

SITE SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

1. Site Details

Site Name:	Dunishbooth Stables	Site Address:	DUNISHBOOTH STABLES, LAND TO THE EAST OF KNACKS LANE, ROCHDALE, OL12 6BJ
NGR:	E: 387688 N: 416275		
Site Ref Number:	JET 336	Site Type: Macro	Lattice Tower

2. Pre-Application Check List

Site Selection

Was an LPA mast register used to check for suitable sites by the operator or the LPA?	Yes	
If no explain why:	N/A	
Was the industry site database checked for suitable sites by the operator:	Yes	
If no explain why:	N/A	

Pre-application consultation with LPA

Written offer of pre-application consultation:	No
Was there pre-application contact:	No
Date of pre-application contact:	N/A
Name of contact:	N/A
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised:	N/A

Ten Commitments Consultation

Rating of Site under Traffic Light Model:	Green			
Consultees:-	N/A			

Summary of outcome/Main issues raised:	N/A
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School/College

Location of site in relation to school/college: There are none in the immediate vicinity
Outline of consultation carried out with school/college: N/A
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised: N/A

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

Will the structure be within 3km of an aerodrome or airfield?		No
Has the Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/Aerodrome Operator been notified?		No
Details of response: The proposal is significantly further than 3km away from an aerodrome or airfield.		

Developer's Notice

Copy of Developer's Notice enclosed?	Yes	
Date served:	13th August 2026	

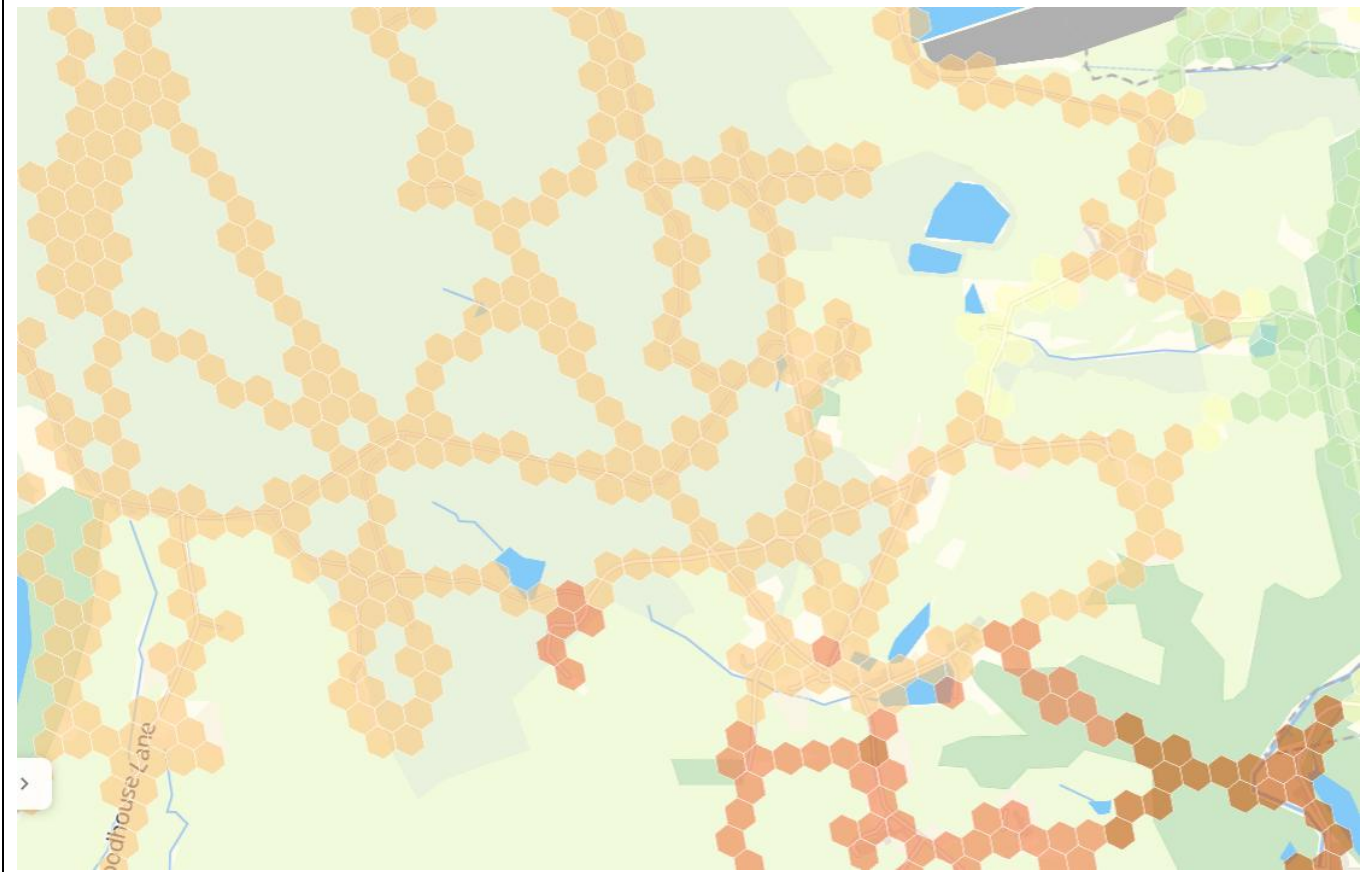
3. Proposed Development

The proposed site: This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Jet Infrastructure in support of a proposed telecommunications installation required to address network coverage within the Dunishbooth Stables area of Rochdale.
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The proposal will deliver new and improved service for VMO2 customers and forms part of a targeted network improvement programme aimed at enhancing existing 4G service and introducing 5GSA capability to meet rising consumer demand, improve coverage and deliver increased network capacity, required to resolve a significant local service deficiency.

Currently, VM02 customers have limited coverage and capacity in this area. Network 'capacity' is an increasing challenge across the country as many areas are experiencing exponential growth in demand for data services to facilitate data hungry applications and devices. While 'coverage' may be present, the network has insufficient 'capacity' to handle the volume of user traffic and so calls are dropped and data based applications continuously buffer without being usable.

As can be seen from the below Crowdsense Data Graphic there is particularly poor coverage to the south of the selected site as highlighted in red, however all roads in the wider locale have only poor-to-fair service and highlighted in orange and yellow. The plotted data demonstrates predominantly poor-to-fair service across the locality, with particularly poor coverage evident within parts of the target area.





The existing VMO2 installation serving the area is currently located upon an electricity pylon within the locality. The existing installation forms an established part of VMO2's network and presently provides mobile connectivity to the surrounding area. However, continued occupation and upgrade of the existing pylon location is no longer a practical or operationally sustainable option.

Whilst electricity pylons can, in principle, provide an opportunity for the siting of telecommunications equipment, their primary function as critical electricity infrastructure gives rise to significant health and safety, access and operational constraints. Access to telecommunications equipment installed upon such structures is necessarily controlled by the pylon operator and is subject to stringent safety and operational procedures. This can restrict the ability of the mobile network operator to obtain the reliable access required to install, maintain, upgrade and, importantly, undertake emergency repair of its equipment. These constraints become particularly significant as mobile networks are upgraded and operators seek to ensure that infrastructure remains resilient and capable of being maintained promptly when faults arise.

The existing pylon location has therefore been considered for continued use and upgrade but is not capable of providing a practical and operationally robust long-term solution for the required network provision. Consequently, VMO2 must relocate its equipment from the existing pylon and secure a replacement installation within the locality.

Importantly, the requirement for the proposed development does not therefore arise from an arbitrary decision to introduce telecommunications infrastructure into this area. Mobile telecommunications infrastructure is already established locally through the existing pylon-based installation, and the proposal is required to replace that existing network site with infrastructure capable of providing a reliable and maintainable long-term solution.

Any replacement site must remain within the general locality of the existing installation in order to perform the required function within VMO2's established cell network. This necessarily limits the geographical flexibility available when identifying a replacement location and requires the operator

to balance radio-planning requirements with land availability, access, power, buildability and planning and environmental considerations. A detailed search for a suitable replacement location has therefore been undertaken, as discussed later within this Statement.

The proposed replacement installation will enable VMO2 to provide the modern mobile connectivity required within the area, including the most up-to-date 5G standalone service expected by customers and supported by Government policy and the operator's regulatory obligations. The requirement is therefore not simply to identify an alternative location, but to identify a technically suitable, available and deliverable replacement capable of maintaining and improving network service while minimising environmental and visual effects as far as reasonably practicable.

Site Location

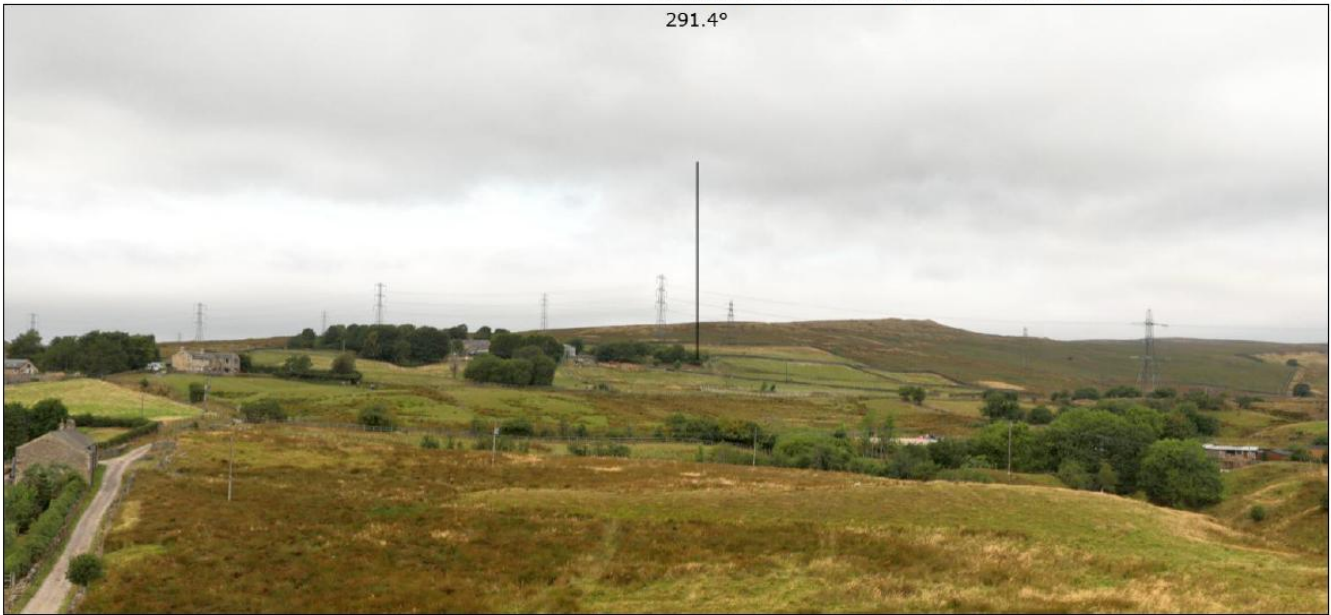
The proposed site is located within land at Dunishbooth Stables, within a predominantly rural area characterised by open agricultural land, grazing fields, scattered farmsteads and agricultural buildings, reservoirs, field boundaries and an established network of tracks. The surrounding landscape is undulating and development is generally dispersed, reflecting the established rural character of the locality.

The site lies within the Green Belt and particular care has therefore been taken in identifying a location and design which minimise effects upon the landscape and visual amenity as far as reasonably practicable. The proposal is positioned within an established agricultural setting, where variations in landform, field boundaries, vegetation and scattered rural development assist in breaking and filtering views across the wider landscape.

Importantly, however, the landscape within which the proposal would be experienced is already significantly influenced by substantial electricity transmission infrastructure. As demonstrated within the accompanying photographic and panoramic survey material, the immediate and wider landscape is already materially influenced by substantial vertical infrastructure. A number of high-voltage electricity pylons and associated overhead transmission lines cross the surrounding landscape and form conspicuous and repeated vertical features within views across the locality. Wind turbines are also visible within longer-distance views, further demonstrating that substantial vertical infrastructure forms an established component of the wider visual baseline.

*Note:- Line in Image is Centre Line of Image – NOT an indication of proposal location

**Images taken at height from near the proposal location



(Above) Panoramic view from near the proposal location demonstrating the established context of electricity transmission infrastructure within the surrounding landscape.

The panoramic imagery taken from within/near the proposal field provides particularly clear evidence of this context, demonstrating that the proposed installation would not be experienced as an isolated vertical structure within an otherwise infrastructure-free landscape. Rather, it would be viewed within a landscape already characterised by repeated and substantially larger vertical infrastructure.

Depending upon the direction of view, the proposed installation would be experienced against the backdrop of, alongside, or beyond existing electricity pylons and overhead transmission infrastructure. In other views, existing pylons occupy the foreground between the receptor and the proposed site. Consequently, the proposed installation would be read within an established infrastructure context, with the considerably larger electricity pylons remaining the dominant vertical features within the wider landscape.

This existing context has been an important consideration in both the siting and design of the proposed development. The proposed use of a lattice tower provides a clear visual relationship with the electricity pylons which already characterise views across the area. Its open lattice construction provides a degree of visual permeability and reduces the perception of mass when viewed across the open landscape. The proposed structure would therefore not introduce an entirely unrelated vertical form, but would instead assimilate more readily with the established pattern and character of utility infrastructure evident throughout the accompanying Panoramic Survey material.

The Panoramic Survey material also demonstrates the influence of the undulating landform, existing vegetation, field boundaries and scattered rural development upon views towards the site. These features variously interrupt, filter and provide context to views of the proposed location. Whilst it is acknowledged that the upper sections of a 25m structure will remain visible from certain surrounding viewpoints, visibility in itself does not equate to unacceptable visual harm. Rather, the relevant consideration is the degree of additional visual effect introduced into the existing landscape, and in this instance the proposal would be experienced in the context of established and substantially larger vertical infrastructure.

The siting also maintains separation from the more concentrated areas of residential development within the wider locality. As illustrated within the Panoramic Survey material, the immediate surroundings remain predominantly rural and agricultural in character, avoiding the closer and more direct residential relationships which would arise from locating the replacement installation within the more developed areas surrounding the search area. This assists in reducing potential effects upon residential amenity whilst retaining the installation within the area required to fulfil its network function.

The location of the proposal must also be considered in the context of the existing VMO2 installation which it is required to replace. VMO2 telecommunications infrastructure is already established within this landscape through equipment installed upon an electricity pylon. As discussed previously within this Statement, continued occupation and upgrade of that pylon does not represent a practical and operationally sustainable long-term solution, necessitating the identification of a replacement site within the locality.

The replacement installation cannot be positioned indiscriminately and must remain within a geographically constrained area capable of maintaining the required relationship with VMO2's existing network. A comprehensive search for alternative locations has therefore been undertaken, balancing radio-planning requirements with land availability, access, buildability and planning and environmental considerations. The selected site provides an opportunity to meet those operational requirements whilst positioning the replacement infrastructure within a landscape already materially influenced by substantial vertical electricity infrastructure.

As demonstrated by the accompanying Panoramic Survey material, the selected location and lattice design allow the development to be experienced in conjunction with an established network of substantially larger electricity pylons rather than as an isolated and incongruous vertical feature within the Green Belt landscape. The proposal therefore represents the best and least visually harmful viable option identified within the constrained search area, minimising additional effects upon landscape character, visual amenity, the Green Belt setting and surrounding receptors as far as reasonably practicable.

In terms of Green Belt openness, it is acknowledged that the introduction of a new 25m structure will result in a degree of spatial and visual change. However, that effect is materially moderated by the slender and visually permeable lattice form of the tower, its limited ground-level footprint and the absence of substantial built mass. Importantly, as demonstrated within the accompanying Panoramic Survey material, the proposal would be experienced within a landscape already strongly influenced by substantially larger electricity pylons and overhead transmission infrastructure. The development would therefore not fundamentally alter the open character of the surrounding landscape, and any effect upon Green Belt openness would be limited and localised.

This assessment is now directly supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026). Policy GB7 identifies telecommunications infrastructure required in a Green Belt location as development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that its impact upon openness is minimised and there would not be a significant conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The proposal satisfies these requirements. The replacement installation must remain within a geographically constrained locality in order to maintain the required relationship with VMO2's established network; its height and siting have been dictated by operational and radio-planning requirements; and a comprehensive alternative-site assessment has demonstrated that the selected location represents the least harmful viable solution available.

Impact upon openness has been minimised through the limited ground-level footprint, visually permeable lattice construction and careful siting of the installation within a landscape already materially influenced by substantially larger electricity transmission infrastructure. Given its limited footprint, slender and permeable form and infrastructure function, the proposal would not result in a form or scale of development that would materially undermine the Green Belt purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Accordingly, the proposal falls within the category of development identified by Policy GB7 and should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances.

Design

The height of the tower at 25 metres is the minimum height required to provide high-quality 4G and 5G coverage to the intended target area. If the mast height were any lower, it would not be able to provide sufficient coverage to the target coverage area due to radio propagation constraints and signals being blocked by surrounding 'clutter' in the form of the undulating landscape and trees.

Modern 5GSA service is provided via higher frequency radio spectrum. This is helpful in that it can deliver low latency, high speed and high capacity data transfer required to service modern applications, sensors and devices. However, this spectrum does not propagate as far nor

propagate through materials (like trees or buildings) as well as lower frequency spectrum utilised by previous generations. This directly impacts and advises the necessary height, design and siting to overcome that constraint.

The proposed 5G equipment utilises spectrum which, in combination with the surrounding topography and environmental clutter, places particular constraints upon radio propagation. The proposed 25m lattice tower has been selected to provide the structural capacity and height necessary to support the required antennas and achieve the necessary coverage footprint. The lattice design is considered particularly appropriate in this location. As demonstrated within the accompanying Panoramic Survey material, the surrounding landscape is already characterised by substantial lattice electricity pylons, which are considerably taller and larger than the proposed installation. The open lattice form therefore provides visual permeability whilst allowing the proposal to assimilate with this established infrastructure context rather than appearing as an isolated or unrelated vertical feature. The proposed height also maximises coverage from a single installation, reducing the potential requirement for additional telecommunications infrastructure elsewhere within the surrounding Green Belt.

The mast is proposed light grey (RAL 7035) colour – this was intentional to minimise contrast against the typically grey sky backdrop.

The antennas have been placed in a stacked format (5G antennas at the top and 4G antennas below) to negate bulk and width to keep the width as streamlined and slimline as possible. GRP shrouding of antennas cannot be used on modern deployments as it obstructs 5G frequency propagation and also acts as a sail, with the greater surface area catching the wind, putting significantly more structural pressure on the pole from wind loading. Below the antennas are remote radio units required to maintain high quality service – these must be adjacent to the antennas as increased feeder length causes signal degradation.

There are cabinets/equipment housing at the base – these share a foundation and are tightly packed beside each other – this is done to minimise impact by negating a sprawl of cabinets in the compound. The cabinets are of fir green (RAL 6009) colour as it helps assimilate with existing and this typically blends with landscaping in the area.

These efforts to minimise contrast at the various heights is advocated at Paras 28 & 40 of the Government Code of Practice...

*“Mitigating visual impacts: when possible, operators should look to use sympathetic designs, materials and colour (including camouflage where appropriate) to **minimise the contrast between infrastructure and the area.**”*

*“Colouring and camouflage: where appropriate, **masts should be coloured to match their backdrop to minimise contrast** in an urban or rural setting.”*

The use of this tower type, capable of supporting antennas at this height to maximise radio propagation and, subsequently the coverage footprint, reduces the need for additional masts in the surrounding area that may have been required if the antennas were at a lower height.

For all these reasons, the lattice tower design is the most suitable design in this particular circumstance.

Significantly, through careful siting, this is the best and least harmful technically viable location in the search area that can ensure such minimal levels of impact upon visual, residential amenity, and streetscene.

The improved digital connectivity also aligns with the Government’s Wireless infrastructure Strategy, Planning and Infrastructure Bill, 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy and the NPPF, all of which promote digital connectivity infrastructure given the significant social and economic benefits it delivers locally, regionally and nationally.

The principal aim of the development is to enhance VMO2’s mobile broadband network coverage and capacity. Businesses, commuters, workers, visitors and residents all depend upon high quality network service to facilitate use of data-hungry applications on their phones and other devices, especially in urban centers and transport hubs. These applications carry significant socio-economic benefit, all underpinned by the connectivity provided by infrastructure such as the proposal.

Enclose map showing the cell centre and adjoining cells:

VMO2’s ongoing network improvement programme in line with Government aspirations.

This area requires additional coverage and capacity to handle the volume of data traffic accessing the network via devices and phones.

Currently, VM02 customers have limited coverage and capacity in this area. Network ‘capacity’ is an increasing challenge across the country where there is exponential growth in demand for data services to facilitate data hungry applications and devices. While ‘coverage’ may be present, the network has insufficient ‘capacity’ to handle the volume of user traffic and so calls are dropped and data based applications continuously buffer without being usable.

Radio plots are available on request.

Type of Structure

Description:

The installation of a new 25m Swann Lattice Tower on new 7m x 7m foundation pad, supporting 6 no. antennas, 15 no. RRUs, and 2 no. dishes, equipment housing and other ancillary development.

The installation has been designed to support both 4G and 5G technologies. For full technical specifications and layout, please refer to the enclosed drawing package.

Overall Height:	+25m AGL
Height of existing building	N/A
Equipment Housing:	
Length:	See drawings
Width:	See drawings
Height:	See drawings
Materials	
Tower/mast etc – type of material and external colour:	Tower painted Light Grey (RAL 7035) with grey antennas.
Equipment housing – type of material and external colour:	Steel equipment cabinets painted fir green (RAL 6009).

Reasons for choice of design:

This is discussed at length in the previous section of this document – to negate unnecessary duplication this will not be repeated but please reference the detail discussed previously.

The National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) provides clear and specific support for the expansion and upgrading of electronic telecommunications networks.

Policy CO1 requires proposals to utilise existing masts, buildings and other structures already employed for telecommunications purposes, or to upgrade or replace existing infrastructure, unless there is no reasonable opportunity to do so, taking account of consumer needs, efficient network operation and reasonable capacity for future expansion.

The existing VMO2 pylon-based installation has been specifically considered but, for the operational, access, maintenance and resilience reasons explained previously within this Statement, does not provide a reasonable long-term opportunity for the required network upgrade. Other existing telecommunications installations, buildings, rooftops and structures within the defined search area have similarly been investigated and discounted where they cannot provide a technically suitable and deliverable solution.

Policy CO2 specifically requires proposals for new sites, including applications for prior approval, to demonstrate that the number of new sites has been kept to a minimum and that opportunities to utilise existing buildings, masts and other structures have been explored. The comprehensive alternative-site assessment contained within this Statement provides that evidence.

The proposal therefore directly responds to Policies CO1 and CO2 by providing a single replacement installation capable of maintaining and materially improving network service whilst avoiding the unnecessary proliferation of additional telecommunications infrastructure.

The latest 5G service is delivered via higher frequency radio. This higher frequency is fantastic in that it can deliver high speed data services required for modern applications, however, it has the negative in that higher frequency does not propagate as far as lower frequencies used in previous generations, nor do the radio waves propagate through 'clutter' as well meaning that signal is blocked easily. ICNIRP exclusion zone is also typically larger. This necessitates antennas to be hosted higher to ensure ICNIRP compliance, so the radio frequency can propagate as far as is possible to maximise coverage footprint and so that there is line of sight above 'clutter' that would block the signal propagation.

All in all it is felt that that this proposed design strikes the best balance in terms of technical necessity to overcome technical constraints and minimising visual impact by keeping the height to an operational minimum, clearing surrounding clutter to assist radio propagation (which negates the need for additional sites in the area to pick up the shortfall if the antennas are low, which would be contrary to NPPF policy in terms of keeping numbers to a minimum) while being structurally secure, providing height so antennas can be of the necessary height for ICNIRP compliance and by utilising a colour finish (Grey) for the tower and antennas so that they also blend with what is typically a grey sky backdrop which it will be typically seen against.

In summary, this proposal represents the most efficient, least visually intrusive solution for delivering critical 4G improvements and new 5G coverage. It reflects a carefully considered approach to site selection, design, and environmental integration, and responds appropriately to both national planning guidance and the Operator's legal obligations to provide robust, modern communications infrastructure.

The technical constraints that dictate and inform this siting and design are discussed at length throughout Government's 'Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England' Planning Guidance document.

4. Technical Information

ICNIRP Declaration attached ICNIRP 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 the site are taken into account.	Yes	
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5. Technical Justification

Reason(s) why site required

In the UK, mobile network operators (MNOs) such as EE, VodafoneThree and VMO2 operate under a regulatory framework primarily controlled by Ofcom on behalf of UK Government. Their obligations arise from two main legal mechanisms:

- Wireless Telegraphy Act spectrum licences (for use of radio frequencies).
- General Conditions of Entitlement under the Communications Act 2003 (for provision of electronic communications networks/services).

Through the Spectrum Licence Obligations (Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006) mobile operators require licences from Ofcom to use radio spectrum, which is essential for operating mobile networks.

Key obligations typically include the use of allocated spectrum that must be used within specific frequency bands, power limits, emission standards and interference controls.

These conditions ensure efficient spectrum use and prevent interference. These radio spectrums are governed by the laws of physics but one spectrum/frequency will have different principles to another. Each Network Operator is licenced to use different spectrum and this is why what may be suitable siting for one operator may not be suitable for another. This directly influences potential siting opportunities for masts.

Perhaps most significantly, these licences are issued with coverage and network performance obligations. This will include things like roll-out or coverage requirements, minimum population coverage or geographic coverage requirements for rural areas. Obligations linked to specific technologies or generations like 5G.

Operators must be provide data to Ofcom on network performance and demonstrate compliance with coverage and network performance milestones to demonstrate they have met their licence obligations.

Additionally, under the General Conditions of Entitlement (Communications Regulation) any operator providing public electronic communications networks or services must comply with Ofcom's General Conditions.

This means that, amongst other things, an Operator must enable and maintain network integrity and resilience, and ensure access to emergency services.

If an Operator does not comply with these requirements then Ofcom, on behalf of UK Government, can issue substantial fines, withdraw spectrum or even cancel an Operators licence.

This is relevant to the proposal because...

1. The spectrum allocated, and the physics associated, directly impacts the siting options for the Operators.
2. The Operators must find a means of providing this service locally through the siting of a mast. While Operators will obviously want to provide the best service they can to their Customers, it goes beyond this in there is an actual legal obligation to provide this area with the most up to date 5G service with sufficient coverage and capacity to deliver quality network performance.

The NPPF then requires that operators find the least impactful means of providing that service, minimising the impact while acknowledging the technical constraints. The proposal is permitted development (albeit ‘with prior approval’) so the principle of the development is established in law via Part 16 of the GPDO. This is an important distinction as under permitted development a solution must be found as consideration cannot be given to the principle, only that the proposal is the most suitable option in terms of siting and appearance.

Under the terms of its licence with UK Government (controlled via Ofcom on Governments behalf), Virgin Media O2 Limited (VM02) are required to meet strict service obligations, ensuring that the benefits of mobile connectivity are extended to all communities, including those currently underserved.

This installation is required to provide improved 4G coverage and brand new 5G coverage for VM02 surrounding Dunishbooth Stables, addressing existing gaps in service, additional capacity and improving overall network performance in the locality.

This area surrounding Dunishbooth Stable near Knacks Lane, Rochdale has limited VM02 5G coverage with poor network performance and, as alluded to previously, requires an additional site to deliver improved service and extra network capacity.

Mobile base stations operate by transmitting radio signals that connect mobile devices to the wider network, allowing users to make calls, send texts, stream content, and access data services. These base stations are linked together—via fibre or wireless links—to form an interconnected network. Each base station serves a defined area known as a cell, and these cells overlap with adjacent ones to create seamless coverage. The size and shape of each cell can vary depending on local conditions, such as topography, building density, and user demand.

As low-powered radio transmitters, base stations have a limited effective range and must be located within or close to the areas they are designed to serve. Proposing this installation too far from the intended coverage area will leave parts of the target service area without essential mobile services. For this reason, the proposed location has been carefully selected to ensure the required coverage objectives can be achieved efficiently and effectively.

6. Site Selection Process – alternative sites considered and not chosen

Discounted Options

In seeking to meet growing network demand in the Dunishbooth Stables area of Rochdale, the Operator's acquisition and survey agents have made every effort to identify a site that minimises any potential impact on the character of the area. However, in order to effectively deliver improved mobile services, it is essential that the communications site is located as close as possible to the area of customer demand.

In line with the sequential site selection process outlined in best practice guidance, the following criteria were followed when identifying a suitable location:

- a) *Mast and Site Sharing*
- b) *Use of Existing Buildings or Structures*
- c) *New Ground-Based Installation*

As required by the Operator's licence and consistent with national planning guidance, the first preference was to utilise existing telecommunications infrastructure where it represented the most environmentally sensitive solution. The Ofcom Site Finder register was consulted to identify potential mast-sharing opportunities.

As no other suitable existing telecommunications sites were identified that could accommodate the extent of equipment required for this proposal, a new installation is required. There are no existing buildings that can be used due to procedural issues. Other potential rooftops in the search area are of pitched design, which is not viable from a design and build perspective, and or do not have the height sufficient to propagate the required signal to target areas and maintain ICNIRP compliance.

The nearby urban environment presented further constraints. Underground services litter the areas underground that we cannot site on top of and or form pavements that are too narrow to leave sufficient space for safe pedestrian passing. Others were unsuitable for installations for visual amenity reasons.

The proposal negates these potential impacts and so is the best, technically viable, option in the area. With this it complies with planning policy and guidance in terms of minimising visual impact.

A detailed list of alternative sites considered is provided below, with reasons for their exclusion in favour of the proposed site.

This sequential assessment also provides the evidence expressly sought by NPPF Policy CO2 for a new telecommunications site. It demonstrates that opportunities to utilise existing masts, buildings and other structures have been explored and that the number of new telecommunications sites has been kept to the minimum necessary to deliver the required network function



Pindrop Key: **Green** = Selected Site **Red** = Discounted Option
Redline = Search Area

As stated previously, the existing site cannot be upgraded.

Site	Address	NGR	Reasons for discounting
D1 - Greenfield	Shawfield, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, England, OL12 8XN, United Kingdom	E: 387624 N: 416448	This location was investigated as a potential alternative replacement site and initial engagement was undertaken with the relevant landowner with a view to securing the necessary rights by consensual agreement. However, despite the site being explored through the acquisition process, the landowner ultimately did not proceed with a consensual deal.

			The location is therefore not reasonably available to VMO2 for the installation and continued operation of the required telecommunications equipment. As the replacement installation requires secure long-term land rights together with appropriate access for construction, maintenance and emergency works, a site which cannot be secured by agreement does not represent a deliverable alternative. This option has therefore had to be discounted.
D2 - Greenfield	Prickshaw Lane, Shawfield, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, England, OL12 8XN, United Kingdom	E: 387606 N: 416667	This location was investigated as a potential alternative replacement site and initial engagement was undertaken with the relevant landowner with a view to securing the necessary rights by consensual agreement. However, despite the site being explored through the acquisition process, the landowner ultimately did not proceed with a consensual deal. The location is therefore not reasonably available to VMO2 for the installation and continued operation of the required telecommunications equipment. As the replacement installation requires secure long-term land rights together with appropriate access for construction, maintenance and emergency works, a site which cannot be secured by agreement does not represent a deliverable alternative. This option has therefore had to be discounted.
D3 - Greenfield	Knacks Lane, Shawfield, Norden, Rochdale, Greater	E: 387097 N: 416610	This location was investigated as a potential alternative replacement site and initial engagement was undertaken with the relevant landowner with a view to securing

	Manchester, England, OL12 6BJ, United Kingdom		the necessary rights by consensual agreement. However, despite the site being explored through the acquisition process, the landowner ultimately did not proceed with a consensual deal. The location is therefore not reasonably available to VMO2 for the installation and continued operation of the required telecommunications equipment. As the replacement installation requires secure long-term land rights together with appropriate access for construction, maintenance and emergency works, a site which cannot be secured by agreement does not represent a deliverable alternative. This option has therefore had to be discounted.	
D4 – Greenfield	Prickshaw Lane, Shawfield, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, England, OL12 8XN, United Kingdom	E: 387661 N: 416843	This location was identified and investigated as a potential alternative replacement site. Repeated attempts were made to contact the relevant landowner to establish whether the necessary land and access rights could be secured for telecommunications purposes. However, no response was received despite these repeated approaches. In the absence of any engagement from the landowner, there is no reasonable basis upon which VMO2 can conclude that the site is available or that the rights required to construct, operate, access and maintain the installation could be secured within a reasonable timeframe. Given the requirement to replace the existing pylon-based installation with a practical and deliverable solution, this location cannot presently be regarded as a	

			reasonably available alternative and has therefore been discounted.
D5 - Greenfield	Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8UU, United Kingdom	E: 387886 N: 416871	This location was identified and investigated as a potential alternative replacement site. Repeated attempts were made to contact the relevant landowner to establish whether the necessary land and access rights could be secured for telecommunications purposes. However, no response was received despite these repeated approaches. In the absence of any engagement from the landowner, there is no reasonable basis upon which VMO2 can conclude that the site is available or that the rights required to construct, operate, access and maintain the installation could be secured within a reasonable timeframe. Given the requirement to replace the existing pylon-based installation with a practical and deliverable solution, this location cannot presently be regarded as a reasonably available alternative and has therefore been discounted.
D6 - Greenfield	Moss Lane, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8WB, United Kingdom	E: 387744 N: 417299	This location was identified and investigated as a potential alternative replacement site. Repeated attempts were made to contact the relevant landowner to establish whether the necessary land and access rights could be secured for telecommunications purposes. However, no response was received despite these repeated approaches. In the absence of any engagement from the landowner, there is no reasonable basis upon which VMO2 can conclude that the site is

			available or that the rights required to construct, operate, access and maintain the installation could be secured within a reasonable timeframe. Given the requirement to replace the existing pylon-based installation with a practical and deliverable solution, this location cannot presently be regarded as a reasonably available alternative and has therefore been discounted.
D7 - Greenfield	Highgate Lane, Whitworth, Broadley, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8SL, United Kingdom	E: 388568 N: 416470	This location was identified and investigated as a potential alternative replacement site. Repeated attempts were made to contact the relevant landowner to establish whether the necessary land and access rights could be secured for telecommunications purposes. However, no response was received despite these repeated approaches. In the absence of any engagement from the landowner, there is no reasonable basis upon which VMO2 can conclude that the site is available or that the rights required to construct, operate, access and maintain the installation could be secured within a reasonable timeframe. Given the requirement to replace the existing pylon-based installation with a practical and deliverable solution, this location cannot presently be regarded as a reasonably available alternative and has therefore been discounted.
D8 - Streetworks	Tonacliffe Road, Whitworth, Broadley, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire,	E: 388241 N: 416174	This location was considered as a potential alternative but would become a circa 20m installation at a materially lower elevation than the proposed site.

	England, OL12 8SF, United Kingdom		At this reduced elevation the location would be unable to satisfactorily achieve the required radio-planning objectives and replacement coverage footprint, meaning that it would not provide an effective replacement for the existing pylon-based installation. In addition, the site occupies a predominantly residential streetscene with residential properties and front-facing windows in close proximity. The available footway is narrow and already accommodates existing street infrastructure, while overhead lines immediately constrain the location and further complicate installation. A substantial telecommunications structure here would therefore appear prominent and constrained within the streetscene, with significantly closer residential relationships than the preferred site. For combined technical, residential amenity, streetscene and infrastructure reasons, this alternative has been discounted. The selected site avoids these constraints while providing the elevation and siting necessary to achieve the required network function.
D9 - Streetworks	Market Street, Fold Head, Whitworth, Broadley, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8TG, United Kingdom	E: 388142 N: 416418	This alternative is situated within a predominantly residential streetscene characterised by traditional terraced properties positioned immediately adjacent to the highway and footway. The location would place a substantial telecommunications installation in close proximity to residential properties with direct front-facing windows, resulting in considerably more immediate and

			sustained views than would arise at the proposed site. The available footway is also relatively narrow and already accommodates street furniture and other highway infrastructure, limiting the opportunity to accommodate a substantial installation without increasing visual clutter or adversely affecting the character of the street. Unlike the selected site, the location does not provide meaningful separation from concentrated residential development or the same opportunity to assimilate the installation within an established landscape of substantially larger vertical electricity infrastructure. The resulting relationship with residential receptors would therefore be materially more direct and sensitive than at the selected site. The location would consequently result in greater effects upon residential and visual amenity and the established streetscene and has therefore been discounted.	
D10 - Streetworks	Tonacliffe Road, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8SY, United Kingdom	E: 388370 N: 417253	This location lies within a predominantly residential street where the available footway is narrow and residential properties are situated in close proximity to the potential installation. A telecommunications structure of the scale required would introduce a substantial new vertical feature into a streetscene principally characterised by domestic development and conventional street furniture, resulting in direct and sustained views from nearby front-facing residential windows. Existing overhead lines also constrain the location and would complicate the siting and construction of the installation.	

			Furthermore, the constrained pavement would require additional intervention and reinstatement, with the potential for visible pavement scarring surrounding the proposed equipment and cabinets, further increasing streetscene effects. When compared with the preferred site, where the installation can be associated with established large-scale utility infrastructure and separated from concentrated residential development.	
D11 - Streetworks	Wallbank Drive, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8UN, United Kingdom	E: 387900 N: 417123	This alternative is located at a residential street corner within an area predominantly characterised by domestic development. Residential properties are positioned in close proximity to the location, including front-facing windows with direct and largely unobstructed views towards the potential installation. The corner position would also increase the visual exposure of the development from more than one direction, making a telecommunications structure of the required scale particularly apparent within both the immediate streetscene and views from surrounding dwellings. There is limited opportunity for meaningful screening or an established large-scale infrastructure backdrop capable of assimilating the proposal into its surroundings. This contrasts significantly with the preferred location, where separation from concentrated residential development and the presence of substantial existing electricity pylons provide a more appropriate visual context.	
		E: 388055		

D12 - Streetworks	Thorburn Drive, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8UJ, United Kingdom	N: 417370	This alternative is located at a residential street corner within an area predominantly characterised by domestic development. Residential properties are positioned in close proximity to the location, including front-facing windows with direct and largely unobstructed views towards the potential installation. The corner position would also increase the visual exposure of the development from more than one direction, making a telecommunications structure of the required scale particularly apparent within both the immediate streetscene and views from surrounding dwellings. There is limited opportunity for meaningful screening or an established large-scale infrastructure backdrop capable of assimilating the proposal into its surroundings. This contrasts significantly with the preferred location, where separation from concentrated residential development and the presence of substantial existing electricity pylons provide a more appropriate visual context.
D13 - Streetworks	Tonacliffe Primary School, Tonacliffe Road, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Rochdale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8SS, United Kingdom	E: 388282 N: 416923	This alternative is situated at a residential street corner where surrounding dwellings and their front-facing windows would have direct and close-range views towards the required telecommunications installation. The location would consequently introduce a substantial vertical structure into a sensitive domestic streetscene with limited opportunity for screening or assimilation. Of additional concern is the site's relationship with the nearby school, which further increases the sensitivity of the immediate surroundings and the number of

			receptors likely to experience the development at close range. The corner position would also expose the installation to views from several approaches, increasing its overall streetscene prominence. These relationships contrast materially with the preferred site, which is separated from concentrated residential development and benefits from an established landscape context containing substantial electricity pylons.	
D14 - Greenfield	Tonacliffe Way, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8SN, United Kingdom	E: 388508 N: 416817	This location lies towards the edge of a residential neighbourhood but remains within a predominantly residential setting and immediately adjoins an area of open space. Although its peripheral position initially offers some separation from the more densely developed parts of the neighbourhood, the location would introduce a substantial telecommunications structure at the transition between residential development and open land. The installation would consequently be particularly apparent in views across the adjoining open space, where the absence of a substantial built or infrastructure backdrop would cause it to appear as an isolated and incongruous vertical feature. It would also remain readily perceptible from nearby residential properties and surrounding streets. The preferred location provides a more appropriate relationship with existing large-scale vertical utility infrastructure, allowing the proposed lattice tower to assimilate more successfully into its setting.	

D15 - Streetworks	Tonacliffe Road, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8SY, United Kingdom	E: 388331 N: 417156	This alternative occupies a residential street corner within an area characterised predominantly by housing. The location would place the required telecommunications installation in close proximity to residential properties, with front-facing windows providing direct and sustained views towards the structure and associated equipment. Its position at the junction would increase visibility from several approaches and would make the installation particularly prominent within the surrounding streetscene. There is limited opportunity for screening or for the structure to be visually associated with existing infrastructure of a comparable scale, meaning that it would be experienced principally against the surrounding domestic environment. This would create a considerably more sensitive relationship than at the preferred site, where the proposed tower is removed from concentrated residential development and would be experienced within a landscape already characterised by substantial electricity pylons.
D16 - Streetworks	Southgate, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8UQ, United Kingdom	E: 388073 N: 417121	This location is positioned at a residential street corner and is surrounded predominantly by domestic development. A telecommunications installation of the scale necessary to satisfy the replacement requirement would be experienced at close range by surrounding residents, including from directly front-facing windows overlooking the potential site. The corner location would additionally increase its visual exposure by allowing

			views towards the structure from multiple streets and approaches, making it a conspicuous addition to an otherwise principally residential streetscene. There is little opportunity for the development to benefit from a substantial infrastructure backdrop or meaningful screening capable of reducing this relationship with neighbouring properties. In contrast, the preferred location offers significantly greater separation from concentrated residential receptors and allows the proposed lattice structure to be experienced in conjunction with existing large-scale electricity infrastructure.
D17 - Streetworks	Westgate, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8UW, United Kingdom	E: 388080 N: 417433	This alternative is located at a residential street corner where surrounding dwellings would have close and direct views towards any telecommunications installation. In particular, front-facing residential windows overlook the potential location, creating a sensitive and sustained visual relationship which would be difficult to mitigate given the scale and height of the infrastructure required. Its corner position would further increase prominence by exposing the structure to views along more than one street and placing it conspicuously within the established residential streetscene. The surrounding built form is predominantly domestic and provides no comparable large-scale vertical infrastructure with which the installation could readily assimilate. The preferred site offers a substantially less sensitive relationship with residential receptors and benefits from the presence of

			established electricity pylons which provide an appropriate infrastructure context. This option would consequently result in greater effects upon residential amenity and local visual character and has therefore been discounted.
D18 - Streetworks	Oakenshaw Avenue, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8SP, United Kingdom	E: 388195 N: 416807	This location also occupies a residential street corner surrounded predominantly by domestic development. The required telecommunications installation would be positioned in close proximity to residential properties and would be directly overlooked by front-facing windows, resulting in prominent and sustained views for nearby occupiers. The corner position would increase the number of public and residential viewpoints from which the installation would be experienced and would make a structure of the necessary scale particularly conspicuous within the established domestic streetscene. There is limited opportunity for effective screening or for the development to be visually associated with existing infrastructure of a comparable scale. By contrast, the preferred location provides considerably greater separation from concentrated residential development and enables the proposed lattice tower to be experienced alongside established large-scale electricity pylons. This option therefore represents a materially more sensitive location in residential amenity and visual terms and has been discounted.

D19 - Streetworks	Oakenshaw Avenue, Fold Head, Whitworth, Healey, Borough of Rossendale, Lancashire, England, OL12 8ST, United Kingdom	E: 388253 N: 416821	This location also occupies a residential street corner surrounded predominantly by domestic development. The required telecommunications installation would be positioned in close proximity to residential properties and would be directly overlooked by front-facing windows, resulting in prominent and sustained views for nearby occupiers. The corner position would increase the number of public and residential viewpoints from which the installation would be experienced and would make a structure of the necessary scale particularly conspicuous within the established domestic streetscene. There is limited opportunity for effective screening or for the development to be visually associated with existing infrastructure of a comparable scale. By contrast, the preferred location provides considerably greater separation from concentrated residential development and enables the proposed lattice tower to be experienced alongside established large-scale electricity pylons. This option therefore represents a materially more sensitive location in residential amenity and visual terms and has been discounted.
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If no alternative site options have been investigated, please explain why:

N/A

7. Additional Relevant Information

Environmental information:

This proposal is sited within the Rochdale Greenbelt.

Land use planning designations:

There are no other relevant designations.

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

From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that any alteration to the landscape (regardless of its function as telecommunications infrastructure) will inevitably be noticeable to nearby residents and frequent passers-by. However, visibility alone, or the siting and appearance of a development, does not inherently equate to significant or unacceptable harm.

When assessing the suitability of telecommunications development proposals, it is essential that decision-makers prioritise telecommunications-specific planning policy where such policy exists and balances the need and socio-economic benefits against perceived, or identified, harm.

In the absence of up-to-date or locally relevant guidance, the provisions of the NPPF must take precedence. It is also important to recognise that it would be unreasonable to expect specialised infrastructure, such as telecommunications equipment, to fully conform to general planning policy criteria that are not tailored to its unique requirements.

Legislation

The proposal constitutes permitted development with prior approval.

This means that the proposal is deemed acceptable in principle via Part 16 of the GPDO. As such, the principle of the development is not in question – just an assessment on the acceptability of the proposal in terms of siting and appearance.

The Local Development plan can be given limited weight in the determination of an application for prior approval – it is certainly not a determinable factor.

The development plan does not have the statutory primacy it has for full planning applications. Relevant development plan policies can be material considerations, but they do not bind the decision maker and cannot be determinative - this proposal is actually permitted development where the principle of the development is accepted in law (even in designations such as public open space or green belt).

Local Policy

The **Rochdale Core Strategy**, adopted in October 2016, remains the lead local planning document for the Borough and establishes the local policy framework against which development proposals are assessed.

Of particular relevance to the proposal is Policy G4 – Protecting Green Belt, which seeks to maintain the openness and purposes of the Green Belt and protect the Pennine rural fringe surrounding the urban areas of the Borough. The proposed development has therefore been carefully sited and designed to minimise its additional influence upon the openness and visual character of the surrounding landscape.

In this respect, the particular characteristics of the site are important. As demonstrated within the accompanying Panoramic Survey material, the landscape surrounding the proposal is already strongly influenced by substantial electricity transmission infrastructure, with a network of lattice pylons and overhead lines forming established and repeated vertical features across the locality. The proposed 25m lattice tower is considerably smaller in scale than these existing structures and, from surrounding viewpoints, would be experienced alongside, beyond or against the backdrop of this established infrastructure rather than as an isolated vertical feature within an otherwise infrastructure-free landscape.

The proposal also responds positively to the design and landscape objectives underlying Policies P2 and P3, through a siting and design approach which responds directly to the existing character of the locality and seeks to minimise visual effects. The lattice form provides visual permeability and an appropriate relationship with the established lattice electricity infrastructure, whilst the location maintains substantial separation from the more concentrated residential development within the wider search area.

The proposal therefore represents a considered response to its particular Green Belt and rural setting, balancing the operational requirement to replace an established pylon-based telecommunications installation with the need to minimise additional landscape and visual effects as far as reasonably practicable.

Places for Everyone

This proposal is of relevance to Policy JP-C2 – Digital Connectivity, which provides strategic support for high-quality digital infrastructure and the continued roll-out of the latest generations of mobile technology. The policy seeks to facilitate digital connectivity whilst ensuring that deployment responds appropriately to environmental and townscape considerations.

The proposal directly supports these strategic objectives. It is required to replace an existing operational VMO2 installation located upon electricity-pylon infrastructure, where continued occupation and upgrade is no longer considered an operationally sustainable solution. The

proposed development would therefore maintain and improve established mobile connectivity within this part of Greater Manchester rather than introduce a network requirement which does not presently exist.

The proposal has simultaneously been designed to respond to Policy JP-G1 – Landscape Character, which requires development to recognise and respond appropriately to the particular characteristics, sensitivities, views and perceptual qualities of the surrounding landscape. The accompanying Panoramic Survey material demonstrates that electricity pylons constitute substantial and repeated elements of the existing visual baseline.

The selection of a lattice tower and its positioning within this established infrastructure landscape therefore provide a site-specific response to the character of the locality, reducing visual contrast and ensuring that the proposed installation remains subordinate in scale to the existing transmission infrastructure.

The development consequently achieves an appropriate balance between the strategic objective of delivering modern digital connectivity and the requirement to minimise effects upon the particular landscape within which that infrastructure must be accommodated.

Regional Policy and Strategy – Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-35

World class Digital connectivity is a major strategic aim the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the GMCA have numerous strategic documents that add significant evidential weight to the material socio-economic benefits of mobile connectivity and the necessary infrastructure to provide it.

One of the 7 ‘Connected Workstreams’ of the ‘**Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-35**’ is Digitally Connected Places and People’.

This states:-

*“It’s **essential** that everyone in our city region can thrive in the digital age – a new industrial revolution powered by artificial intelligence.”*

The need for digital connectivity, provided by infrastructure like the proposal, is discussed consistently throughout this document as something that underpins all strategic aspirations of the city region.

Additionally, the ‘**Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint 2023-26**’ adds further weight and context....

*“Ensure we have **world class digital infrastructure that stimulates economic growth** and enables the development of our growth zones, across sectors and localities.”*

Extending the digital infrastructure such as the proposal is also noted as a ‘Key Strategic Enabler’:-

Key strategic enablers



A Building digital skills and literacy for life, education, work and business



C Extending our world class digital infrastructure, technology and data



B Strengthening our digital talent pipeline



D Harnessing academia, testbeds and research

Finally, the ‘**Greater Manchester Industrial Strategy, June 2019**’ adds additional support and context for the need for 5G enabling digital infrastructure as something that underpins the city regions wider economic aspirations. This aspiration is noted:-

*“A top five city-region for the digital economy in Europe, with full fibre broadband and **5G coverage**, and with internationally-significant media and cyber-security clusters.”*

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

*“Continue **transforming the digital connectivity of the city region to drive economic growth and innovation**, working with government to meet national targets of nationwide full fibre coverage by 2033 and **full roll-out of 5G technologies for most people by 2027.**”*

There is clearly extensive weight of support for infrastructure like the proposal. This proposal is part of a network that wholly underpins these wider strategic and economic aspirations of both Rochdale Council and Greater Manchester.

Without infrastructure like the proposal those aspirations cannot be met and it is significant that no specific area is deprived of this while the rest of the city region benefits, creating a digital divide that will impact the locality.

This is particularly relevant to the proposal given it will provide network capacity to the nearby commercial and residential areas. This situation, in the context of those strategic documents and regional aspirations, weigh heavily in favour of the proposal.

National Digital Strategy, Planning Policy and Guidance:-

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England

In March 2022 UK Government published their 'Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England' Planning Guidance document.

The document notes that...

*"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"*

This guidance document is clear that...

*"Digital connectivity is **vital to enable people to stay connected and businesses to grow. Fast, reliable digital connectivity can deliver economic, social and well-being benefits** for the whole of the UK.*

*As the demand for mobile data in the United Kingdom is increasing rapidly, it is important that **everyone has access to dependable and consistent mobile coverage** where they live, work and travel."*

The document clearly establishes the material socio-economic benefits of digital connectivity. However, from a really practical perspective, is also really useful in outlining the technical constraints associated with mobile infrastructure that dictate siting and design.

This application has gone into detail on the siting and design rationale of this proposal and this wholly aligns with the principles established within the Government guidance document. These technical constraints, and the solutions necessary to overcome them, are material considerations that should be given weight in favour of the proposal in any determination.

Paras 28 and 40 discuss how proposals should minimise impact through good design and utilise colours that minimise and reduce contrast – this is wholly the case here with the colouring of the mast – grey pole as it will be viewed against a streetscape and mostly grey skies and grey antennas as they must clear buildings for radio propagation and will be seen against a typically grey sky.

All of these matters wholly align with the proposal. As such, the proposal wholly aligns with the Planning guidance for England provided by UK Government.

NPPF (August 2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in August 2026 and provides significantly strengthened national policy support for the expansion and upgrading of electronic telecommunications networks.

Chapter 9, Supporting High Quality Communications, recognises that advanced, high-quality and reliable communications are essential to meet changing technological, social, business and security requirements, expressly including the delivery of higher-quality standalone 5G.

Of particular significance to this proposal is national decision-making Policy CO1, which states that:

*“**substantial weight** should be given to the benefits of maintaining or improving network coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience.”*

This expressly includes the provision of next-generation wireless technologies such as standalone 5G.

This is directly applicable to the proposed development. The proposal would replace an established VMO2 installation which can no longer provide a practical and operationally robust long-term solution, maintain and improve 4G network coverage and capacity, introduce modern standalone 5G capability, improve the reliability and resilience of VMO2's network, and provide infrastructure capable of meeting existing and future consumer demand.

Accordingly, *substantial weight* must be afforded to these benefits in the determination of this proposal.

Policy CO1 simultaneously requires telecommunications infrastructure to be sited and designed so as to minimise visual impact, particularly where a new structure is proposed, so far as practical having regard to its operational requirements.

The proposed development has been designed expressly in response to that requirement. A comprehensive alternative-site assessment has considered opportunities to utilise existing telecommunications infrastructure, buildings and other structures. The proposed 25m height represents the operational height necessary to achieve the required network function, whilst the open lattice form reduces perceived mass and provides a visual relationship with the extensive

electricity transmission infrastructure already established throughout the surrounding landscape.

The accompanying panoramic survey provides clear site-specific evidence of this context. Multiple substantially larger electricity pylons and associated overhead lines form repeated and conspicuous elements of the surrounding landscape, while wind turbines are also apparent within longer-distance views. The proposal would therefore be experienced within an established landscape of vertical infrastructure rather than as an isolated vertical feature.

Policy CO2 is also directly relevant and expressly applies to applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order. It requires evidence that applicants proposing a new site have sought to keep the number of sites to a minimum and have explored opportunities to utilise existing buildings, masts and other structures. The detailed alternative-site assessment accompanying this proposal demonstrates compliance with this requirement.

Green Belt

The August 2026 NPPF also materially strengthens the national policy position applicable to telecommunications development within the Green Belt.

Policy GB7 expressly identifies telecommunications infrastructure required in a Green Belt location as development which is not inappropriate, provided that its impact upon openness is minimised and it would not result in significant conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The proposed development satisfies these requirements.

The installation is required within this geographically constrained locality in order to replace an established VMO2 network site and perform the necessary function within the operator's existing network. The extensive alternative-site assessment demonstrates why the development cannot simply be displaced to an unrestricted location outside the required search area.

Its impact upon openness has meanwhile been minimised through careful siting, a limited ground-level footprint and the visually permeable lattice construction of the tower. The photographic and panoramic evidence further demonstrates that the surrounding landscape is already materially influenced by substantially larger electricity pylons, overhead transmission infrastructure and other vertical infrastructure.



(Above) Wider landscape context illustrating the established presence of electricity pylons and wind turbines within views surrounding the proposal site. The vertical line denotes the centre of the panoramic image and does not identify the proposal location.

The proposal would consequently result in a limited and localised effect upon openness and would not significantly conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt.

It therefore falls within Policy GB7 and should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances.

Taken together, Policies CO1, CO2 and GB7 provide clear and substantial national policy support for the proposed development. The proposal constitutes telecommunications infrastructure required within this locality, has been demonstrated to represent the least harmful technically viable solution identified following a comprehensive search, minimises its visual and Green Belt effects so far as practical having regard to operational requirements; and would deliver material improvements to VMO2's coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience.

The NPPF expressly requires *substantial weight* to be afforded to those network benefits.

Other National Strategy and Policy

It is felt that it is unnecessary to quote all the relevant documents but it is appropriate to reference them as they clearly show the intent, rationale and of the Government in relation to development like the proposal...

Wireless Infrastructure Strategy
Planning and Infrastructure Bill

10 Year Infrastructure Strategy

It is also significant to note that, under commitments made within the 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy a consultation on a review of Part 16 of the GPDO has just been concluded – this is with a view to reduce restrictions on digital connectivity infrastructure to promote its delivery. An NPPF consultation which has also recently concluded is also expected to add even more policy support for digital communications.

Ministerial Statements

Written Ministerial Statement UIN HCWS867: Boosting growth by removing barriers to digital infrastructure deployment, made by the then Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms, Sir Chris Bryant (attached to this application) states:-

*“Digital infrastructure **underpins growth right across the economy**, and is also a powerful contributor to the economy in its own right, with the sector worth an estimated £50 billion to the UK. **It supports the adoption of new and emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence** and enables citizens to participate in modern life. In an increasingly online world, growth in data consumption and increased **demands on the UK’s digital infrastructure mean there is an urgent need to support the sector in delivering greater connectivity for local communities and businesses.***

*We are committed to the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband and 5G networks, with the ultimate goal of enabling businesses, residents, and institutions to access seamless and reliable connectivity. **These efforts are essential to building a more competitive, equitable, and digitally connected nation.***”

This clearly articulates Government’s commitment to removing planning barriers, accelerating deployment and recognising digital communications infrastructure as critical to economic growth.

Similarly, Statement UIN HCWS1325 by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for AI and Online Safety Kanishka Narayan makes clear that:

“Digital connectivity is at the foundation of our economy and society and underpins almost every part of daily life. The strength, security, and resilience of our digital infrastructure matters deeply to people, business and the economy in the UK.”

Other Material Considerations – Appeals

It is wholly acknowledged that every proposal must be considered on its own merits and there is no such thing as precedent in Planning.

However, appeal decisions can be material considerations to decisions with similar characteristics and main matters. They are certainly material considerations that can be given significant weight in cases where procedural and principle matters are established.

A dominant procedural and principled feature in appeal decisions is that there is a need for balance and identifying the least impactful option. In many cases harm can be identified but that harm must be balanced against the material benefits, the technical constraints and the lack of a better viable option. When that appropriate Planning Balance occurs, especially in the context of prior approval where the principle of the development is established in law, then proposals are often deemed acceptable, on balance.

While harm associated with this proposal is minimal, significantly, it is clear that great effort and consideration has gone into identifying the technically viable siting and design with the least impact.

In that context some recent, procedural and principle establishing, appeal decisions in the Rochdale City Council area have been referenced below. These procedural and ‘in principle’ matters are wholly relevant to the proposal:-

APP/P4605/W/25/3359736

*“In conclusion, the siting and appearance of the proposed development would appear overly prominent and visually intrusive within the street scape. It would **therefore result in harm to the character and appearance of the area due to its height and siting**. Additionally, it is for the same reasons that it would result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents regarding outlook.”*

*“The **Framework recognises that high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being**. Consequently, it supports the expansion of electronic communications networks, including 5G.*

The appeal scheme would provide coverage in an area which has no effective coverage. The lack of coverage would likely lead to a lack of/or very poor call set up, dropped calls and no capacity leading to no service.

*The **appellant has provided a sequential approach to site selection** in which approximately 32 sites were assessed. Many of the sites have been discounted due to, amongst other things, inadequate pavement widths, the presence of underground services and/or overhead lines, closer proximity to dwellings and/or education facilities, greater visibility due to both a lack of natural screening and/or requirements of a taller mast due to lower topography, proximity to access points, reduction in parking provision and /or visibility splays, as well as practical requirements to*

ensure no competition between the proposed 5G coverage and existing 3G and 4G cell areas and to achieve International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) certification. **Various buildings and structures were also considered as part of the sequential approach however these were likewise discounted for practical reasons.**

Given all of the above, in my judgement, it has **been adequately demonstrated that there are likely to be no other appropriate sites**, including buildings and existing masts, than the appeal site. I therefore **attach significant weight in favour of the appeal as a consequence.**

In conclusion, I consider the moderate **harm** the installation would cause to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and living conditions of neighbouring residents regarding outlook would be **outweighed by the benefits** of a high-quality communications network facilitated by the proposed development and **the lack of any more suitable alternative sites to provide this benefit.**”

APP/P4605/W/24/3349032

“I have found that the proposed development, through its siting and appearance, **would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area** for the reasons given above. The other options that might be available are therefore an important consideration.

The **Framework supports the development of a high-quality reliable communications infrastructure as this is deemed to be essential for economic growth and social well-being.** Nonetheless, it requires sites to be kept to a minimum and encourages the reuse and adaptation of existing base stations. Paragraph 122 of the Framework expects evidence to be submitted to justify all applications. For a new mast or base station this includes evidence that the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure has been explored.

The proposal is required to provide 5G coverage. It has been demonstrated that **the site is within an area with demonstrable need for an additional installation in the vicinity to achieve a full and appropriate level of coverage.** The coverage map has informed the appellant’s search area for the new equipment and a sequential approach has been taken. In support of the application and now appeal, the **appellant has undertaken an assessment of 42 alternative sites within the defined search area required to provide coverage for the target area.** This included an assessment of several alternative sites that were identified by the Council.

The appellant has supplied a number of reasons as to why these sites should be discounted from the search including: concerns with upgrading the existing mast nearby, interference between masts, issues with the structural suitability and wind loading requirements of buildings in the search area and the impact the surrounding buildings and topography of the area would

have upon signal transmissions. Certain sites were also discounted due to concerns with highway safety and the nearby railway line and underground services. Some sites were situated within residential areas or within parks close to trees that were covered by a Tree Preservation Order as well as concerns over the effect of the mast upon the character and appearance of the area which provided reasons to discount them.

Several of the alternative sites were located in the ‘most’ and ‘more’ sensitive locations as per the Guide. **While the site is in a ‘more sensitive location’, the proposed equipment is required to be sited within the search area and the principal of such equipment is not in dispute.** Taking into **consideration the significant constraints identified for the alternative sites;** existing buildings, masts, and other structures have been explored and reasonably discounted. Furthermore, comprehensive, and reliable evidence has been given for discounting other possible ground-based mast sites.

*I conclude that the siting and appearance of the proposed installation **would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.** However, based on the evidence before me, it is unlikely that there is a more suitable site within the search area that may reasonably be available. Therefore, any identified harm is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed, taking into account the suitable alternatives.”*

APP/P4605/W/24/3357531

*“As I have found that the **proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that evidence of alternative sites is provided to justify the proposed development.** Where this is in relation to a new mast or base station, this evidence should include that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure.*

*I have no reason to doubt that the cell **search area is extremely contained.** On the basis of the evidence before me, I am **satisfied that the appellant has demonstrated that there is an identified need for the proposal to be located somewhere in the search area.***

*The Council suggests that there are more suitable locations nearby. However, **the appellant has provided details of a number of alternative sites which were considered and discounted as part of the site selection process,** including detailed supporting information to fully corroborate that an exhaustive search of all possible sites was undertaken. These sites were discounted for a number of reasons including proximity to residential properties and other buildings, impact on visibility splays and proximity to underground services. **I am satisfied that there are no realistic opportunities to erect antennas on existing buildings, masts or other structures.** I consider that **the site selection process was robust and potential alternatives discounted on***

reasonable grounds and that the appellant has demonstrated that there are no clear alternatives which would be preferable. This carries significant weight in favour of the proposal.

The proposal would support high-quality infrastructure, an approach which is supported by Chapter 10 of the Framework. When balancing this benefit against the harm identified in relation to the first main issue, I consider that the benefits of the proposal would outweigh the identified harm to the character and appearance of the area.”

Although the NPPF was updated on 17 August 2026, this appeal is materially strengthened by the updated policy, in that the revised Framework now provides even clearer and stronger national policy support for the expansion and upgrading of telecommunications infrastructure, including standalone 5G. Most significantly, the updated telecommunications policy expressly requires *substantial weight* to be afforded to the benefits arising from maintaining or improving network coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience. Accordingly, the connectivity benefits which the Inspector previously found sufficient to outweigh the identified harm would now attract expressly enhanced weight in the planning balance under the updated national policy framework.

APP/P4605/W/25/3359873

*“The southwest boundary of the Edgbaston **Conservation Area (ECA)** is located in close proximity to the appeal site and generally runs along Pritchatt’s Road. Furthermore, the **Grade II* Chamberlain Tower** is located to the southwest of the appeal site within the grounds of a Birmingham University campus. The proposed mast would be located within the setting of both, which I note is not in dispute. I have also had regard to the appellant’s HIA which establishes the significance of both designated heritage assets and the potential impacts of the proposal.”*

*“The appeal site would be clearly visible in the setting of the ECA, most notably from the junction of Pritchatt’s Road and Farquhar Road. I have already concluded that **the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area**. The modern, utilitarian appearance of the mast would be compounded by its height and appear incongruous in the area as a result. **This would harm the setting and thereby the contribution this makes to the significance of the ECA**. Moreover, section A.2(1)(c)(i) of part 16, class A of the GPDO states that permitted development of this type is subject to the condition that the siting and appearance of any development which is visible from a site which is article 2(3) land, as in this case, must ensure that the visual impact of the development on the site is minimised so far as practicable, taking into account the nature and purposes of the site. It is unclear as to what steps have been taken to minimise the impacts of the mast and its ancillary equipment in this instance.”*

*“Taken together, **the proposal would cause harm withing the setting and thereby harm the significance of both the ECA and the listed tower**. I have therefore had regard to the provisions*

of paragraph 212 of the Framework which advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is of particular importance given the Grade II* listed status of the tower."

"Insofar as they are material considerations, the proposal would be contrary to policies DM16 of the DPD, PG3 of the BDP and advice in the SPD. These seek to ensure telecommunications equipment would not have unacceptable harm on heritage assets and their setting, among other things."

"Heritage Balance

The GPDO is clear that the only considerations should be the siting and appearance of the proposal. In granting permission under Article 3(1) those benefits have effectively been acknowledged already. However, as per paragraph 215 of the Framework, **the harm I have identified should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I agree that the harm would be less than substantial, but worthy of great weight against the proposal.**"

"The mast and its equipment would evidently improve 5G coverage in a small geographical area is part of a wider network, where the network may be undermined by gaps in coverage. Whilst only users of that particular operator would be using the service, **these aspects are recognised as public benefits.**"

"The proposed development's **public benefits, through enhanced digital communications networks, attract significant weight in favour of the scheme.** In recognising the great weight attached to the harm caused to designated heritage assets, **the Government places considerable importance on the benefits of economic growth and social well-being from the expansion of the nation's electronic communications network. On this occasion, I consider that the benefits would outweigh harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and its setting.**"

"On the basis of the evidence before me, I see no reason to disagree with the appellant's site selection process and while the Council was frustrated at not having this information at application stage, it has had the opportunity to comment at appeal. Nothing substantive was forwarded on this matter in their appeal statement of case. I understand that the site is close to identified sensitive locations such as heritage assets and educational institutions. I have considered these matters. However, the evidence on balance shows that **the lack of alternative options to deliver improved coverage and capacity within the required area is a consideration which weighs strongly in favour of the appeal.**"

"The siting and appearance of the proposal would **result in some limited harm to the character and appearance of the area and to the setting of the ECA and a Grade II* listed building.** These

*attract significant weight against granting prior approval. However, in **the absence of a more suitable alternative site within the required area and the need for the installation, that harm would be outweighed by the benefits provided by the improved telecommunications coverage and capacity.** The proposal would therefore comply with the Framework when read as a whole with due regard to supporting high quality communications. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed, and that prior approval is granted.”*

It is clear that the proposal, subject of this application, has significantly less heritage impact than the appeal example provided.

It is clear that this proposal complies with...

Rochdale Council Local Plan

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 to 2039

Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-35

National Planning Policy (NPPF)

National Planning Guidance (Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development)

Wider national economic and digital aspirations and strategies

Meets appropriate balance tests applied in appeal decisions

Planning Assessment

In accordance with Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order, this development is to be assessed primarily in terms of its siting and appearance.

While the provisions of the local development plan are not determinative, they remain material considerations where relevant to matters of design and visual impact. The key issues arising from this prior approval application are whether the proposed structure would appear visually intrusive or out of keeping with the character of the area, and whether any such impact would be outweighed by the substantial social and economic benefits associated with the deployment of 5G and the enhancement of next-generation digital infrastructure in the context of the technical constraints and lack of less impactful siting options.

Siting

As previously detailed, there is an urgent requirement to secure a suitable replacement for the existing VMO2 installation located upon electricity pylon infrastructure within the locality. The replacement installation must remain within a defined and geographically constrained search area in order to maintain the required relationship with the existing network and deliver the

necessary coverage and capacity. The siting of the proposal has therefore been carefully selected to meet these operational requirements whilst avoiding unnecessary proliferation of telecommunications infrastructure and minimising environmental and visual effects as far as practicable.

It is acknowledged that the introduction of a 25m telecommunications structure within an open rural environment will inevitably result in a degree of visibility. However, visibility does not necessarily equate to unacceptable visual harm. In this instance, the particular characteristics of the receiving landscape provide an important opportunity to assimilate the development into an established infrastructure context.

As clearly demonstrated within the accompanying Panoramic Survey material, the surrounding landscape is already materially influenced by a network of substantial high-voltage electricity pylons and associated overhead lines. These form prominent and repeated vertical features throughout the locality and are considerably greater in height, scale and overall visual presence than the proposed installation. From surrounding viewpoints, the proposed tower would variously be experienced against the backdrop of, alongside, or beyond existing pylons, with existing electricity infrastructure also occupying the foreground in a number of views. The proposal would consequently be experienced as a subordinate feature within an established infrastructure landscape rather than as an isolated vertical structure within an otherwise uninterrupted rural setting.

The proposed lattice design further assists this relationship. Its open and visually permeable form responds to the lattice construction of the surrounding electricity pylons and reduces the perception of solidity and mass across longer-distance views. Existing undulating landform, vegetation, field boundaries and scattered rural development provide further context and interruption to views towards the site.

The location also maintains substantial separation from the more concentrated areas of residential development within the wider search area. This avoids the significantly closer and more direct relationships with residential properties and front-facing windows identified at a number of alternative locations, thereby reducing potential effects upon residential amenity and avoiding the introduction of substantial telecommunications infrastructure into sensitive residential streetscenes.

An extensive sequential search for alternative sites has been undertaken. Whilst a number of other locations were investigated, these were found to be unavailable, technically unsuitable or materially more harmful in planning and visual terms, including locations characterised by close residential overlooking, constrained footways, sensitive streetscenes and, in one instance, proximity to a school. The proposed location represents the best balance between technical requirements, availability, deliverability and environmental considerations.

It is therefore considered that the selected site represents the best and least harmful viable location within the defined search area. Its relationship with the established pylon infrastructure, separation from concentrated residential development and responsive lattice design ensure that the additional visual effect of the replacement installation is minimised as far as reasonably practicable, whilst allowing VMO2 to maintain and improve the network service currently provided from the existing pylon-based site.

Visual Appearance & Design

The proposed 25m height represents the minimum viable height required to achieve the necessary radio propagation and coverage footprint from this location, allowing the installation to satisfactorily replace the existing pylon-based site and provide improved 4G and new 5G coverage and capacity. A reduction in height would compromise the ability of the installation to fulfil the identified network requirement and could result in a requirement for additional infrastructure elsewhere within the surrounding area.

The proposed lattice tower design has been specifically selected to respond to both the technical requirements and the particular visual characteristics of this location. As clearly demonstrated within the accompanying Panoramic Survey material, the surrounding landscape is already characterised by numerous substantial lattice electricity pylons which are considerably taller and larger than the proposed installation. The open lattice construction provides a degree of visual permeability and reflects the structural form of this established electricity infrastructure, allowing the proposed tower to assimilate more readily within its setting than a visually solid structure.

Consideration has also been given to whether the antenna equipment could be further concealed through the use of GRP shrouding. However, enclosing the antenna arrangement would introduce additional material around the radio equipment which can adversely affect signal propagation, particularly for the latest 5G equipment, whilst also substantially increasing the structure's wind loading. Accommodating this additional loading would require a heavier and more substantial supporting structure, increasing its visual mass. In this location, retaining the antennas openly mounted upon the lattice tower therefore represents the more appropriate solution, maintaining effective radio performance whilst preserving the open and visually permeable character of the lattice design and its visual relationship with the surrounding electricity pylons.

The Panoramic Survey material demonstrates that the proposed installation would be experienced from surrounding viewpoints alongside, beyond or against the backdrop of existing electricity pylons and overhead transmission infrastructure. In several surrounding views, existing pylons also occupy the foreground. The proposed tower would consequently remain subordinate in height and scale to these established structures, substantially reducing its visual contrast within the wider Green Belt landscape.

The associated ground-based equipment has similarly been designed to minimise visual effects. The equipment cabinets will be finished Fir Green (RAL 6009), providing a recessive finish appropriate to the surrounding rural and agricultural environment. The equipment is consolidated within a defined compound, ensuring a contained and orderly installation and minimising the overall footprint of the development.

The antenna arrangement has been designed to meet the operator's technical and structural requirements whilst avoiding unnecessary additional bulk at the top of the tower. The equipment must remain capable of operating effectively and safely at the required height, and the proposed configuration represents the appropriate balance between radio performance, structural requirements and visual impact.

Overall, the proposed development represents the least visually intrusive viable design capable of meeting the identified network requirement. Its 25m height maximises the coverage achievable from a single replacement installation, whilst the visually permeable lattice form responds directly to the substantial electricity infrastructure already characteristic of the surrounding landscape. Together with the recessive treatment of the ground-based equipment, the proposal has been designed to minimise additional effects upon the visual amenity, character and appearance of the Green Belt landscape as far as reasonably practicable, whilst providing the required replacement and modernisation of VMO2's network.

Residential Amenity

The proposed site is located within an open rural setting and is well separated from the more concentrated areas of residential development within the wider locality. As demonstrated within the accompanying Panoramic Survey material, the immediate surroundings are predominantly agricultural in character, comprising open fields, scattered rural development and established electricity transmission infrastructure.

Whilst the upper sections of the proposed 25m lattice tower may be visible from some residential receptors at greater distance, such views would be experienced across the wider landscape and in the established context of numerous substantially larger electricity pylons and overhead lines. The proposal would therefore not introduce an isolated vertical feature into the immediate outlook of residential properties.

This represents a significant benefit of the selected location when compared with a number of the alternatives considered. Several alternative sites would position substantial telecommunications infrastructure within residential streets, including locations immediately overlooked by front-facing windows and prominent street-corner positions. The proposed site avoids these

significantly more sensitive relationships and thereby minimises effects upon residential outlook and visual amenity.

The development would not result in any loss of privacy and would not generate material levels of noise, artificial light, odour or vibration. Operational visits would be limited and infrequent, principally associated with routine maintenance and any necessary repair or upgrade works.

Given the substantial separation from concentrated residential development, the rural setting and the established large-scale infrastructure evident within surrounding views, the proposal would have minimal impact upon residential amenity, with no unacceptable effect upon outlook, privacy or living conditions.

Sequential Test and Lack of Alternative Options

The search area for the replacement installation is necessarily geographically constrained. The proposal is required to replace an existing VMO2 installation located upon electricity-pylon infrastructure and the replacement must remain sufficiently close to the existing cell location to perform the required function within the wider network. The operator therefore cannot locate the replacement infrastructure indiscriminately outside the defined search area.

A comprehensive sequential search has been undertaken to identify a technically suitable, reasonably available and deliverable location whilst minimising planning and environmental effects. Nineteen specific alternative locations have been investigated, in addition to consideration of the wider opportunities available throughout the search area.

The assessment demonstrates the considerable efforts made to identify an alternative solution. D1–D3 were actively progressed with the respective landowners, but the landowners did not proceed with consensual agreements. D4–D7 were subject to repeated attempts to establish landowner engagement, but no responses were received. These locations therefore could not provide reasonably available and deliverable alternatives.

The remaining alternatives demonstrate the planning and technical constraints affecting the search area. These include locations incapable of satisfactorily meeting the required radio-planning objectives, constrained residential streets and narrow footways, overhead infrastructure, and locations where substantial telecommunications equipment would be directly overlooked by front-facing residential windows. Several alternatives occupy prominent residential street-corner positions, while other options would introduce infrastructure at sensitive interfaces between residential development and open space. One alternative also has an additional sensitive relationship with a nearby school.

The proposed site avoids these materially more harmful relationships. Although situated within the Green Belt, the location provides substantial separation from concentrated residential development and, importantly, allows the proposed lattice tower to be accommodated within a landscape already materially influenced by substantial lattice electricity pylons. As demonstrated within the accompanying Panoramic Survey material, these structures are significantly larger than the proposal and form established and repeated vertical features throughout the receiving landscape. The siting and lattice design therefore make positive use of the existing infrastructure context to minimise the additional visual effect of the replacement installation.

The sequential assessment consequently demonstrates that the selected site represents the best and least harmful viable and deliverable solution identified within the defined search area. Other locations are either unavailable, technically unsuitable or would give rise to materially greater effects upon residential amenity, streetscene or visual amenity.

This robust alternative-site assessment, together with the careful siting and design of the proposal, demonstrates that the development minimises visual and environmental effects so far as practicable whilst taking full account of the operator's technical requirements.

The proposal constitutes permitted development subject to prior approval under Part 16 of Schedule 2 to the GPDO. Accordingly, the principle of telecommunications development is established through the permitted development regime, with the relevant prior-approval assessment focused upon the siting and appearance of the development. This distinction is particularly relevant in the present case, where considerable effort has been undertaken to demonstrate why the selected location represents the most appropriate siting and appearance solution available within the constrained search area.

Given the comprehensive sequential assessment undertaken, the absence of a less harmful reasonably available and technically suitable alternative, and the measures incorporated into the siting and design to minimise additional effects, the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

There is an established requirement to replace and modernise the existing VMO2 telecommunications installation currently located upon electricity-pylon infrastructure within the locality. Continued occupation and upgrade of the existing pylon is no longer considered a practical or operationally sustainable long-term solution. A replacement installation is therefore required within the defined search area to maintain and improve existing mobile connectivity and facilitate improved 4G coverage and new 5G capability.

The selected site represents a carefully considered response to the particular constraints of this rural Green Belt location. As demonstrated within the accompanying Panoramic Survey material,

the surrounding landscape is already materially influenced by substantial high-voltage electricity pylons and overhead transmission infrastructure. These structures are considerably greater in height and scale than the proposed 25m tower and form established and repeated vertical features throughout the locality. The proposal would therefore be experienced alongside, beyond or against the backdrop of existing electricity infrastructure rather than as an isolated vertical feature within an otherwise infrastructure-free landscape.

The proposed lattice design responds directly to this established character. Its open and visually permeable construction reflects the structural form of the surrounding lattice pylons, reducing perceived mass and assisting assimilation within the existing infrastructure landscape. The proposed height is the minimum viable to achieve the required radio-planning objectives from this location, whilst the associated ground-based equipment will be consolidated and finished Fir Green (RAL 6009) to minimise its visual presence within the rural setting.

A comprehensive sequential site search has been undertaken, with 19 specific alternative locations investigated. This assessment has demonstrated that alternative options are either not reasonably available, technically unsuitable or would result in materially greater planning impacts, particularly through the introduction of substantial telecommunications infrastructure into constrained residential streets, close to front-facing residential windows and other sensitive receptors. The selected site provides substantial separation from concentrated residential development whilst taking advantage of an established large-scale infrastructure context.

The proposal therefore accords directly with the telecommunications and Green Belt decision-making policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026). In particular, Policy CO1 expressly requires *substantial weight* to be afforded to the benefits of maintaining and improving network coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience, including through the provision of standalone 5G. Those are precisely the benefits delivered by this proposal.

Furthermore, the proposal falls within the telecommunications infrastructure identified by Policy GB7 as not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Its impact upon openness has been minimised through its siting, limited footprint and visually permeable lattice design, while the extensive existing pylon and wider vertical infrastructure evident within the accompanying panoramic material materially moderates its additional landscape effect.

The comprehensive alternative-site assessment demonstrates that this is the least harmful technically viable and deliverable solution identified within the constrained search area. When the limited and localised visual effects are considered alongside the substantial weight which national policy expressly requires to be afforded to the network benefits delivered, the proposal represents an appropriate and policy-compliant form of telecommunications development

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