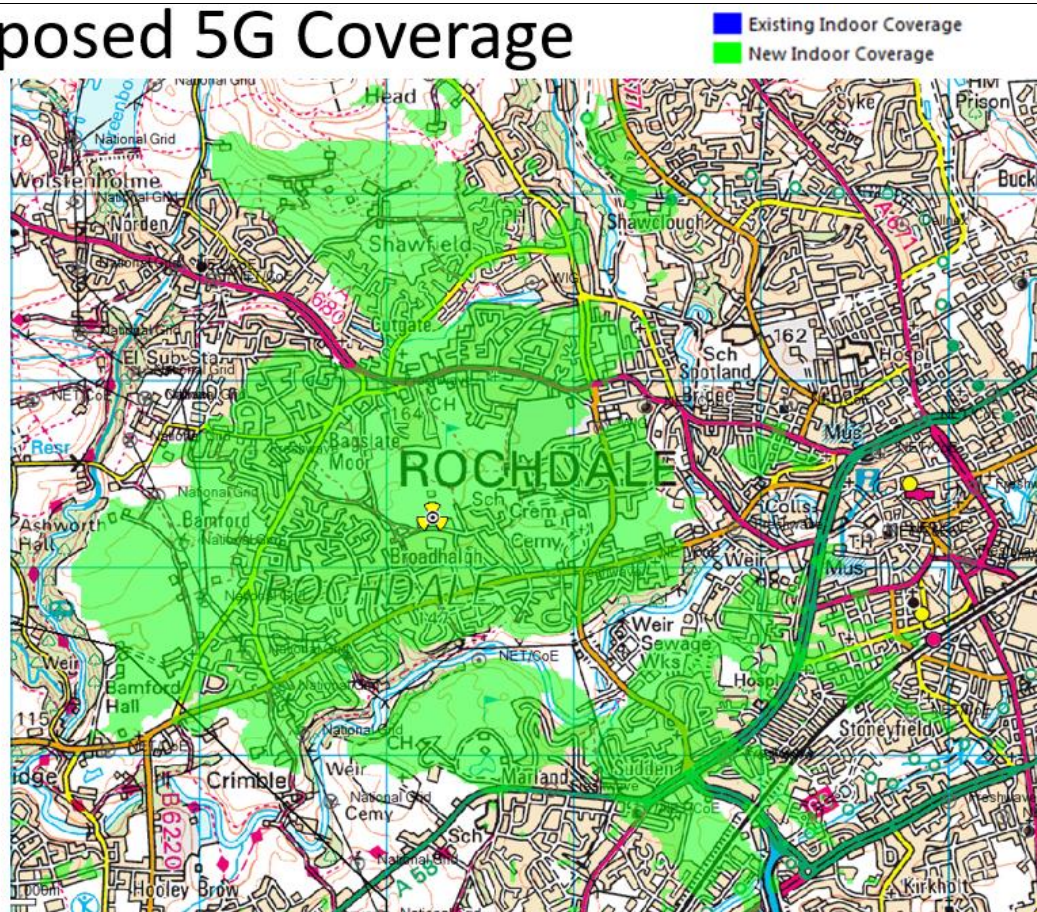
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Proposed 5G Coverage



The above plots show the 5G coverage. However, the site will also provide enhanced 4G coverage to this area. Although the 4G coverage is not shown on the plots, it will follow the 5G footprint, ensuring that 4G coverage will be available in a similar area as the improved 5G coverage.

to a certain number of users at any one time. When this 'Capacity' is exceeded, although 'Coverage' remains present, the base station cannot provide service to any further users and calls/text/data usage would be unavailable. This is contrary to the purposes in which the operator's customers purchased their handheld devices as well as the Government's latest thinking that everyone should have access to the information superhighway wherever they are. Capacity is the maximum data or calls that can be processed by a base station.

Therefore, without this installation, the area would continue be detrimentally affected as they continue to try to serve a much larger demand. The result would be constant buffering and dropped calls to the surrounding area, to the detriment of locals, businesses, students and visitors to the area. Therefore, coverage is worse than the plots can predict.

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Further detail regarding the general operation of the network can be found in the accompanying document entitled 'General Background Information for Telecommunications Development'. In addition, fact sheets on Radio Planning and Propagation and 5G services have been attached to this application for reference. This information is provided to assist the local authority in understanding any technical constraints on the location of the proposed development.

Type of Structure (e.g. tower, mast, etc): Lattice Tower	
Description:	
The proposed works comprise the removal of the existing 15m monopole supporting 3 no. antennas, removal of 4 no. equipment cabinets, 1 no. electric meter cabinets, timber fence and the installation of a new 12m pole with flood lights, new 20m lattice tower supporting 6 no. antennas, 2 no. transmission dishes, 4 no. replacement equipment cabinets, 1 no. replacement electric meter cabinet, 2.4m palisade fence and ancillary development there to including Ericson Radio Systems (ERS's) and 1 no. GPS module.	
Overall Height: 20m	
Height of existing building (where applicable):	N/A
Equipment Housing: EFF1	
Length:	0.725 Metres
Width:	2.1 Metres
Height:	0.850 Metres
Equipment Housing: EFF2e	
Length:	0.650 Metres
Width:	2 Metres
Height:	0.600 Metres
Equipment Housing: V-Cab 1	
Length:	0.155 Metres
Width:	0.4 Metres
Height:	0.500 Metres
Equipment Housing: V-Cab 2	
Length:	0.155 Metres
Width:	0.4 Metres
Height:	0.500 Metres
Equipment Housing: DBS	
Length:	0.155 Metres
Width:	0.4 Metres
Height:	0.500 Metres
Materials (as applicable):	
Tower/mast etc – type of material and external colour:	Steel – Galvanised

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

Planning history –

22/01192/FUL - Removal of the existing 15m pole supporting 6no. antennas and installation of a replacement 20m lattice tower supporting 12 no. new antennas on a headframe, 4 no. transmission dishes and 36 no. ERS units behind the antennas. Removal of 5 no. equipment cabinets and installation of 4no. replacement cabinets, together with additional ancillary development thereto, including 2no. GPS modules, 2.1m high palisade fencing, relocation of floodlight meter cabinet and floodlights to proposed replacement lattice tower

A previous design was submitted to the council on 11/01/23 with the description detailed above. The site was subsequently refused on 23/03/23 due to:

"The proposed installation, by virtue of its height, siting and appearance, would represent an incongruous and dominant feature of the street scene in a prominent residential location. Furthermore, no thorough justified information in relation to alternative ground or rooftop based sites has been provided as part of this proposal, required under paragraph 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development would therefore result in unacceptable harm to the street scene and visual amenity generally and be contrary to policies P1, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework".

The operator has re-looked into the design and has removed the bulky headframe that was previously proposed by reducing the amount of technology proposed on the tower. The tower will still be able to provide coverage and capacity for both operators (VMO2 and Vodafone) but at a reduced configuration. The proposals as will be discussed later on in this statement is in accordance with the NPPF and Code of Practice, as well as local policy. There are design constraints which the operator faces that local policies do not take into account, instead these are generic design policies.

The existing radio base station has been in situ at Rochdale RUFC since 2007 when it was originally approved for a 15m monopole supporting 3 no. antennas (LPA ref: 07/D48616). Since then it has become an established part of the area. Technology advances (including 5G service provision) and additional demands on the operator's mobile network system in the area have meant that the replacement monopole with replacement antennas is required to facilitate all the data that is required to be carried for mobile superfast broadband. This enables customers to continue to be able to use their handheld devices for the purposes in which they have become accustomed, and now rely on in the modern world we live in, a similar scenario to the reliance on gas and electricity. However, this new technology and the design of the antennas (6 no. in total) are required for 5G means that the existing monopole is not able to support this new technology for both operators therefore a replacement lattice tower is required with additional antennas on a headframe.

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The operator has carefully considered the design of the proposed mast. A lattice tower is the most suitable design from a technical viewpoint. Such a design is also able to facilitate greater coverage (as they give better scope for antenna orientation) and provide the structural capability required to be able to support the weight and size of the operator telecommunications equipment. Due to the slim line nature of the supporting struts of the lattice frame, light is able to continue to pass through the structure. If the lattice tower were to be any slimmer in width, then it would not be structurally capable of supporting the operator equipment or meet the windloading requirements in this rural location. The tower is proposed to be a galvanised colour, although it can be painted any colour should the Local Planning Authority consider that an alternative would be more appropriate.

One of the previous reasons for refusal stated by virtue of its height. However the mast can not be reduced in height. The proposed height at 20m is essential in order for the operators equipment to provide sufficient levels of coverage to the whole of the target coverage area. 5G new radio technologies operate in higher frequency bands than the older technologies. Since it operates at higher frequencies, where attenuation of the radio signal is naturally higher and the effects of clutter are greater, it will normally require a higher structure to achieve the same coverage footprint. To increase capacity and data speeds to the user, the antenna will normally need to be mounted higher than conventional antennae. These factors drive a requirement for an increase in antenna height for 5G.

As can be seen below from the Panoramic images, if the height of the mast were to be lower at 16.5m, then the tree clutter would block the signal for one of the three sectors leading to poor levels of coverage and fail the operators design brief.

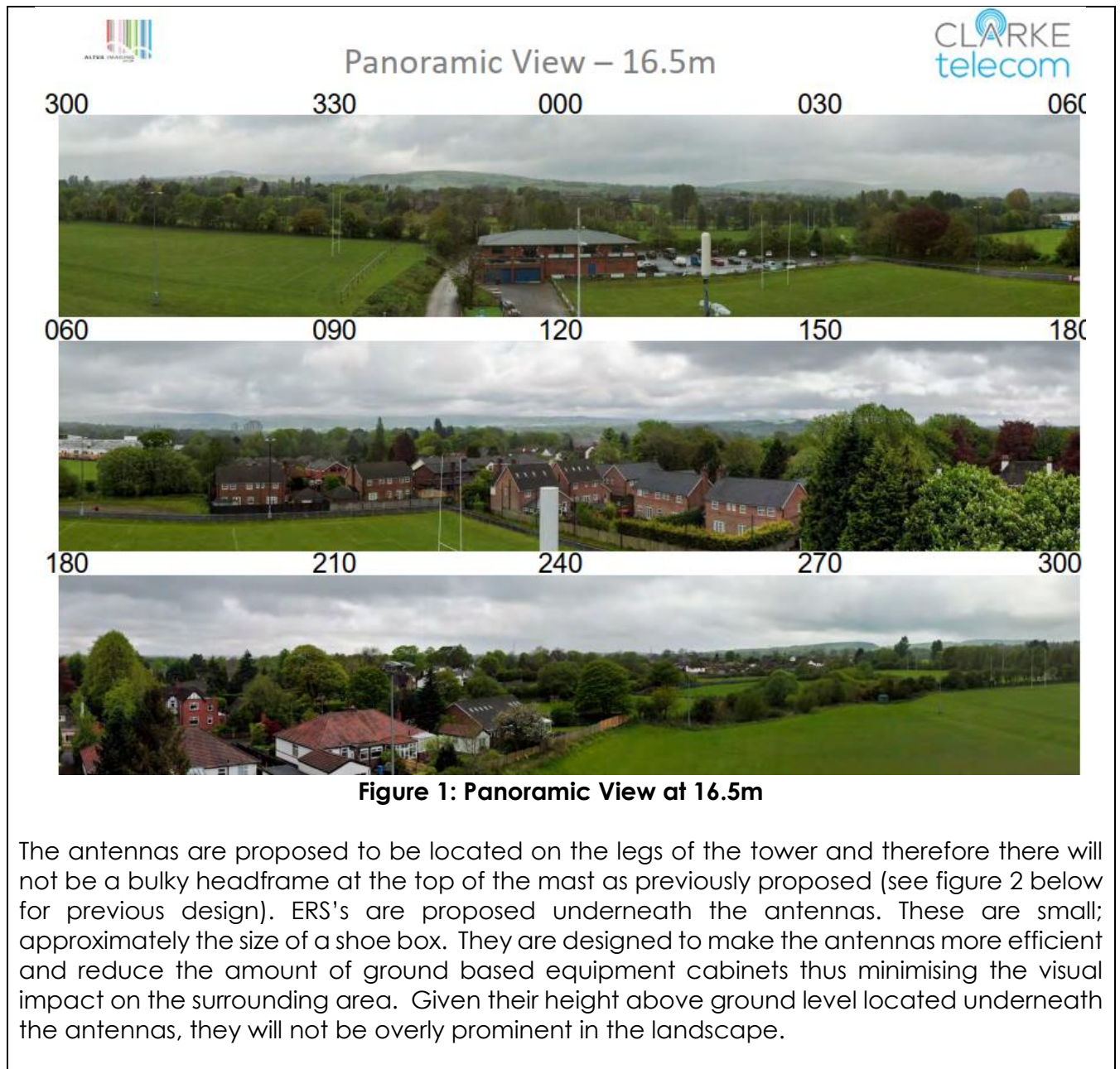
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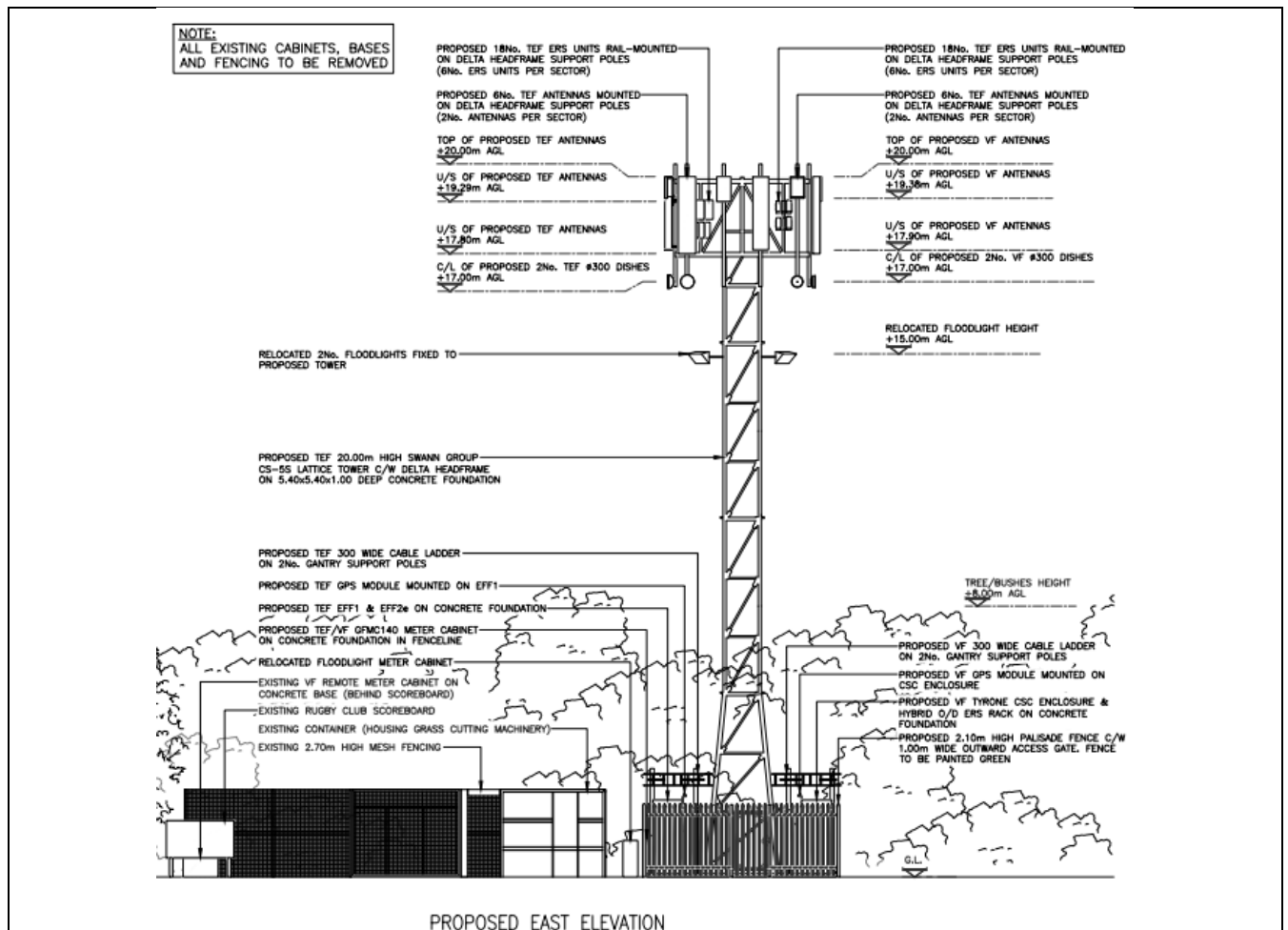


Figure 2: previous design refused under LPA ref: 22/01192/FUL

The top height of the antennas are required to be 20m to provide the latest technologies. 5G new radio technologies operate in higher frequency bands than older technologies. Since it operates at higher frequencies where attenuation of the radio signal is naturally higher and the effects of clutter are greater it will normally require a higher structure to achieve the same coverage footprint. To increase capacity and data speeds to the user, the antenna will normally need to be mounted higher than conventional antennae. These factors drive a requirement for an increase in antenna height in 5G. Due to technical purposes the antennas cannot be reduced in height as they would not be able to reach their target coverage area. Therefore existing customers would have a poor user experience if the installation were to be reduced in height, with buffering and dropped calls becoming a significant issue.

The antennas are proposed to be open on a headframe (to support the antennas) and not shielded as this provides the optimal service provision to the surrounding area. If the antennas were to be shrouded, they would not be as efficient at providing the latest technologies to this cell area. Thus an additional installation would likely to be required in this cell area which would lead to the proliferation of masts contrary to the NPPF. Given the sites established location on private land (where an existing installation has already been considered acceptable) at Rochdale RUFC away from the highway, this loss in service provision if the

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antennas were to be shielded, would not be justified. As such, the antenna headframe and new antennas have been designed to resemble as closely as possible the existing apparatus which is already in situ, whilst providing the latest high quality, reliable service provision to this area of Rochdale.

The transmission dishes are essential to link the installation back into the MNO's wider network and relay the data. The dish antennas used by mobile phone networks are relatively small – in this case they are proposed to be 600mm in diameter. They are used to link individual radio base stations to each other and, through a series of links, into the wider mobile phone and fixed line networks. In order to communicate with each other, dish antennas must have a clear line of sight, sometimes known as point-to-point communications. They must be in clear view of each other without any physical obstructions such as trees or buildings which would reduce or disrupt the low-powered signal. For this reason, dish antennas are always mounted high on rooftops or tall structures. In this instance, in order to obtain a clear line of sight their centre line height needs to be 16.6 metres above ground level.

The cabinets are designed to appear like other statutory undertakers equipment cabinets. The proposed equipment cabinets are small for telecommunications apparatus and proposed to be coloured grey to match the replacement pole and the cabinets they replace.

A compound is proposed to enclose the entire development for health and safety reasons. It is proposed to utilise a palisade fence to secure the site.

It is therefore considered that the proposal before you strikes a good balance between environmental impact and operational considerations. The proposed height and design represents the best compromise between the visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding area and meeting the multi-technical requirements for the site. Taking all matters into account including the previous reason for refusal and design, it is considered that these amendments to the existing installation, on an established radio base station site, to enable the enhancement of 2G, 3G and 4G service provision and new 5G coverage to the surrounding area, would not appear out of place within its surroundings and would provide enhanced high quality, reliable and secure coverage and capacity, delivering the capability for a multi hi tech service from an existing ground based installation.

It is considered the previous reasons for refusal have been addressed by reducing the configuration of technology on site, removing the bulky headframe by moving the antennas and ERS's onto the legs of the antennas. The site has moved closer to the row of trees to help further shield the lower section of the mast, as will be explained later, the antennas have to be taller than the surrounding trees in line with Code of Practice guidance otherwise the signal will be blocked. The height can not be reduced as evidenced within the Panoramic photo detailed in figure 1. There are technical constraints an operator faces which restricts the ability to reduce the height of the mast.

Health and Safety - including ICNIRP compliance

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International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection public compliance is determined by mathematical calculation and implemented by careful location of antennas, access restrictions and/or barriers and signage as necessary. Members of the public cannot unknowingly enter areas close to the antennas where exposure may exceed the relevant guidelines.

When determining compliance, the emissions from all mobile phone network operators on or near to the site are taken into account.

In order to minimise interference within its own network and with other radio networks, Telefonica UK Ltd operates its network in such a way the radio frequency power outputs are kept to the lowest levels commensurate with effective service provision.

As part of Telefonica UK Ltd's network, the radio base station that is the subject of this application will be configured to operate in this way.

All operators of radio transmitters are under a legal obligation to operate those transmitters in accordance with the conditions of their licence. Operation of the transmitter in accordance with the conditions of the licence fulfils the legal obligations in respect of interference to other radio systems, other electrical equipment, instrumentation, or air traffic systems. The conditions of the licence are mandated by Ofcom, an agency of national government, who are responsible for the regulation of the civilian radio spectrum. The remit of Ofcom also includes investigation and remedy of any reported significant interference.

The telecommunications infrastructure the subject of this application accords with all relevant legislation and as such will not cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest.

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

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There is a specific requirement to upgrade the existing radio base station at this location to enable Cornerstone to enhance its 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and capacity to this area of Rochdale and provide new 5G service provision.

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 Best Practice 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 including National Grid pylons;
- 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 local 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 upgrade the existing radio base station in this location to provide enhanced 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and new 5G service provision. However, due to the previous refusal (LPA ref: 22/01192/FUL) alternative sites have been looked into and discounted for the following reasons.

Site Type	Site name and address	National Grid Reference	Reason for not choosing site
D1 - Rooftop	Rochdale RUFC, Broadhalgh Avenue, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater	E: 387244 N: 413388	The pitched roof design of the building would not be suitable to host telecommunications equipment for multiple operators

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	Manchester, OL11 5LZ		as it would not be structurally stable. The operators need a flat surface with appropriate strength and support on which to attach their equipment, otherwise the antennas and supporting equipment which is heavy even without the antennas attached to them would cause the equipment to slide off the roof tiles, taking the batons with it causing the host buildings structural demise. The rooftop is too low to accommodate equipment to provide the necessary coverage to the target coverage area. Therefore, this site has been discounted for this reason.
D2 - Greenfield	Rochdale RUFC, Broadhalgh Avenue, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LZ	E: 387098 N: 413320	There is access constraints for a site proposed here. A new access track would be required for the build and maintenance of the site which would be unacceptable to pass through the rugby playing fields. Therefore, this site has been discounted for this reason.
D3 – Greenfield	Rochdale RUFC, Broadhalgh Avenue, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LZ	E: 387245 N: 413345	A site in this location would cause access issues for the Rugby club deliveries as the site needs to be contained within a secure compound up to 10 x 10 due to them being climbable structures. Therefore, there is insufficient space to accommodate access and a mast in this location.
D4 - Streetworks	Clubhouse Close, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LT	Various	An installation at this location is not possible due to insufficient space to install both the required equipment and allow safe passage for pedestrians including those using wheelchairs and

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			pushchairs. This site has therefore been discounted on safety grounds.
D5 - Greenfield	Clubhouse Close, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LT	E: 387353 N: 413313	An installation in this location would be directly adjacent to 7 Clubhouse Close which would have a greater impact on visual amenity than the proposed upgrade. The nearest window for the proposed upgrade is circa 30m away with intervening trees, a site in this location would be 10m away from the nearest house without intervening trees.
D6 - Greenfield	Rochdale RUFC, Broadhalgh Avenue, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LZ	E: 387252 N: 413430 / various	There is no space in this location, it is currently being utilised for the Rugby Club's welfare units and first aid. The car park is utilised by both players and fans on matchdays, a 10 x 10m compound is required, taking up at least two car parking spaces. There are also underground services in the car park as can be seen with the manhole covers which means it is not possible to build a site in parts of the car park, eliminating much of the car park too. The proposed upgrade site location benefits from not being used by the Rugby Club and is away from any underground services so can be built.
D7 - Rooftop	Rooftops along Broadhalgh Avenue, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, England, OL11 5LZ	Various	The majority of these roofs are pitched and thus there is nothing for the apparatus to be securely attached to. The weight of the equipment would mean that the antennas would slide off the roof taking the tiles and batons with them. The antennas would also

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			not be able to be directed to the target coverage area from a pitched roof as they would be pointing up to the sky rather than horizontally. Bolts would need to be attached through the building to backplates on the other side into the residential dwellings ceilings. These bolts and backplates would need to be inspected internally on an annual basis. This would be very intrusive for the occupants of these properties and would not be practicable. Furthermore these buildings are not designed to structurally take the weight of the antennas which are at least 50kg each and their feeder cables which are also very heavy. These buildings have therefore been discounted for these reasons.
D8 – Greenfield	Rochdale RUFC, Broadhalgh Avenue, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LZ	E: 387220 N: 413356	There is no space in this location, a 10 x 10m compound is required to secure the mast which would encroach onto the rugby playing field. The embankment to the east would also cause structural stability issues, therefore a site in this location has been discounted.
D9 – Greenfield	Rochdale RUFC, Broadhalgh Avenue, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LZ	E: 387166 N: 413252	There is access constraints for a site proposed here. A new access track would be required for the build and maintenance of the site which would be unacceptable to pass through the rugby playing fields. An installation in this location would also be directly behind 82 Broadhalgh Avenue which would

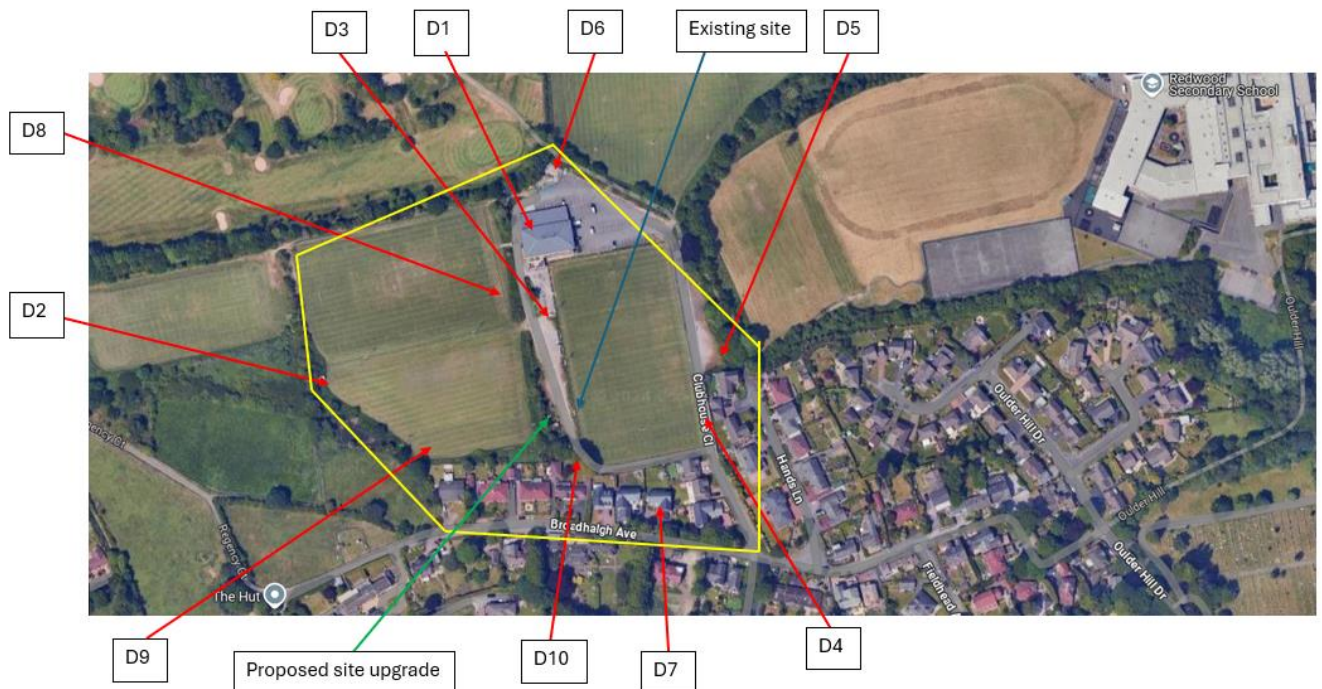
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			have a greater impact on visual amenity than the proposed upgrade. The nearest window for the proposed upgrade is circa 30m away with intervening trees, a site in this location would be 20m away from the nearest house without intervening trees. Therefore, this site has been discounted for this reason.
D10 – Greenfield	Rochdale RUFC, Broadhalgh Avenue, Broadhalgh, Norden, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL11 5LZ	E: 387166 N: 413252	There is insufficient space in this location to locate a mast, it would block part of the road way leading to safety issues. The mast would also be closer to the properties along Broadhalgh Avenue with no screening. This would have a greater impact on the visual amenity than the proposed upgrade.



Map 1: Discounted sites and search area

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

N/A

Land use planning designations:

The site sites south of Moorgate Conservation Area, it can not be seen on the appraisal map below due to the title placement. However, in the previous application the Conservation Officer concluded the proposed development would not have an impact on the Conservation Area due to the separation distance:

'It is acknowledged that the proposed telecommunications would far exceed the height of surrounding features, the proposed development would be situated a sufficient distance away, and behind adequate screening to ensure that the proposal would have a neutral impact on the designated heritage assets, the Moorgate Conservation Area and No. 15 Broadhalgh Avenue, in addition to the non-designated heritage asset No. 15 Broadhalgh Avenue (The Red House).'

Therefore, it must follow that a mast at exactly the same height but with less equipment and reduced headframe would have a similar, if not less of an impact than the previous design.

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Map 2: Moorgate Conservation Area map (source: Rochdale MBC)

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). It 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 (December 2024)

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The government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 24 July 2018 and updates the 2012 version. In February 2019 the NPPF was revised again, with minor alterations to wording relating to housing supply and not any parts relating to telecommunications. The NPPF was updated in July 2021, in order to strengthen sections including requirements on improved design quality, a new requirement for Councils to produce local design codes or guides, an emphasis on using trees in new developments, revised policies on plan-making, removing statues and opting out of PD rights relating to residential conversions. The NPPF has been recently revised again in December 2024 with an update on policy on housing development in England and does not affect any parts relating to telecommunications.

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 119 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 networks at paragraph 119. It notes that policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time. The economic and social benefits of providing high quality and reliable communications infrastructure are well documented and can be found later in this Supporting Information Statement.

The NPPF makes reference to 5G:

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

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

Paragraph 120 of the NPPF retains the requirement to minimise the number of installations consistent with the efficient operation of the network but also includes

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being consistent with the needs of consumers and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion.

Paragraph 123 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 prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

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

The NPPF continues to provide guidance on decision-making. At paragraph 39 it states that:

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

The NPPF builds on the aspiration to build a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 85 states:

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

Footnote 42 of the NPPF states:

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

Section 16 of the NPPF refers to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 207 explains how local planning authorities and applicants should assess their proposals against the historic environment:

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation'.

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF states Local Planning Authorities assess level of significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal:

'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The CoP sets out 'How wireless networks function.

Para. 16 states *"Cellular wireless networks use base stations to provide an area of radio coverage. Wireless technology uses the radio spectrum to broadcast radio waves between base stations and devices. Different radio frequencies have different characteristics which, along with the density of cell site locations, affect the extent of*

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coverage and how much data can be carried over the network. Depending on the radio frequencies used, base stations can deliver coverage over a wide area or provide extra network capacity in areas where there is a high demand for network bandwidth".

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

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

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

- **Site sharing and use of existing infrastructure:** make use of existing structures, sites and masts wherever possible to reduce the need for new development. The NPPF states that, [when installing mobile infrastructure](#), the number of masts and sites should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion.
- **Consultation with local planning authorities, local communities and other stakeholders:** participate in dialogue with local planning authorities, along with other relevant stakeholders such as the highways authorities, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty bodies, Historic England, and Natural England, including pre-application discussions, where appropriate. Maintain clear procedures, and high quality communication and consultation with local communities and other interested parties. Operators should agree community engagement with local planning authorities and share information as appropriate (see [Pre-application consultation with local communities](#) below).
- **Standardised and high-quality approach to planning applications, and the notification procedure:** provide standardised supporting documentation for planning applications (where appropriate) within the context of national and local requirements. Ensure planning submissions are of high-quality and provide the necessary evidence to support the application (as per the NPPF).

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- **Prompt responses to enquiries:** respond to complaints and enquiries within a timely manner (see Review and Enquiries section below).
- **Siting and Design:** wireless infrastructure should be deployed in accordance with the guidance set out within this Code of Practice. Where appropriate, equipment should comply with the principles set out in the NPPF and consider any local planning policies, including any local and national design codes. When located in protected landscapes and other designated land, the sensitive nature of these areas must be considered.
- **Removal of redundant equipment and site restoration:** ensure that when infrastructure is upgraded, any equipment that is made redundant by the upgrade, such as brackets, is removed to benefit the local environment. Where a whole site is no longer in use, the site should be restored to its original state.
- **Compliance with guidance laid out in the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) public exposure levels guidance:** as required by spectrum licences, comply with international guidelines for limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) - including, as set out in the NPPF, providing a statement that self-certifies that ICNIRP guidelines will be met with all applications (see [Annex C](#)).

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

- **“Incentivising connectivity:** support the expansion of telecommunications networks and take a ‘joined-up’ approach to the wireless infrastructure planning process, including ensuring that Local Plans effectively support the deployment of digital infrastructure.
- **Facilitating sites:** engage with operators when new sites have been proposed and discuss site requirements.
- **Engagement with operators:** respond positively to requests for engagement and make decisions in line with national policy and Local Plans. For planning applications, find solutions to issues and ensure timely decisions are made.
- **Information and communication:** ensure that members of the public can access information about any development proposals within their local area. Send communications promptly to an appropriate operator contact (or their representatives)”.

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

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Siting and Design Principles

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

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

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

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

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

- *Installation on existing buildings and structures;*
- *Erecting new ground based masts;*

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- *Camouflaging or disguising equipment where appropriate;*
- *Using small scale equipment (although small cells themselves are generally used to address capacity issues as opposed to providing coverage); and*
- *Mast and/or site sharing (including redevelopment of a site to enable upgrade or sharing with another operator)'.*

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

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

Para 27 requires that Local Planning Authorities consider these issues and consider the need for a site within a limited search area alongside the public benefit of improved connectivity. Para. 27 further considers that in general, it should not, therefore, be appropriate for planning authorities to seek wider evidence of alternative sites (beyond that required by the NPPF), unless they consider the proposed development is unacceptable having regard to the relevant material planning considerations. In respect of 'Design', the CoP at Para 28 acknowledges that the siting of wireless infrastructure will influence which design options are most appropriate for reducing the visual impact including

- **Protecting visual amenity**
- **Mitigating visual impacts**

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

- *In urban areas, where there is a high level of demand for mobile data, mobile base stations are likely to need to be deployed more densely. In these settings*

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you can expect to see more use of streetwork monopoles and rooftop installations and, in future, we are likely to see a larger number of smaller units (so-called “small cells”) deployed on buildings and on street furniture.

- In rural areas, base stations often need to cover wider geographic areas. Operators may need to use tall masts or lattice towers to provide the required coverage. The location of masts can sometimes be dictated by access to transmission links back to the operator’s main network and proximity to a power supply. Coverage in some areas can be limited because of the geography, topography and terrain’.

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

- Colouring
- Siting on highways and footways:
- Highway safety:
- Listed buildings/ scheduled monuments and Conservation Areas:
- Access
- Trees

The CoP explains the planning and visual considerations an operator should aim towards when siting a new mast, including the information referenced above:

Paragraph 39 of the CoP refers to mast positioning:

‘All new masts should be sited, so far as is practicable, so as to minimise their impact on their setting, including the landscape and any buildings. This includes siting next to similar structures - streetworks masts, for example, should ideally be sited in line, and in harmony, with existing vertical infrastructure, such as street lighting columns, to minimise their visual impact. Placing a mast within or adjacent to an existing group of trees, vegetation and other natural features can reduce visual impact. Care should be taken to minimise the unnecessary loss of existing trees, though antennas will need to be sufficiently elevated to clear the treeline and the trees may need to be maintained to prevent growth above a certain level’

Paragraph 40 refers to colouring and camouflage of the mast:

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'Where appropriate, masts should be coloured to match their backdrop to minimise contrast in an urban or rural setting. Streetworks monopoles can utilise design features such as shrouding or banding to protect visual amenity, though, for some 5G infrastructure, camouflage design solutions may not be practicable. Simple designs should be encouraged - masts which have complex designs are more likely to dominate and be in discord with the landscape and have adverse visual impacts. Operators and planning authorities should work collaboratively to agree on the optimal design solution on a site-specific basis'.

Local Policy

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

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan Policies (Adopted 2006)

The Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (Rochdale UDP) was adopted on June 2006 and forms the development plan. It is the basis for decisions on land use planning in Rochdale. The Rochdale UDP is used by the Council to guide future use of land and buildings as well as manage development, providing a basis by which planning applications will be determined.

The Rochdale UDP does contain policies which relate to telecommunications. However, this policy is now outdated as the UDP was initially implemented for use up to 2016. The UDP is still in place until the Allocations Development Plan is adopted. The most relevant policy relating to this proposed radio base station is CF/6 – Telecommunications.

"Applications for planning permission or for prior approval (as required under Part 24 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995) for telecommunications masts, satellite and terrestrial microwave antennae on masts, and satellite and terrestrial microwave antennae on a building or structure will be permitted where the following requirements are met:

- a. In the case of satellite and terrestrial microwave antennae on a building or structure the equipment is not detrimental to the character and design of the building or structure, to the character of the local street scene or to the visual amenity of the area.*
- b. b) In the case of telecommunications masts the development is not detrimental to the character and appearance of the local street scene or the visual amenity of the area.*

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- c. c) The opportunity is taken to share sites or erect telecommunications equipment on an existing mast, building or other structure, unless this would be unacceptable in terms of increased height or visual clutter.
- d. d) An applicant provides evidence of compliance with the Government guidelines on health impact of telecommunication use.
- e. e) The equipment is sited and designed so as to minimise its visual impact subject to technical and operational considerations; and
- f. f) The operator removes any apparatus when it becomes redundant.

The Council will use conditions and, where necessary, legal agreements to secure the above'.

Rochdale Core Strategy (Adopted October 2016)

The Core Strategy was adopted on October 2016 and sets out the long-term spatial strategy for future development. The Core Strategy sets the overall direction of growth and development and all other Local Plan documents will need to conform with it. There are no specific policies relating to telecommunications in the Core Strategy.

The Council refused the previous design on more general Core Policies, Policies P1, P3 and DM1.

Policy P1 relates to improving the image of the borough and high quality design:

- 'a. Requiring design which is of a high standard, demonstrating innovation and originality;*
- b. Working with developers of major developments to incorporate public art in the design of buildings and spaces or contribute to public art projects as appropriate;*
- c. Helping to 'green' the urban environment, for example by securing tree planting on sites and along streets and roads;*
- d. Promoting the development and re-use of under-used land and buildings, maximising the potential for heritage assets to provide a sense of place and image; and*
- e. Creating people-friendly, safe, vibrant, uncluttered public areas'.*

Core Policy P3 relates to improving design of new developments. The policy requires for all new developments to adhere to high standards of design in the area where it is located. It should enhance the boroughs identity and sense of place by having regard to:

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'Enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general'

Similarly, Core Policy DM1 relates to all development and it must take into account all relevant policies within the Local Plan. The Policy is similar to Policy P1 and P3 as all developments will be expected to demonstrate:

- 'a. Are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area;*
- b. Are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users;*
- c. Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy'.*

The Core Strategy promotes sustainable development as the Core Strategy is centred around delivering and supporting sustainable development. The Core Strategy promotes sustainable development as it should deliver economic, social and environmental objectives in an integrated and balanced way. Core Policy SD1 states:

'When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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

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

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Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (Adopted March 2024)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan is a collective agreement and plan between Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. It was formally adopted in March 2024 by all local planning authorities in the Greater Manchester region.

In 2019 Greater Manchester set out bold plans to give people, communities and businesses hope and confidence for the future. However, the impact of Covid 19 has had a on the way people live and work over the shorter term with a high degree of uncertainty over its impact in the long term. In response the Government has been very clear that we need to positively plan for recovery. The Government first made commitments to supporting economic recovery in mid-2020, for example with the Prime Minister's Build, Build, Build announcement at the end of June 2020 setting a context for England as recovered from Covid-19.

The vision is to capitalise on the opportunities which were brought about the recent pandemic... the borough need to be places where people have access to the services they require through high quality digital communications.

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan provides an important opportunity to create the conditions for inclusive economic growth.

By the end of the Plan period, Greater Manchester aims to be a top global city. To do this it will require a range of attributes, including a strong economy, skills residents, a high quality of place and the environment, and a diverse portfolio of investment and development opportunities.

The vision for Greater Manchester is set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy:

'Our vision is to make Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old:

- *A place where all children are given the best start in life and young people grow up inspired to exceed expectations.*
- *A place where people are proud to live, with a decent home, a fulfilling job, and stress-free journeys the norm. But if you need a helping hand, you'll get it.*
- *A place of ideas and invention, with a modern and productive economy that draws in investment, visitors and talent.*
- *A place where people live healthy lives and older people are valued.*
- *A place at the forefront of action on climate change with clean air and a flourishing natural environment.*

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- A place where all voices are heard and where, working together, we can shape our future'
-

To meet the vision, the plan sets out 10 objectives. The most relevant to telecommunications are below:

Objective 6: Promote the sustainable movement of people, goods and information

- Ensure new development provides opportunities for affordable, high quality digital infrastructure.

Objective 7: Playing our part in ensuring that Greater Manchester is a more resilient and carbon neutral city-region

- Promote sustainable patterns of development that minimise the need to travel and contribute to cleaner air;
- Locate and design development to reduce car dependency.

Objective 9: Ensure access to physical and social infrastructure.

- Ensure that our communities and businesses are supported by infrastructure;
- Improve the capacity and network coverage of digital, energy, telecoms, transport and water in key growth locations.

Policy JP-S1 refers to sustainable development

'To help tackle climate change, development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives'.

Policy JP-S1 refers to Sustainable Places and is referenced for all development. Key attributes should be consistent with:

'1. Distinctive, with a clear identity that:

A. Conserves and Distinctive, with a clear identity that: Distinctive, with a clear identity that: A enhances the natural environment, landscape features, historic environment and local history and culture;

B. Enables a clear understanding of how the place has developed; and

C. Respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used'

5. Adaptable, able to respond easily to varied and changing needs and technologies

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14. Well-connected to other places, particularly by public transport and digital infrastructure enabling everyone to take advantage of the employment, cultural and leisure opportunities across Greater Manchester and beyond'.

Chapter 10 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan document details how the Greater Manchester region will become more connected and integrated.

Para 10.3 directly states that digital connectivity is growing in everyday life. The use of being able to be digitally connected allows people to connect with people wherever they are and access to a range of learning, employment and retail opportunities.

Para 10.21 acknowledges the rise in digital demand and the continuous of the demand is likely to continue. The area is to become "smarter" with services to adopted innovations such as connected and autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (where an increasing range of everyday devices are connected, monitored and operated via the internet). It is the Greater Manchester ambition to be the UK's leading digital city and one of Europe's top five.

Policy JP-C1: An Integrated Network outlines how Greater Manchester will meet its low carbon emissions target through world-class connectivity. This includes a range of measures:

1. Delivering a pattern of development that minimises both the need to travel and the distance travelled by unsustainable modes to jobs, housing and other key services, including healthcare, education, retail, recreation and leisure facilities, green space and green infrastructure;

2. Enabling the provision of high quality digital infrastructure'.

Chapter 10 goes further to reference the importance of digital connectivity.

Paragraph 10.29 refers to the opportunities that digital connectivity can bring are unprecedented and everyone should have the opportunity to access them so they can fully participate in society and the economy.

Paragraph 10.30 notes a global city requires digital infrastructure to be competitive and support high levels of social inclusion:

'Any truly global city will need to have widespread, affordable, reliable, secure and future-proofed digital infrastructure that provides a competitive edge for businesses and supports high-levels of social inclusion. This will be essential to capitalise on new innovations, such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things and connected and autonomous vehicles. Big data will also enable the

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city-region to be managed more effectively. By facilitating more home-working, good digital infrastructure can also help reduce the need for travel and therefore help reduce carbon emissions, traffic congestion and air pollution'.

Paragraph 10.33 recognises the growth and development that digital infrastructure and capability goes through. The evolution of digital connectivity through next generation technology has increased and so has the speed that it evolves. Digital infrastructure is therefore needed to adapt and evolve.

The plan directly supports the provision of affordable, high quality, digital infrastructure with Policy JP-C2 digital connectivity. In making decisions the plan supports a range of measures, including:

'1. Enabling the roll-out of latest generation mobile technology and full fibre to the premises connectivity, in a way that maximises coverage whilst protecting townscape quality and ensuring an ability to respond to updated / changing technology'.

Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy (June 2019)

This Local Industrial Strategy sets out how Greater Manchester (GM) will forge its future. It states that it will build on GM's position as a 'leading European digital city-region; enable the digitalisation of all sectors; and capitalise on the links between digital and creative industries that feed internationally significant clusters in broadcasting, content creation and media, and maximise growing assets in cyber security.

It aims to put in place the integrated 21st century infrastructure needed for digital driven, clean and inclusive growth.

A top 5 city-region for the digital economy in Europe, with full fibre broadband and 5G coverage.

The Strategy states that GM will take a 'Made Smarter' approach to all industries, supporting firms to adopt new digital and creative techniques and enabling the digitalisation of all sectors.

The strategy has a specific section relating to infrastructure and acknowledges its importance:

'...The city-region now aims to upgrade, integrate and future-proof its infrastructure, to create a 21st century city-region with extreme digital connectivity, clean and

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inclusive growth and – through work with others – improved access to national and global markets.

Existing partnerships are working to improve digital infrastructure in the city-region to meet national targets of roll out of 5G technologies for most people by 2027'.

The Local Industrial Strategy sets out an objective to ensure the vision for infrastructure is met:

- World-class connectivity – digitally and through an integrated transport network within all parts of GM.

To achieve the ambitions of the GM Local Industrial Strategy it identifies actions around 5 foundations of productivity: Infrastructure, Ideas, People, Business Environment and Places. These are noted as being essential attributes of every successful economy. It also identifies opportunities grouped under 4 Grand Challenges – Artificial Intelligence and Data, the Ageing Society, Future Mobility and Clean Growth.

The Vision for the Digital, Creative and Media is set out in the Local Industrial Strategy and reproduced below:

'GM will be a leading European digital City-Region, with the infrastructure, skills and networks needed to digitise all sectors, and internationally significant clusters in broadcasting, content creation and media and cyber security'.

To help meet the vision the strategy states that GM will continue to transform the digital connectivity of the city-region to drive economic growth and innovation, working with Government to meet national targets of full roll-out of 5G technologies for most people by 2027.

The Local Industrial Strategy acknowledges that GM will aim to become one of the best digitally connected city-regions in the UK. It fully supports the development of 5G networks.

The Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint (April 2020)

The GM Digital Blueprint builds on the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy and states that this blueprint sets out the next chapter in Greater Manchester's ambition to be recognised as a world-leading digital city region, with an ongoing commitment to taking an open, innovative and connective approach to delivering that ambition.

It states that Greater Manchester remains committed to being a digital city-region. The ambition is still for Greater Manchester to be a top 5 European Digital City-Region

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and recognised globally for its digital innovation. Benefitting from top level physical infrastructure, and a highly skilled, ready-to-go digital workforce.

The Blueprint goes on to say that this is the place that does digital differently.

'We want our citizens' lives to be bettered, and for them to be empowered by the myriad of opportunities a digitally fuelled city-region provides'.

The Blueprint for Greater Manchester digital sets out a 3 year approach to meeting these ambitions:

... 'investing heavily in digital infrastructure, connectivity and transport offering breadth and depth of expertise across digital and creative services, e commerce, technology, hardware and software.

We're creating a digital place where innovators from across the globe want to tap into and a place where businesses already here can thrive'.

The 3 year aims include:

- By 2023, the average download speed across fibre, cable mobile and wireless will exceed 100Mbps compared to a Q4 2017 baseline of 32Mbps.
- Employment and skills in digital and creative industries 86000 people employed in 2019 growing to 96000 in 2023.
- Overall economic growth £5 billion in creative digital and technology economy growing to £5.5 billion by 2025 and £7 billion by 2029.

The digital priorities are set out as follows:

- Empowering people
- Enabling innovative public services
- Digitally enabling all businesses
- Creating and scaling digital businesses
- Being a global digital influencer

Enablers to these priorities are noted as including extending world-class digital infrastructure:

'We will ensure that Greater Manchester has the digital infrastructure it needs to be a world class digital city region'.

The aims are noted as:

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- *Deliver ubiquitous high speed digital connectivity over full fibre and 4G and 5G mobile across the whole city region by 2025.*
- *Driving market investment in fibre and mobile by minimising roll out costs.*

Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework 2040 (GMCA)

This is a pre-cursor to the GM Infrastructure Strategy. The aim is to focus on developing infrastructure which ultimately improves the lives of all those living and working within Greater Manchester.

The Infrastructure Framework acknowledges a number of key challenges, one of which is digital and the need to provide pervasive, affordable, resilient digital connectivity. The Framework notes that 'Digital technology is increasingly the backbone of the major industries and our daily lives'.

The Framework goes on to states that approaching 2040, GM will need to be a Smart and digitally ready City Region. To achieve this, and support on-going digitalisation, the region will require resilient fixed connectivity (through fixed fibre) supported by 5G (and subsequent technologies). It will also need to streamline the process for installation of new infrastructure within the street space.

The Framework notes the vision for the GM Infrastructure Strategy:

'Develop and maintain a holistic infrastructure system that is robust, accommodates sustainable growth and supports the ambitions of the Greater Manchester Strategy to make "Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old".'

The Greater Manchester Infrastructure Strategy should seek to:

- *Support the lives and well-being of people, communities and the environment within Greater Manchester.*
- *Be age-friendly and support the economic and social participation of both young and old.*
- *Support strategically identified growth for parts and communities within Greater Manchester.*
- *Be flexible, robust and met the existing and future needs of the communities and technological change.*
- *Provide world-class connections and access to opportunity for all.*
- *Provide world-class digital infrastructure which provides a platform for GM to embrace emerging technological and societal changes.*
- *Support a carbon-neutral GM and be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.*

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The Framework identifies a key infrastructure trend to 2040 as Digital (Telecommunications Operators) including mobile infrastructure:

- As the population and employment is due to rise:
 - more people will mean more homes and businesses, and more consumers of digital services.
 - There will be a growing demand for high-speed, resilient data connectivity to facilitate changing patterns such as shopping patterns moving online, whilst flexible working becomes more prevalent.
- Changing workforce:
 - More productive, higher skilled, higher paid jobs more specialised and skill activities needs digital infrastructure to support higher skilled industries – which may require increased digital infrastructure.
- Environmental Change:
 - Improving efficiencies of buildings and appliances. The use of smarter technologies within each infrastructure sector will look to improve efficiencies further.

The Framework comments on digitalisation noting the importance of it and how it has transformed the way in which we go about our everyday lives:

'We live in an increasingly digital world. Technologies that are visionary today rapidly become part of everyday life tomorrow. In turn, people's expectations are rising constantly. "Digital" now encompasses an increasing array of technologies, from sensors, smartphones and robots, to augmented reality, cloud computing and data analytics. These technologies are changing the way in which we live and places we live in. Digital technologies are being used to make cities more smooth running, more productive, and more democratic. The pervasiveness of digital technology in our lives represents a major change. For these technologies to function effectively, it is fundamental that a robust and diverse underpinning infrastructure is installed that ensures a future-proofed platform for the development of these and many new technologies for years to come.'

As our homes, businesses and cities become more reliant on digital technology to function the robustness of these systems becomes even more critical'.

The Framework states that *'anyone in GM should be able to access resilient, seamless connectivity at a speed they need anywhere and anytime'.*

- New technologies, artificial intelligence and atomisation:
 - Improvements in artificial intelligence and atomisation technologies will transform infrastructure sectors and business markets.

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- Digital infrastructure will be crucial to supporting future technology and a Smart City Region.
- Embracing digital technology throughout all sectors, geographies and occupations is fundamental to GM's current and future international competitiveness.

The Framework acknowledges that the vision of moving to a smart and digitally-ready city-region requires future digital infrastructure to be strong fixed resilient connectivity, supported by 5G (and beyond), big data systems and other nascent technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and machine learning. Without connectivity it is acknowledged that processing the sheer volumes of data necessary to create a network of communicating devices will be impossible. As such, the Framework states that big improvements are required to increase the provision of wired and wireless (through 5G or subsequent technologies and Wi-Fi provision) across GM. Without the more basic technology solutions (such as passive fibre connectivity and 5G) the smart-region solutions and value-added outcomes will struggle to be brought to fruition.

The Framework notes that 5G roll out is expected from 2020. However, the timing and costs of roll out is uncertain and international standards have yet to be agreed. It is possible that there will only be one network upon which providers deliver their services or that each provider might need to invest.

With regards to the Regional Centre if Challenge 8 is to be met to provide pervasive, affordable, resilient digital connectivity the challenge is early roll out of 5G especially in areas where mobile data use is congested such as the Regional Centre.

The Framework also states that GMCA and the Districts together with digital and telecommunication providers need to drive forward opportunities to promote connectivity and uptake in the Regional Centre.

Manchester Digital Strategy 2021-2026 (March 2022)

This digital strategy for Manchester is the vision for Manchester's digital future. It sets the priorities that our whole city – our public, private, voluntary and community organisations and residents – will be able to work on together to make Manchester one of the world's leading smart cities and digital economies in the next five years.

The priorities of the Manchester Digital Strategy will contribute directly to the delivery of five of the ten Our Manchester Strategy priorities:

- We will become a digitally inclusive city, with better digital infrastructure, access to digital technology and strong and lifelong digital skills.

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We have used these to create four overarching themes for the Digital Strategy:

1. Smart people:

We will ensure that everyone can gain and sustain the skills, aspirations, and confidence to fully participate in the digital world; providing the basis for Manchester to become an inclusive, diverse, successful and ethical smart city.

2. Digital places:

We will create digital neighbourhoods providing access, connectivity and support for all residents and businesses and digitally enabling enhanced health and wellbeing.

3. Future prosperity:

We will enable the digital economy and ecosystem to grow, continue to attract new digital businesses & sectors and support a resilient and inclusive economy.

4. Sustainable resilience:

We will use digital imaginatively for innovation to meet zero carbon and climate resilience goals and to create open inclusive connectivity with enhanced digital infrastructure as a utility not just a commodity.

Digital Places is about making sure the city itself, alongside its people, drives us towards a more digitally enabled future.

In a digital place, high quality and open digital infrastructure is ubiquitous at every level. Its leaders think towards the future and make sure that the changes we make to our physical environment today support the technological demands of tomorrow, and therefore much of Digital Places is about how we plan for and consider these future requirements in everything that we do to create a built environment that is fully digitally enabled.

Smart places are places where connectivity is ubiquitous and universal, where people, organisations and smart devices are all connected. They are places where information is collected and shared in a way that allows anyone to understand and interrogate it, coming up with their own solutions to our greatest challenges. Smart places are also climate-resilient and adaptive, supporting our transition to a zero carbon economy as well as being sustainable, adaptable and future-proofed.

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Connectivity is also of critical importance to Manchester 's creative and cultural industries, which overlap with the digital and tech sectors. Our cultural sector has been reliant on digital to keep operating throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is a role for Digital Places in supporting the city 's Cultural Recovery Plan. The digital transformation of the sector is likely to continue, and we must support it by making it easier for creators to digitising, distributing and monetising artistic products online.

Secondly, we know that improved access and technology can enhance access to existing public services. Using the example of health services, digital delivery means that services become more accessible and have wider benefits, for example enabling older people to continue to live in their own homes. Digitisation of health and care records also provides the opportunity to better integrate services as well as offering an opportunity for innovation providing new approaches to tackling embedded health challenges in the City including Health Ageing.

Online Nation 2022 Report (June 2022)

Online Nation is an annual research report, published for the first time in 2019. Using research produced by Ofcom and others, it looks at what people in the UK are doing online, how they are served by online content providers and platforms, and their attitudes to and experiences of using the internet.

The latest Online Nation 2022 report (published June 2022) found that for most people in the UK, being online is a major part of daily life. Being online allows people to connect with others, sometimes in ways they may not be able to do offline. Data shows how we benefit from a range of online services, from messaging and calling platforms to gaming platforms, online news outlets and online shopping.

The Meta-Owned social media apps (Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and Facebook Messenger) made up the top four smartphone apps most visited daily by UK adults in September 2021. The top-reaching smartphone app was Whatsapp (88% of UK online smartphone using adults) closely followed by the Facebook app (87%).

94% of UK adult internet users aged 16+ said they used an online communications service for making voice/video calls or sending messages in 2021, and 80% of children aged 3-15 did the same.

The 2022 report found that the UK adult internet users spent almost 4 hours online a day in September 2021, with 3 of those hours being spent on smartphones. One in five people only use a smartphone to go online compared to one in ten last year. News and government public services are among the most-visited websites and apps in the UK.

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The majority (67%) of UK internet users aged 13+ feel that the benefits of being online outweigh the risks. 43% agree that being online has an overall positive impact on their mental health.

The report found that 60% of children aged 8-15 say that using social media and messaging platforms makes them feel closer to their friends. More than three-quarters of children aged 12-15 said that being online can help with their school/homework, whilst half said it can be used to learn a new skill.

The Online Nation 2022 report acknowledged that the global pandemic since March 2020 has resulted in significant changes in online behaviour. Online shopping habits developed during the lockdown periods have remained. The largest online platforms' revenues and profits increased significantly during the lockdown periods and this growth continued in 2021. The growth is being driven by UK consumers' increased spend on e-commerce and entertainment subscription services, while advertising revenues are also increasing with the continuing brand migration to online.

Figure 1.2 of the Online Nation 2022 report indicates that the percentage of UK online adults accessing the internet, by device, in 2021 was the highest by smartphone at 88%. In September 2021 73% of the time spent online by UK adults per day was on a smartphone.

Figure 1.2: Percentage of UK online adults accessing the internet, by device: 2021

Percentage of adult internet users	Smartphone	Tablet	Laptop	Smartphone only
2021	88%	43%	53%	21%

Source: Ofcom Adults' Media Literacy Tracker 2021: Core survey and CATI omnibus survey. IN1. Which of these devices do you use to go online? (MULTI CODE) Base: All adults 16+ that go online (at home or elsewhere) (excluding those who did not give a response at the postal survey) (3577)

Reproduced from Online Nation 2022 Report

The table below indicates the most-missed device among adults were it be taken away from them, using data collected 2014-2019. As can be seen, nearly half of all adults say that their mobile device is the device they would miss the most were it taken away from them.

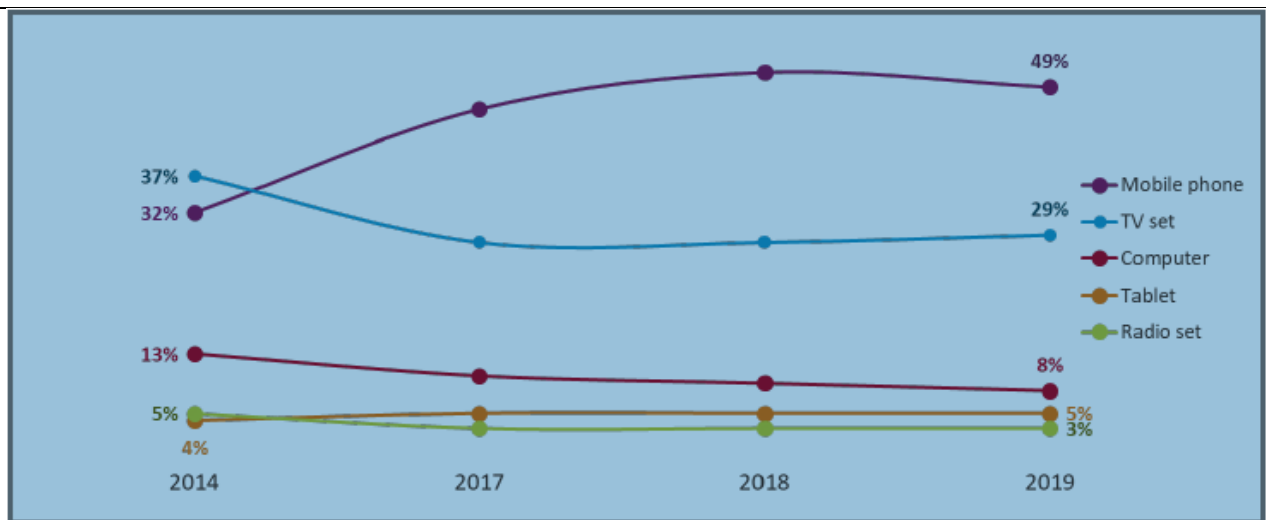
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Source: Ofcom Adults' Media Literacy Tracker 2014-2019

Online Nation 2023 Report (December 2023)

Connected Nations is an annual report on progress in the availability of broadband and mobile services in the UK, including the roll out of mobile 5G networks. The 2023 report was published in December 2023. These reports support Ofcom's objective of making communications work for everyone, including to promote reliable, widely available, and high-quality networks. The latest report found that the availability of 5G services is growing rapidly. The level of 5G coverage provided outside of premises by at least one mobile network operator (MNO) rose from 67-78% in 2022 to 85-93% in 2023. As of September 2023, there were more than 18,500 5G deployments in place across sites in the UK up from around 12,000 5G deployments reported in 2022.

The 2023 Connection Nations Report also found there has been fast paced growth in 5G capable devices and traffic with 5G traffic showing a growth of around 140% from 2022 to 2023. This data traffic was generated from devices, of which at least 43% are 5G capable handsets (up from around 20% in 2022). Traffic on 5G capable handsets represents around 17% of total mobile traffic, up from around 9% in 2022.

The Report notes that the MNOs have started to switch off their 3G networks. The number of customers using devices reliant on 2G and 3G connectivity has fallen sharply, from approximately 5.5 million reported last year to 2.4 million this year, of which just over half a million are residential customers with a 3G device. Less than 3% of all data traffic is now carried on 3G networks, with 3G data traffic having decreased by an average of 44% year on year.

The latest Online Nation 2023 report (published December 2023) found that for most people in the UK, being online is a major part of daily life. Being online allows people

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to connect with others, sometimes in ways they may not be able to do offline. Data shows how we benefit from a range of online services, from messaging and calling platforms to gaming platforms, online news outlets and online shopping.

In total, 47.9 million UK adults accessed the internet on smartphones, tablets and computers in May 2023, spending an average of 3 hours 41 minutes a day online, eight minutes more than in May 2022. Young adults continue to spend the most time online, with 18-24-year-olds spending a daily average of 4 hours 36 minutes, and the 65+ group spending the least time (2 hours 46 minutes).

YouTube is the highest-reaching social media service among UK online adults using smartphones, tablets or computers, taking the top spot in May 2023 from Facebook (including Messenger), with more than nine in ten (91.0%) visiting it that month. In May 2022, Facebook was the highest reaching social media service, reaching 93.8% of UK online adults but in May 2023 it had 1.4 million fewer adult visitors, maintaining a high overall UK online adult reach (90.7%) but now on par with YouTube. TikTok, in fifth place, overtook LinkedIn, now ranked sixth, reaching 44.3% of UK online adults in May 2023, up by 9 percentage points since May 2022 (34.7%). UK online 18-24-year-olds are avid users of social media, and over half of them are visiting six social media platforms: 96% visited YouTube in May 2023, 87% visited either Facebook or Facebook Messenger, 86% visited Instagram, 72% visited TikTok, 71% visited Snapchat and 61% visited X (formerly Twitter).

Levelling Up the United Kingdom (February 2022)

Digital Connectivity is a focus area, and the mission is 'By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population'. This mission is focused on improving digital connectivity.

Digital connectivity: The case for action

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of digital infrastructure right across society, from ensuring business continuity to reducing isolation. Improved digital connectivity has the potential to drive growth and productivity across the UK and widen job opportunities through remote working. However, there are significant spatial disparities in the quality of broadband and mobile networks, with rural areas likely to experience worse digital connectivity than urban areas. Infrastructure is only part of the picture: economic benefits will only materialise if businesses and workers have the skills to take advantage of improved infrastructure.

More broadly, high quality digital infrastructure can deepen local labour markets through remote working, making it more attractive for both workers and companies to locate regionally. It also allows for the development of high-value sectoral clusters,

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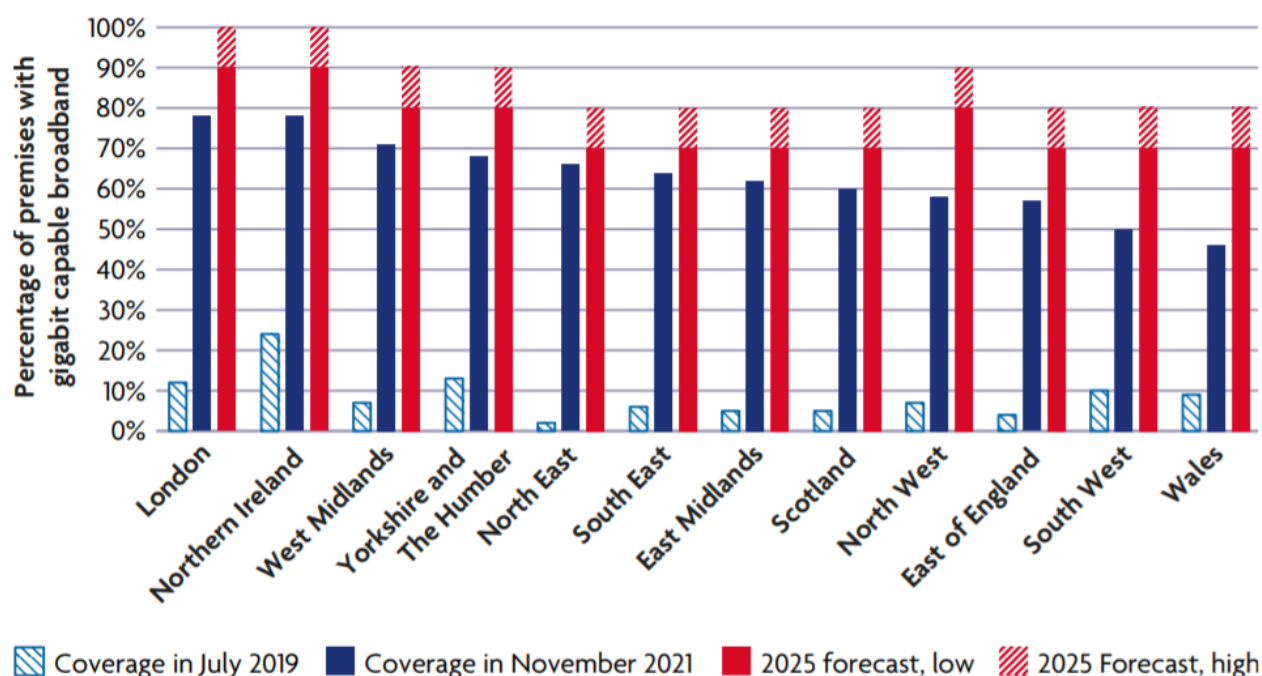
which can drive growth and jobs in new areas. Existing specialisms in the UK regions have the potential to generate strong tech clusters, such as fintech in Scotland and Wales, e-Commerce in the North West and Northern Ireland, and Agri-Tech in Yorkshire and the Humber. The sector also provides opportunities for raising living standards – median earnings for the sector are 50% higher than the UK average.

The policy programme

In 2020, the UK Government published the National Infrastructure Strategy, committing to providing £5bn in public funding to roll out gigabit broadband to at least 85% of the country by 2025, and subsequently to as close to 100% as possible, working with the private sector.

Public investment will target premises that are hardest to reach and which would otherwise not be provided for by the private sector, ensuring no areas are left behind. Gigabit coverage has increased from 10% to over 60% in less than two years. Since 2019, coverage has improved across the UK, and the UK Government anticipates the following additional improvements to be delivered as a minimum by 2025, as set out below.

Figure 3.1 Gigabit coverage improvements, UK countries and regions, 2019, 2021 and 2025 (forecast)



Source: Levelling Up the United Kingdom.

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In 2023, the UK Government published the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy. This aims to achieve the objectives that have been set out by the Government. This reviews how far the private sector will go to deliver wireless infrastructure across the country and determine whether there are any market failures in places that need to be addressed, and how the UK Government could tackle these.

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

UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy (April 2023)

The UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy, published in April 2023 aims to achieve the objectives that have been set out by the UK Government. The next decade will see seismic changes both in terms of what wireless connectivity can deliver and how we can use it. The economic and social benefits from these changes promise to be vast, from supercharging growth to accelerating our transition to net zero. But these benefits can only be achieved with concerted action from government, industry, and others. This strategy sets out the Government plan to do that.

In the last 5 years, UK government policies have driven impressive progress in the deployment of world class fixed and wireless networks across the whole of the UK, removing regulatory and practical barriers to deliver stronger growth, more jobs, and better public services in every corner of the country.

- through our £1 billion deal with the mobile network operators, we are supporting rural communities by ensuring that 95% of the UK landmass have 4G coverage by 2025. This currently stands at 92%
- we have made substantial progress with 5G, too. Last year, we met our ambition for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027 5 years early through the deployment of basic, non-standalone 5G using existing 4G networks to deliver increased network capacity.

By building world-class, secure digital infrastructure networks, the Government can meet its vision they set out in their [Digital Strategy](#) for a competitive and innovative digital economy. This will play an important role in:

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- **underpinning other new technologies** - the next decade will see the development and maturation of transformative technologies from AI and self-driving vehicles to digital twins, which will drive demand for advanced wireless connectivity.
- **transforming public services** - there are also significant benefits for improving our public services, supporting smart cities which are cleaner and less congested and delivering connectivity to our schools and hospitals that will provide better, more interactive lessons and personalised healthcare.

By transforming our economy, widespread adoption of 5G can bring a cumulative productivity benefit of £159 billion by 2035, driving growth and inward investment, and improving lives for communities in every corner of the country.

However, there are challenges we need to address to ensure the UK can realise these benefits, as the economics of investing in wireless networks are changing:

- There is still need to overcome uncertain demand for 5G-enabled services and continuing practical barriers to network deployment need to be overcome.
- Many of the economic benefits we have identified require significantly higher quality connectivity than is likely to be deployed in national public networks.
- 5G roll-out in the near term is likely to focus on urban areas, where the commercial returns are more certain.
- Research we commissioned shows significant variation in the quality of mobile coverage in different parts of the country over the next decade - economically important areas like Freeports and industrial parks could be underserved.

Market dynamics are also changing:

- **Demand is uncertain** as connectivity moves beyond smartphones to enable an array of new, innovative use cases, businesses and the public sector will need to navigate an increasingly complex ecosystem to get the connectivity they require. As many businesses and local authorities do not yet clearly understand the benefits 5G offers or how they can effectively deploy 5G-enabled services to realise these benefits, there is no clear articulation of the demand for higher quality services. In turn, this makes it more challenging for providers to make the business case for investment.

Through this strategy, the UK government set out a new policy framework with 6 key steps to do just that and ensuring that the UK maximises the potential of advanced wireless networks over the next decade, securing our international competitiveness for the future and driving economic growth across the UK.

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1. Ensuring good connectivity for all

As networks are upgraded with 5G technologies over the next decade, 4G will continue to play an important, albeit diminishing, role in providing mobile connectivity across the UK.

Coverage reporting also needs to improve so that it more accurately reflects consumers' actual experience, equipping them with the information they need to choose the right contract. In turn, we expect this to drive further commercial investment to address previously unidentified gaps - ensuring that people and businesses get the connectivity they need, whether to start and grow a business or to have a remote healthcare appointment.

2. Setting a bold 2030 ambition

Given the substantial potential that 5G offers for businesses and public service delivery, we are setting out a bold vision for the next generation of our national networks to galvanise investment across our economy. We want to move beyond the basic 5G that is being deployed now over 4G networks to build higher quality, standalone 5G networks that do not rely on older infrastructure. We also want to extend 5G coverage well beyond cities and towns to all populated areas of the UK, including rural villages and communities.

We are therefore setting a new headline ambition for the UK to have nationwide coverage of standalone 5G to all populated areas by 2030 (emphasis added).

3. Strengthening the investment climate

While the government already has a range of policies in place to drive forward the deployment of digital infrastructure, our 2030 ambition requires significant commercial investment.

This includes:

- Continuing to remove practical barriers to the deployment of 5G infrastructure.

4. Realising the full benefits of 5G

We want people, business and public services across the UK to realise the full benefits of 5G and advanced wireless connectivity. However, without concerted action, this will be slow to materialise and limited to larger businesses, in fewer sectors, and in certain geographies.

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Supporting places to attract investment: we set out how we will drive greater opportunities for industry and public service providers to be empowered customers for future connectivity solutions – supporting places to attract investment and encouraging adoption of 5G services.

We will do this by:

- Driving local leadership and coordination and encouraging local authorities across the UK to employ digital champions to provide strategic leadership for local authorities' own digital infrastructure strategies.

There are 5 chapters which outline the aims and ambitions, along with the steps the government are going to take in order to achieve their set targets and provide improved 5G connectivity for all.

Chapter 1 - Approach and scope

This strategy sets out a policy framework to help deliver the government's priority of growing the economy and to ensure the UK benefits from advances in wireless connectivity for the next decade.

Chapter 2 – Ensuring good connectivity across rural and urban areas.

The government's priority to build a better, more secure, more prosperous future for the UK includes a clear commitment to grow the economy and create better-paid jobs and opportunity right across the country. To do this, it is vital that people who live and work in all parts of the UK, including in rural areas, have access to good quality mobile and broadband coverage.

Chapter 3: Our 2030 ambition

World-class digital infrastructure underpins the digital economy – it was worth £143 billion in 2021, accounting for 5% of the national workforce. This infrastructure provides the backbone of the UK economy and society with ever more jobs, public services and societal interactions built upon its foundations. As growth in the digital sector is nearly six times faster than across the economy as a whole, its importance will only continue to increase as we deliver the Prime Minister's priority of growing the economy.

4G technology revolutionised the way people use their mobile phones. What today is considered normal, a decade ago was ground-breaking. We have seen the growth of streaming services, like Netflix and Spotify, and gained constant access to high quality, user-produced content for free on platforms like YouTube, transformed the

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way we shop online, travel around cities through access to apps like Uber and Bolt and use public services, such as booking NHS appointments through apps.

The evolution of 5G

While 4G will continue to play an important role in providing widespread geographic connectivity to consumers through public cellular networks across the UK's landmass, 5G can offer significantly better performance and support a far greater range of use cases. 5G enables data transfer speeds of more than 10 times faster than 4G, has the potential to offer lower latency and greater reliability and the ability to connect more devices. The implications of these improvements reach far beyond the potential to develop the capabilities of smartphones, enabling an array of innovative use cases and providing for transformative economic, and social benefits that were perhaps unimaginable a decade ago.

The government's ambition for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027 has been met early through the deployment of basic, or non-stand alone, 5G which is built on a 4G core network. While this has helped MNOs increase the capacity of their networks in more densely populated areas, it does not reflect the full functionality 5G can deliver.

Without clear action, the market for advanced 5G services will remain nascent as many business and public services do not yet fully understand the benefits or how to navigate the supplier ecosystem for 5G enabled digital products, applications and services.

We want high quality coverage to extend well beyond cities and larger towns to all populated areas of the UK, including villages and rural communities. **We are therefore setting a stretching new ambition of nationwide coverage of standalone 5G to all populated areas of the UK by 2030** (emphasis added).

Chapter 4: Strengthening the investment environment.

Our 2030 ambition requires commercial investment, and this chapter focuses on creating the environment to support it.

The deployment of standalone 5G and ultimately advanced will require operators to deploy additional infrastructure, including:

- 5G core networks in addition to the 5G equipment in the radio access network
- upgrades to the existing grid of approximately 18,000 macro cell sites per MNO
- additional cell sites to provide 'infill' to cover gaps in coverage

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Addressing barriers to deployment

Since the publication of the Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review, the government have taken significant strides to make it quicker and easier for operators to roll out new digital infrastructure including making reforms to the planning system to support the deployment of 5G and extend mobile coverage in England.

Chapter 5 – Realising the full benefits of 5G and advanced wireless connectivity.

5G and other forms of advanced wireless connectivity pave the way for new services and applications that can have a transformative effect on our public services, businesses and our local economies, delivering this government's priority of growing the economy and creating better paid jobs. Wireless connectivity can support mobile healthcare workers and connected vehicles, improve traffic flow through our cities and enable our factories to be more productive, supporting the fourth industrial revolution. Our evidence is clear that the most significant economic benefits from 5G will come from widespread adoption of advanced 5G by industrial sectors, including manufacturing and logistics, and by public services.

The government is determined that the UK should take full advantage of these opportunities, but this will only be possible if places across the country can attract commercial investment in 5G and other forms of advanced wireless connectivity and for that to be adopted at scale by businesses and public services.

Connected places.

Improving digital connectivity is one of the government's Levelling Up Missions. We want places and communities across the UK to share in the benefits of good connectivity, enriching lives and driving local growth.

We want to support connected places with their digital connectivity ambitions. **We will do this by helping regions and local authorities to build the case for adopting new technology, attracting investment and removing practical barriers to the deployment of advanced wireless networks** (*emphasis added*). Local and regional authorities play a pivotal role in facilitating the rollout of wireless connectivity and their role will become more critical than ever as investment in 5G continues, due to its technological complexity and the vast number of new applications and services it can support.

Local leadership and coordination

Local leadership can help to identify and break down barriers to deployment at a local level by bringing together stakeholders across the public sector and building

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strong relationships with industry. The installation of telecoms infrastructure involves a number of different local government departments (such as **planning**, estates, **highways**) and their activities can be siloed and uncoordinated.

It is essential that, at a leadership level, local and regional authorities recognise the importance of wireless connectivity and identify decision-makers within the organisation who are empowered to facilitate private sector investment.

Chapter 6: Driving adoption in key economic sectors.

Adoption of 5G-enabled use cases in sectors such as healthcare, transport & logistics, manufacturing and agriculture will drive economic growth and productivity across the UK, delivering our priority of economic growth.

Key features of 5G for industry Dedicated 5G networks can enable:

- data analytics: Utilising operational and environmental sensor data to make real time decisions about equipment and operational performance.
- video surveillance and geolocation: Providing the location of workers and assets for security and safety purposes.
- tracking moving assets: Working with self-driving vehicle technology and software guidance systems to provide situational awareness of mobile assets.
- automation: Enabling independently operating robots to perform operational tasks.

Connected Nations 2024

The Connected Nations 2024 was published in April 2024. This is an interim update to the last annual Connected Nations report, which was based on data collected in September 2023. This Connected Nations 2024 is based on fixed broadband availability and mobile coverage in the UK as of January 2024. Ofcom is a measure mobile coverage in a way that reflects the likely experience of people using their mobile phones. The report acknowledges that there has not been a significant increase in coverage since the September 2023, but the industry continues to develop its coverage footprint.

"Mobile coverage remains stable for 4G, with around 93% of the UK landmass predicted to have good outdoor 4G coverage from at least one operator. This area includes nearly all the premises in the UK."

"5G coverage has also remained steady over the previous 4 months with around 92% of premises being able to get a 5G signal outdoors, from at least one mobile network operator (figures reported with a high degree of confidence)"

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The below interactive map provided by Connected Nations shows Rochdale to have only 10% 5G coverage for all 4 operators. This application will provide coverage for 2 out of the 4 main operators and reduce this gap in coverage. The Government has set out an aim for **the UK to have nationwide coverage of standalone 5G to all populated areas by 2030 (emphasis added, see UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy)**

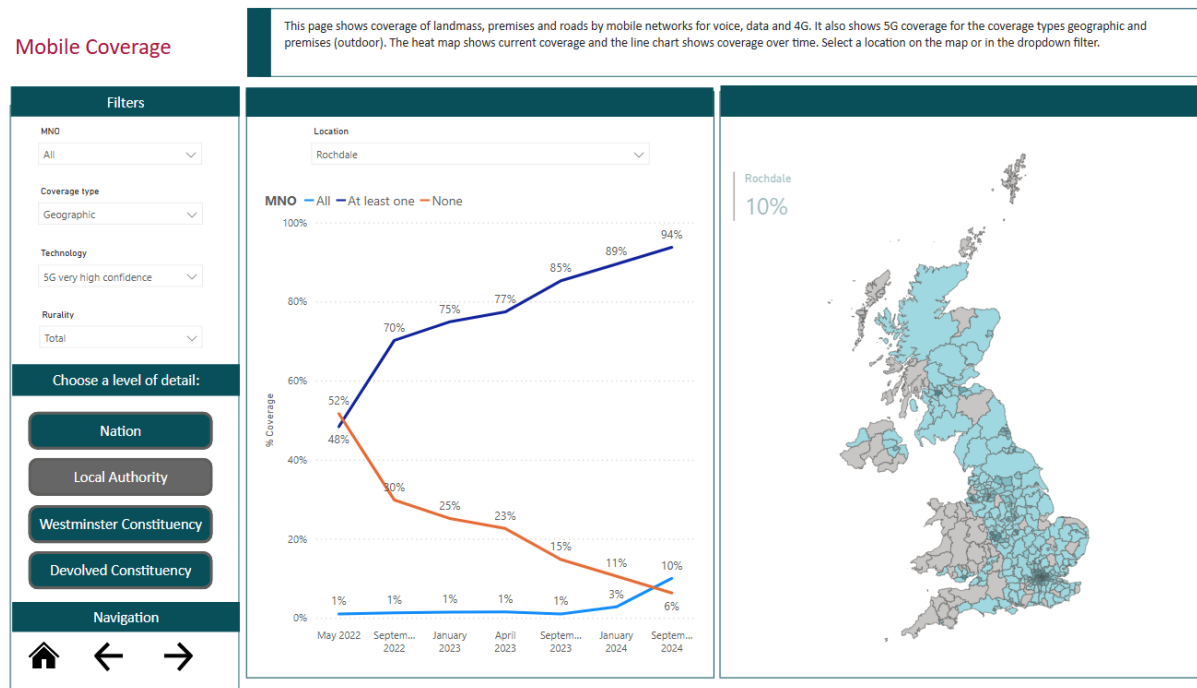


Figure 2: Graph of geographic coverage for 5G in Rochdale for all 4 operators (source: Ofcom²)

Planning Assessment

The main issues arising from this application to upgrade the existing radio base station at the land at Rochdale RUFC is whether the proposed replacement tower and antennas due to their scale and siting would be a visually obtrusive feature which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. Whether any perceived harm would outweigh the significant social and economic benefits associated with the increased service provision attributed to the proposal and other valid material considerations as outlined within NPPF, which fully supports the roll out of 5G and the next generation connectivity to accelerate business opportunities and growth to ensure the economy is resilient and competitive, as well as the and also the relevant objectives and policies within the Rochdale UDP, the Rochdale Core

² <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/coverage-and-speeds/connected-nations-2024/interactive-report-2024/>

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Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Strategy, the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework, and the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy which fully supports Greater Manchester's position as a leading European digital city-region and the development of 5G networks.

The replacement of the existing tower and 6 no. new antennas fully comply with, the Rochdale UDP, the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy, the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint and the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework as it will improve the infrastructure and services for this area of Denton. Access to a high quality, reliable superfast mobile network is not just 'a nice to have' but an essential part of everyday life. Indeed many, including the former Minister for Digital Infrastructure Matt Warman, consider it to be the fourth utility service as important as gas, water and electricity, a life line for many especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where people were able to see their loved ones, speak to friends and family and arrange virtual meetings allowing some form of normality in a very abnormal situation.

The principle of siting telecommunications equipment in the locality has been established and accepted by the Local Planning Authority since 2014 with the installation of; of 15m radio mast and floodlights (LPA ref: 14/00812/TELE). The proposal which this application is the subject of is similar to the accepted proposals and serves the purpose of providing the latest 4G coverage and capacity and new 5G technologies to the same target coverage area. This ensures that the surrounding area will benefit from up-to-date digital technologies to match increased demand in the area.

In line with Policy CF/6 of the Rochdale UDP, the proposed amendments to the existing radio base station will enable 5G to be brought to this area of south Bagslate Moor without having a negative impact on the area. This is due to the established siting of the radio base station located away from the highway. The site is viewed in the context of the surrounding trees, the other operators monopoles and the flood lights all of which form the context of the area.

A previous design was submitted and subsequently refused by the planning authority under LPA ref: 22/01192/FUL on 01/03/2024. The delegated report refers to policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy, along with Paragraphs 126 and 130 of the NPPF (now paragraphs 131 and 135):

'Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general. In addition,

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paragraphs 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 130 goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change'.

These are generic design policies and do not take into account the design constraints an operator faces which limit the operators choice of design. Hence why there is a specific section in the NPPF covering high quality communications. The site's location has been carefully chosen as it needs to be near to the existing site, it is tucked away adjacent to semi-mature trees to be away from the residential properties.

The headframe has been removed with the antennas being moved onto the legs and the amount of technology the site will provide has been reduced, in turn negating the need for a bulky headframe. The headframe previously raised concern by the case officer in their delegated report:

'The revised headframe however would result in a fundamentally more obtrusive appearance over the existing headframe by virtue of its increased size and visual complexity due to the additional antennae'.

Therefore, it must follow the design of the new lattice tower is more conformed to the area as it is a one width structure, rather than a complex headframe.

The existing radio base station has hosted telecommunications equipment for a number of years. It has become an established feature in this area of south Bagslate Moor. Thus, an established telecommunications radio base station is to be utilised and upgraded to enable the latest 2G, 3G and 4G services to be provided as well as new 5G. This is in full accordance with Policy U2 of the Policy CF/6 of the Rochdale UDP as it will utilise an existing site. These additional antennas are required in order to bring 5G into the area for two operators and improve the existing 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and capacity in this cell area. This is in full accordance with national guidance contained within the NPPF, the Code of Best Practice, the Tameside Digital Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Strategy, Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint and the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework.

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The proposed amendments have been carefully considered. To this end, the top height of the antennas will increase by 5m above ground level. The previous case officer raised concern the proposal would “create a more prominent and incongruous feature. However, as demonstrated at figure 1 the surrounding trees would block one sector if the tower were to be reduced in height. Furthermore, the proposed antenna height of 20m is essential to provide new 5G coverage and replacement 2G, 3G and 4G service provision to the surrounding area. 5G radio signals are more sensitive to physical obstructions than older technologies. This is because the higher the frequency band the greater the reduction in signal strength, increasing the likelihood of dropped calls and reduced data rates for internet browsing, for example. Any physical object obstructing the propagation of radio signals causes a reduction in the signal strength reaching a customer’s device. A common term for these objects is ‘clutter’ such as buildings, trees and hills. Generally, the higher the signal frequency the more it will be impacted by clutter.

Since 5G new radio technologies operate in higher frequencies where attenuation of the radio signal is naturally higher, and the effects of clutter are greater it will normally require a higher structure to achieve the same coverage footprint as older technologies. Furthermore, unlike traditional technologies 5G uses adaptive beamforming technologies to increase capacity and data speeds to the user. For effective beamforming the antenna will normally need to be mounted higher than conventional antennas. These factors all lead to the need for an increase in antenna height in 5G.

It is accepted that the height of the proposed installation is taller than other pieces of surrounding buildings and trees, but this in itself is not a valid reason to conclude that it is not appropriate at a specific location. Telecommunications apparatus by its very nature must be taller than surrounding built and natural form to ensure its efficient operation. To suggest that it is inappropriate because it is taller than nearby lighting columns is no more relevant than suggesting that street lighting columns are inappropriate because they are taller than road signage or traffic lights. They are all essential pieces of infrastructure within a streetscene that carry out differing functions and therefore cannot be considered on the same merits. As such, the proposal should not be considered negatively due to it being taller per se than adjacent buildings and linear structures.

The proposed site is in conformity with The Code of Practice for Wireless Development. The site is set against semi-mature trees, whereby the antennas need to rise above the tree line in order to reach the target coverage area, Paragraph 39 of the CoP states:

‘Mast positioning: all new masts should be sited, so far as is practicable, so as to minimise their impact on their setting, including the landscape and any

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buildings. This includes siting next to similar structures - streetworks masts, for example, should ideally be sited in line, and in harmony, with existing vertical infrastructure, such as street lighting columns, to minimise their visual impact. Placing a mast within or adjacent to an existing group of trees, vegetation and other natural features can reduce visual impact. Care should be taken to minimise the unnecessary loss of existing trees, **though antennas will need to be sufficiently elevated to clear the treeline (emphasis added)** and the trees may need to be maintained to prevent growth above a certain level'

The design of the replacement lattice tower has been carefully considered as the existing monopole cannot support the replacement and additional antennas as well as additional equipment on the new headframe. As previously stated the current monopole cannot support the latest 5G technologies. The lattice tower is proposed to be galvanised to blend in with the other vertical structures nearby and assimilate with an often grey sky. This is in accordance with Policies CF6 Rochdale UDP, Policies P1 and P2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

The upgraded installation fully complies with Policy CF/6 of the Rochdale UDP, Policies P1 and P2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy. The antennas are positioned as tight as possible and are required to have an antenna top height of 20m it is acknowledged that this is the most minimal height possible to provide the required level of coverage to the target coverage area which includes 5G.

It is essential that the 5G antennas are unshrouded. As the radio frequencies get higher, required for data carrying, the antennas are less able to propagate through immediate blockages including Glass Reinforced Plastic, which is what the shroud is made from. This affects the 5G antennas more so than any other technology. The result being they cannot operate effectively close to Glass Reinforced Plastic or any other blocking material. Therefore there is a technical reason why the 5G antennas need to be unshrouded. The latest 4G technology are also affected more so than older technologies by propagation, and are therefore less efficient if they are shrouded. As such, the other antennas also need to be unshrouded to ensure that the latest technologies are provided to the surrounding area maximising their propagation. It is vital for the success of the city that these types of infrastructure are able to expand and improve as required especially as residents and businesses become more reliant on their mobile coverage to help them go about their daily lives.

If the lattice tower were to be any lower, the antennas would not be able to clear the trees and landscape and as such would not be able to operate effectively. A lower height would lead to a poor user experience for a large part of the target coverage area. As such, this would fail the operators design brief and an additional

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installation would have to be found leading to the proliferation of masts contrary to national planning guidance contained in the NPPF.

Government guidance states that in order to limit visual intrusion, the number of radio and telecommunication masts and the 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. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability should be encouraged.

The proposed upgrade to the existing radio base station will enhance Cornerstone's customer experience by providing improved 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and capacity as well as new 5G services to the surrounding area of south Bagslate Moor. It will enable their customers to continue to utilise their handheld devices for the purposes in which they have become accustomed, as well as being able to access the latest technology wherever they are whether that be indoors or outside. This is in full accordance with the NPPF and The Code of Practice. It offers the best environmental solution, limiting the number of new sites required whilst allowing the two operators to continue to utilise the same existing established site, limiting the visual intrusion in the area. This is in full accordance with NPPF and the Code of Practice, as well as Policy CF/6 of the Rochdale UDP.

NPPF states at paragraph 120 the number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, 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. Utilising the existing radio base station is fully in line with the NPPF. Whilst a new site is not required, a new tower is. In order to provide a new 5G service in this locality, the operator is unable to utilise the existing structure as it is not physically capable of supporting all the legacy technologies comprising 2G, 3G and 4G as well as the new bigger 5G antennas. Therefore, a replacement tower and antennas are required in order to maintain, upgrade and provide the latest and new technologies to the surrounding area. This is in line with the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy, the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint and the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework.

The additional antennas are required to ensure that all the operators' latest technologies can be provided from the existing radio base station. Given the installation is set well back from the highway, on private land, tucked away adjacent to semi-mature trees, the amended design has removed the headframe to minimize its overall width and visual appearance. The upgraded site will also help reduce the varying levels of coverage for 2 operators in the south Bagslate Moor area and boost the signal for its customers.

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The RRUs are designed to make the antennas more efficient and reduce the need for additional equipment cabinets at ground level. This minimises the impact on the visual amenity of the area. In order to maximise signal efficiency the RRUs need to be as close as possible to the antennas, hence they need to be located underneath the antennas towards the top of the column. Given their height above ground level and their small size, approximately that of a shoe box, they will not appear prominent in the streetscene as they will be out of the general eye line of casual passers-by. This is in accordance with Policy DM1 and P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

This is an existing radio base station located on private land, which enables two operators, to continue to utilise the same site to provide high quality service provision to this area of south Bagslate Moor. The upgrade to this site is needed to enable superfast data including enhanced 4G service provision and new 5G technology to be continually accessed in the area as technologies change and greater demands on the network are experienced as more people use their handheld devices to stream data and access the internet. The upgrade will ensure greater capacity in the network and as such prevent the requirement for an additional installation elsewhere within the area. This is in full accordance with NPPF which supports such development, especially on existing sites and buildings and that are utilised by more than one operator. It is also in line with the Rochdale UDP which acknowledges telecommunication technology is continually developing and the council has to meet the growth, the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy which aims to be a world leading digital city region, the 'smartest' city and a top 5 digital city region, the Greater Manchester Industrial Strategy and Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint which both aspire for Greater Manchester to be a top 5 city-region for the digital economy in Europe, with full 5G coverage, with world-class connectivity and which fully supports the development of 5G networks, the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework which also supports the provision of world-class connectivity as it provides a platform for Greater Manchester to embrace emerging technological and societal changes and if the challenge is to be met to provide pervasive, affordable, resilient digital connectivity the challenge is early roll out of 5G especially in areas where mobile data use is congested such as the Regional Centre.

The proposed replacement tower accords with NPPF and Policy CF/4 of the Rochdale UDP because the re-designed equipment will not be overly prominent within the area, will expand the network, ensure high quality communications infrastructure is maintained whilst minimising the number of radio base stations in the area.

Lack of Coverage – Material Consideration

Since the previous refusal (LPA ref: 22/01192/FUL), there has been significant increases in support for improved digital connectivity. A letter dated 29 November

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2024 from Sir Chris Bryant MP to Council Leaders and Council Chief Executives across the UK in support of digital infrastructure deployment.

The letter confirms the importance of fast and reliable connectivity and the Government's commitment to supporting the delivery of next-generation connectivity across the UK by driving towards nationwide 5G coverage by 2030. The letter requests help from Councils across the UK to achieve these goals by prioritising digital infrastructure and focussing on a number of areas that remain a challenge to telecoms investment.

There is a specific ask in the MP's letter that Councils **'support the deployment of communications infrastructure wherever possible'** and this is an important point that should be added into the weight of the application.

In accordance with the NPPF, the proposed installation is significant to enable continuous coverage of the telecommunication network, ensuring that this area of Top of Hebers continues to get the mobile coverage it needs for VMO2 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 VMO2 and Vodafone network which includes GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile, Sky Mobile on the VMO2 network and VOXI, Asda Mobile, Lebara Mobile and Talkmobile on the Vodafone network. So the proposal will not only provide a service for two operators but those who buy network space off them, which is at least 3 with VMO2 and 4 with Vodafone. This will provide a choice for those customers who consider the level of coverage in their area when selecting which operator they agree future contracts with.

The current proposals will facilitate the development of an advanced broadband telecommunications infrastructure in line with National Government guidance contained within the NPPF which supports infrastructure especially where growth takes place. By providing the latest 4G technology and new 5G service provision the proposals will support the aspirations of Central Government for everyone to have access to the superfast highway network wherever they are and that the majority of the population have access to a 5G service by 2030. This is also in line with the ambitions of the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy which recognises that the future vitality of cities is increasingly based on their ability to use digital networks in intelligent, strategic ways.

The proposed upgrade to the existing radio base station will also fully comply with the NPPF and the Rochdale Core Strategy, as this north area of Rochdale will play a major role in the economic growth of the region. They will continue to develop a diverse economy with accessible employment and deliver significant increases in the number of businesses and jobs, which also includes enhancing digital infrastructure. There is an identified need for this site to ensure that coverage is maintained, and in

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order to provide the latest 5G technology can be brought to this area of south Bagslate Moor, ensuring there is sufficient capacity in the network to prevent buffering as greater demands on the network lead to additional pressure on capacity. If there is insufficient capacity then even if coverage is available customers would increasingly be unable to utilise their handheld devices for the manner in which they have become accustomed. Ensuring that the 2G, 3G and 4G coverage is sufficiently enhanced and providing new 5G coverage to the area is fully in line with the requirements of NPPF which recognises the importance of providing 21st Century Infrastructure to support an increasing population.

The proposed upgrade to the existing radio base station is in full conformity with the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy. It acknowledges that the digital infrastructure is required to increase investment to create the right conditions for growth. As such, the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy fully supports the extension of good quality digital connectivity to all parts of the region. The proposed radio base station, providing 5G into the network in this area of the city, will help meet the opportunities set out in the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy as the global economy shifts, so do the opportunities in Manchester, including digital adoption and connectivity.

Trials have already begun across the UK to demonstrate the potential of 5G and how it can improve and drive productivity and efficiency. In June 2019, West Midlands 5G partnered with BT and University Hospitals Birmingham to trial the UK's first 5G Connected Ambulance. Real-Time communications 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 ultrasound scan on a patient in an ambulance over a public 5G network. These trials show how digital connectivity and technology can reduce patient waiting times and save lives (Source: WM5G).

Without this radio base station, the operator's customers would 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 aspires to everyone having access to the superfast highway network wherever they are, and that the majority of the population have access to a 5G service by 2030.

New 5G coverage in this part of the city will also fully comply with the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework by helping to provide pervasive, affordable, resilient digital connectivity. The proposals will also help Greater Manchester to be a

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smart and digitally ready city-region, where resilient fixed connectivity supported by 5G service provision is required.

In accordance with the NPPF the proposed installation will help improve the area's economic prosperity, strengthen the urban economy's by supporting local businesses to start, grow, adapt and diversify. It will support a better environment for today and tomorrow by reducing the need to travel and in turn minimise carbon emissions. This is in accordance with the Strategic Objectives of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

The radio base station will support the delivery of healthcare provision and accessibility by enabling people greater access to online services, NHS appointment reminders, reminders to take medicines, make appointments etc. As well as assisting hospital outpatient appointments and emergency consultations carried out remotely via video link, connected ambulances, live streaming of CCTV footage etc.

By ensuring the 2G, 3G and 4G service provision to the surrounding area is maintained, and providing new 5G coverage into the operator's networks, this would fully support the vision of Central Government that people will be able to access the 'information highway' wherever they are. It also supports the vision of the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy which recognises improved digital connectivity as a way to maximise opportunities for growth and investment in the region.

The way 5G works, it is closely connected with the Smart City agenda and will enable centralized control of lots of different street infrastructure owned or managed by councils, such as street lights, water meters and bus stops. Manchester is fully committed to being a smart city and being a world-leading digital city region, as highlighted in the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy, Infrastructure Framework and Local Industrial Strategy. As such it needs the 21st century infrastructure to enable this objective to become a reality. An upgraded installation in this location enabling 5G service provision to the Rochdale area will ensure that this aspiration is fully met.

In line with the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework which fully supports the development of 5G, the proposals will provide world-class connections and access to opportunity for all in this cell area, as well as providing world-class digital infrastructure which provides the platform for Greater Manchester to embrace emerging technologies and societal changes. As noted in the Infrastructure Framework 5G infrastructure is fundamental to enable digital technologies to function. The proposals will ensure that any VMO2 and Vodafone customer in this cell area will be able to access resilient, seamless connectivity at a speed they need anywhere at any time. Without the more basic technology solutions such as 5G, the Framework acknowledges that smart-region solutions and value-added outcomes will struggle to be brought to fruition.

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

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, such as higher GDP and increased employment.

The Government fully supports high quality communications infrastructure, even more so with the advent of 5G. The NPPF continues to strongly support telecommunications connectivity and states at paragraph 119 that local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks. It acknowledges that advanced, high quality and reliable communications 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.

Without this upgrade to the existing radio base station the operator's customers would experience increasing numbers of dropped calls and buffering unable to access the internet on their handheld devices. 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 is contrary to the UDP policy Policy CF6 which seeks to improve digital infrastructure delivery to businesses and residents. It would also be contrary to the aspirations of Central Government which aspires to everyone having access to the superfast highway network wherever they are.

Access to the internet in whatever medium now impacts every facet of our lives but only benefits those who can access and use it. The benefits of internet connectivity are key for both residents and businesses alike and a radio base station in this location providing the latest 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G technologies will support the Central and Local Government objectives to improve connectivity infrastructure to speed up economic and business growth.

The proposed installation in this location would fully meet the latest operators' coverage and capacity requirements for 3G, 4G and new 5G provision. This would be wholly in line with the Government's latest aspirations to strongly support advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure, essential for

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economic growth and social well-being, where the NPPF notes that decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks.

As part of the operators 4G licence obligations, many customers will benefit significantly from a vastly improved service provision in this locality. They will be able to gain access to the very latest technologies and connectivity, to high-speed data services. Digital technology has catalysed the interconnection of the global economy, with the internet enabling the free exchange of goods and services, providing consumers with greater choice and businesses with access to skills, resources and customers. Ensuring that adequate 2G, 3G and 4G coverage is provided to the area, as well as introducing new 5G service provision, will help meet the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy's ambition to become more digitally connected.

The Code of Practice acknowledges that upgrading and improving mobile networks will not be possible without the necessary infrastructure on which we rely. With increasing consumer demand and the Government's aspirations for high quality communications infrastructure it is ever more important to improve connectivity and capacity.

The Online Nation 2021 Report highlights the importance of smart phones and thus in turn connectivity. In September 2020, UK Internet users spent nearly 4 times as much time on smartphones than they did on computers. The report found that most of the time people spend on the internet is via apps on mobile devices. Social media serves as a means of entertainment and education for many, and as an important method of marketing for businesses. The report found that 91% of households used smartphones to access the internet in 2021, compared to 65% who used tablets and 47% who accessed the internet using computers. The Report notes that the smartphone is the most-used device for accessing the internet for all age groups apart from those aged 65 +.

It is therefore imperative that the operator continues to invest in ensuring that the latest technologies are available on its network, so that customers are able to continue to use their handheld 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 Rochdale UDP and Core Strategy, the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy and the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework. 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

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groceries, manage finances, apply for jobs/university, and carry out school projects, send emails, download applications, send and receive instant messages, participate in social media, streaming and downloading data to name just a few of the benefits of being able to use an internet enabled handheld device. It also allows people to work from home or on the move without needing to return to the office. Residents and businesses will enjoy better accessibility, assisting home-base working by improving the electronic means of communication and the roll-out of high-speed broadband helping to promote live-work development. This reduces travel time, carbon emissions and increases the speed in which information is processed/shared. The proposals therefore fully comply with NPPF and the policies within the Rochdale UDP and Core Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint, Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and Greater Manchester Local Infrastructure Framework, to minimise the effects of climate change reducing the need to travel and therefore the carbon footprint.

In such instances, as described above, the NPPF support development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Enhancing the 2G, 3G and 4G coverage and capacity in this area and providing new 5G services will fully meet this national and local policy objective. Continuing to transform the digital connectivity of the area to drive economic growth and innovation, working to meet national targets of full roll-out of 5G technology and that all populated areas are connected to the 5G network by 2030, will ensure economic growth and social well-being.

Mobile connectivity is essential to the future success of the economy. The combined value of 4G and 5G mobile connectivity is estimated to add £18.5bn to the economy by 2026 (Councils and 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. Innovations such as artificial intelligence and connected cars will change how we work, spend our leisure time and run our public services. This is in full accordance with the Rochdale UDP and Core Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Strategy, Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint, Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and Greater Manchester Local Infrastructure Framework, all of which aspire to improve connectivity and access to enhanced 4G/new 5G services across the city region.

Providing the latest digital infrastructure to enable improvements in digital technology empowers and enables residents to have the highest quality of life, supports the creation of high-quality jobs and achieves the maximum productivity levels. It will help this area of south Bagslate Moor comply with the aims of objectives of the relevant Rochdale UDP and Core Strategy policies and objectives outlined above.

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In such instances, as described above, the NPPF support development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Enhancing the 2G, 4G and 5G coverage and capacity in this area will fully meet this national and local policy objective. Continuing to transform the digital connectivity of the area to drive economic growth and innovation, working to meet national targets of full roll-out of 5G technology and that all populated areas are connected to the 5G network by 2030, will ensure economic growth and social well-being.

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The Cornerstone Local Authority Engagement Brochure September 2020 further emphasises the benefits of high-quality mobile connectivity. "Access to a reliable mobile network has become a necessity for many of us. Some of the key benefits it provides:

- Connecting with family, friends, and colleagues at any time around the world.
- Giving the ability to manage our personal information 24/7.
- Keeping us always entertained and informed with the latest news.
- Creating more productive and cost efficiencies for businesses.

The economic benefit:

- 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 is 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 will also facilitate learning on the job procedures, thanks to

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technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) goggles, which, for example, can give the likes of engineers real-time instructions on how to fix a machine on a production line.

The social benefit:

- Mobile communications can help people to stay in touch wherever and whenever, 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 keep people 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 balance.

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

The health benefits:

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- Support the delivery of healthcare provision and accessibility by enabling people greater access to online services, NHS appointment reminders, reminders to take medicines, make appointments etc.
- Patients across the country are now becoming accustomed to using remote healthcare services such as NHS 111, virtual GP appointments, and ordering 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 and keeping medical records secure and private. For instance, trials have shown that connecting ambulance crews to expert resources using 5G allows paramedics to work with doctors and conduct specialist procedures in real time whilst on the road.

The Education benefits:

- Facilitates access to educational establishment databases or booking systems for 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, and for parent/student/teacher interactions.
- The relationship between 5G and education is evolving at a massive rate with educators exploring the relevance of Virtual Reality (VR) technologies for education and training. Crucially, VR can support remote learning, allowing students a presence in the classroom even when working elsewhere.

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

Paragraph 39 of the revised NPPF states that:

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

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Providing enhanced 2G, 4G and 5G coverage and capacity service provision in this area will fully meet paragraph 38 of the NPPF, to develop the best-in-class digital infrastructure to underpin the efficient functioning and growth of the regional economy and identify opportunities to improve and accelerate the roll out of fibre, 4G and 5G technologies to accelerate business opportunities and growth to gain regional competitive advantage.

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

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

'By reducing red tape and barriers to investment, the Government will support the market to deliver the internationally competitive fixed and mobile digital communications infrastructure the UK's businesses need to thrive and grow, and which will enable the UK to remain at the forefront of the digital economy. The Government is working with business so that the market can play the lead role in delivering against the ambitions set out in the Digital Communications Infrastructure Strategy, published March, of near universal 4G and ultrafast broadband coverage.'

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

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

This will allow everyone in the country to benefit from the economic advantages of widespread mobile coverage. As well as improved mobile signal, 5G networks are also crucial to drive productivity and growth across the sectors that local areas are focusing on through their emerging Local Industrial Strategies. Enabling and planning for 5G implementation is central to achieving the Government's objective to deliver property at the local level and enable all places to share in the proceeds of growth.

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The Government is determined to ensure the UK receives the coverage and connectivity it needs. To this end, the Government wants to be a world leader in 5G, the next generation of wireless connectivity, and for communities to benefit from the investments in the new technology. The proposed installation will fully support these national aspirations.

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 usage, 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 council's and businesses deliver services more efficiently including:
 - Transport and logistics: connected parcels and fleet tracking.
 - Health and social care.
 - Environmental monitoring: sensors monitoring air quality and water pollution in real-time.
 - Smart agriculture and smart animal farming, smart retailing.
 - Connected and autonomous cars: allowing cars to communicate with each other, other road users and even the road infrastructure.

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

'A lack of digital connectivity has a detrimental effect on business operations, productivity and output and hence competitiveness in the global marketplace. Securing digital connectivity is thus critical to the UK's long-term prosperity. A key

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challenge for the digital sector is a persistent digital divide between those who have access to the latest technologies and those who do not, with resulting social and economic exclusion, particularly as dependence on e-services and digital communications increases.'

The Assessment goes on to note that 'Universal digital connectivity would serve as an equaliser of economic opportunity in that it enables participation in a modern digital economy'. Therefore, this Needs Assessment further explains the consequences of a lack of coverage and the effects this has on social and economic prosperity. This clearly highlights the importance of maintaining and enhancing high quality 2G, 4G and 5G coverage and capacity in Regent Street and Savile Row area, where the social and economic benefits will outweigh the environmental considerations in line with Policy SI6 of the London Plan and Policy 19 of the City of Westminster's City Plan.

The Government's continued strong support for connectivity is further evidenced by the DCMS who launched their UK wide Digital Connectivity Portal on 20 December 2018. The Digital connectivity portal provides guidance for local authorities and network providers on improving connectivity in local areas. The Government wants everyone in the UK to benefit from world-class connectivity no matter where they live, work or travel. The Future Telecommunications Infrastructure Review outlines a package of measures to create the right market and policy conditions to deliver world-class connectivity for citizens and businesses. As a result, the pressure to install a new site in this area to provide enhanced 2G, 4G and new 5G service for VMO2 and Vodafone is significant.

On the 23 September 2020, the former Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman MP spoke about the ongoing work by the Government and telecoms industry to boost the UK's world class digital connectivity in his keynote speech at Connected Britain 2020³:

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

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

³ 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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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 connection is as 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 to world-class, next generation gigabit connectivity that is secure and resilient enough to deal with all 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 be one of the earliest adopters of 5G coverage, with the majority of the population able to access 5G by 2027.

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

.... Turning to 5G, while the commercial rollout of 5G continues at pace, we're pushing ahead 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 testbeds across the UK. Between them, those testbeds have trialled almost 70 different 5G technologies, products and applications. And more importantly than ever, we are investing in a range of sectors to foster, build and grow 5G cross wider industry...

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

In a more recent letter published by the former Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman MP on the 24 May 2021 he spoke further about the Government's Commitment to extending mobile coverage:

'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 mobile connectivity...

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...The Government is committed to extending mobile network coverage across the UK and 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 National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") for England states that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology, such as 5G...

...In relation to electronic communications development, it also states that local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only and they should not seek to prevent competition between different operators or question the need for an electronic communications system. As set out in planning practice guidance, it is in the public interest for local planning authorities to have effective delegation arrangements in place to ensure that decisions on planning applications that raise no significant planning issues are made quickly and that resources are appropriately concentrated on the applications of greatest significance to the local area'.

This Keynote Speech by Matt Warman MP highlights the importance that Government places on 5G and 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 Report published '*Upwardly Mobile: How the UK can gain the full benefits of the 5G revolution*'⁴. The report identifies what the 5G opportunities are and what the Government needs to do so we can all 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 Nick King argue that Government's 'levelling up' agenda and the UK's recovery from the COVID-19 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 retain and attract businesses and talent as well as by reducing regional inequalities.

⁴ <https://www.cps.org.uk/research/upwardly-mobile>

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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 the ground 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 produce GDP gains of £41.7 billion by 2027. It highlights that the difference between the UK being a leader and a laggard in 5G adoption could be as much as £173 billion in incremental GDP over the coming 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 upgrades 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 capacity, reliability and speed – vastly improving business productivity and removing barriers imposed by poor 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 vital role in reducing regional inequalities. Providing a supportive environment for digital infrastructure is one of the few things the Government can do those costs little, boosts growth and helps level up the UK.... the key is speed. **The faster a network is built, the bigger the regional gains** (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 capacity.

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 passive 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 bigger downstream economic impact. It acknowledges that productivity gains to business, equality gains for regions

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and economic gains for the country are only as achievable as the networks they can access.

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 adequately addressed in Local Plans and that new developments are assessed on how they might impact, or could support, local connectivity.

In the recent Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill⁵, which set out “12 bold, national missions” which will be given legal status, Mission 4 is:

“By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for most of the population”.

It highlights the important benefits that high quality, reliable connectivity can provide, particularly in rural areas. It states:

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

The proposed installation in this location will allow the operator to provide high quality enhanced 2G, 4G and 5G coverage and capacity service provision supporting the Government's aim of 'focusing on ensuring that everyone is connected to the information superhighway'. This fully meets the aspirations of the NPPF, Greater Manchester Digital Strategy, the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework, and the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy which fully supports Greater Manchester's position as a leading European digital city-region and the development of 5G networks.

The proposed installation in this location will ensure that the expansion of the electronic communications network is facilitated, and that high quality communications infrastructure is provided to the immediate area. This is in full accordance with the operator's 5G license obligations and the Council's aims and aspirations to expand and improve telecommunications mobile coverage as

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

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required and to have the latest high quality 5G infrastructure, promoting and growing the digital sector and increasing digital inclusion.

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

Education:

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

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

Health:

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

5G will prove critical in providing the infrastructure required to deliver remote health services over the next decade. By design, 5G's ability to deliver real-time information (low latency), ultra-fast speeds (critical for high definition images and video), increased capacity and heightened security are going to be fundamental in scaling the patient benefits of remote healthcare and keeping medical records secure and private. For instance, trials have shown that connecting ambulance crews to expert resources using 5G allows paramedics to work with doctors and conduct specialist procedures in real time whilst on the road.

Summary

This is an upgrade to an existing established radio base station in this location. It is not possible to utilise the existing monopole which is significantly dated and provide the latest 5G communication technologies. The design of the existing monopole is not capable of supporting the new 5G technologies for both operators. Therefore, a replacement lattice tower is needed to provide this operator with the latest 2G, 3G 4G and 5G technologies. The new monopole will continue to enable VMO2 and Vodafone to utilise the same site for 2G, 3G and 4G service provision and provide new 5G coverage.

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This is an existing site that has already been considered acceptable within the area. The proposed top antenna height at 20m is essential in order for the antennas to clear the surrounding landscape and trees and ensure the antennas are able to reach the target coverage area, to maintain and provide new high quality 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G service provision to this area in and around this area of Rochdale. This will fully meet the national Governments aim of '*ensuring that everyone is connected to the information superhighway*' and the national policies set out in the NPPF. If the height of the column were to be reduced then the antennas would not be able to operate effectively, leading to a degraded service for the operator's customers especially for the higher frequency technologies including the latest 4G technology and new 5G service provision which have lower antenna propagation.

The design has been amended from the previous refusal (LPA ref: 22/01192/FUL). The antenna headframe has been removed to make the column all one width with the antennas situated on the legs. The height of the mast can not be reduced as evidenced without impacting the coverage in this area.

Site selection was progressed in accordance with the applicants licence obligations, advice in the NPPF and the Code of Best Practice and represents the least environmentally intrusive, technically suitable, available option.

The social and economic benefits of providing reliable and high quality mobile broadband connections including 5G support growth in productivity, efficiency and labour force participation across the whole economy. This is fully supported by the NPPF. 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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Signed:		Date:	06/02/2025

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Position: Planning Lead (on behalf of Cornerstone)

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