SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

1. Site Details

Site Name:	Salisbury Railway BR B2 Upgrade 5G	Site Address:	Telecommunications site Salisbury Railway Station Churchfields Road Salisbury Wiltshire SP2 7NW
National Grid Reference:	413821, 130175		
Site Ref Number:	CS12278225 VF004038	Site Type:[1]	Macro

2. Pre-Application Check List

Site Selection

Was a local planning authority mast register available to check for suitable sites by the operator or the local planning authority?	Yes	No
If no explain why: None available		
Were industry site databases checked for suitable sites by the operator:	Yes	No
If no explain why:		

Site Specific Pre-application consultation with local planning authority

Was there pre-application contact:	See below
Date of pre-application contact:	See below
Name of contact:	Duty Planner
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised: A site-specific pre-application consultation was issued to the LPA on 14 April 2023. The submission included a written description of the proposal, a consultation plan and draft plans. Given that the proposal relates to an upgrade of an established base station that needs to be modernised to address uptodate modern communications service requirements, no fee was paid and therefore no detailed response from the LPA has been received.	

[1] Macro or Micro

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Annual area wide information to planning authority

Has annual area wide information been provided?	No
Summary issues raised: Cornerstone's commercial relationship with the operator in question has changed, effectively increasing an independence to work with other companies in the deployment of mobile infrastructure. It means Cornerstone no longer have visibility of the operator's full update plan. However, Cornerstone is fully committed to working closely with Local Planning Authorities and following best practice guidance. Cornerstone aim to engage and work with the planning department at the earliest opportunity from when instructed to deliver new infrastructure within your Local Authority area and often conduct strategic pre-rollout engagement meetings to discuss our wider rollout. If your Local Authority would like a meeting to discuss wider Cornerstone rollout plans, then please advise. We recognise the importance of developing long term partnerships and will always work with you to deliver improved mobile connectivity.	

Community Consultation

Rating of Site under Traffic Light Model:	Red	Amber	Green
Outline of consultation carried out: The following were consulted: • Salisbury St Edmunds Ward Councillors			
Summary of outcome/main issues raised (include copies of relevant correspondence): N/A			

School/College

Location of site in relation to school/college (include name of school/college): N/A
Outline of consultation carried out with school/college (include evidence of consultation): N/A
Summary of outcome/main issues raised (include copies of main correspondence): N/A

Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/Aerodrome Operator consultation

Will the structure be within 3km of an aerodrome or airfield?	Yes	No
Has the Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/Aerodrome Operator been notified?	Yes	No

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

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Details of response:
N/A

Owner Notice / Developer's Notice

Copy of Notice enclosed?	Yes	No
Date served:	08/08/2023	

3. Proposed Development

The proposed site:
The existing base station site is located within Network Rail land south of the Windsor Road / Fisherton Street junction in north west of central Salisbury. Land use present in the locale is predominantly commercial. The topography of the locale is relatively flat. The site is located close to the northern section of the station platform which is relatively elevated from the surrounding road network. To the east of the site is a bridge which allows Fisherton Street to run beneath the tracks. This locality is very commercial in nature with advertising hoardings (height of 4.5m) screening the lower sections of the monopole, there are also some trees at a height of 5 metres which provide additional low level natural screening. To the north of the site is the station yard.

Enclose map showing the cell centre and adjoining cells if appropriate:
This can be supplied upon request. The intention is for the proposed base station site to provide new and improved network services to those living, working and travelling in the local area. The operational context of the development has been explained in further detail below.

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

Description:
 	
The proposal incorporates the following:
 	
• Removal of:
  ○ 17.5m high mast with 3No. antennas within GRP shroud and 2No. dishes (1No. 300mm; 1No. 200mm (Grey RAL7035) and all ancillary development
 	
• Installation of:
  ○ 20.1m high mast incorporating 15m monopole and headframe (galvanised streel, Grey), 6No. antennas (Grey RAL7035), 2No. dishes (1No. 300mm; 1No. 200mm) (Grey RAL7035), with all ancillary development
 	
All apparatus has been limited to a minimum amount and dimension for the achievement of an efficient telecommunications service to be achieved.

Overall Height:	
Height of existing building:	As per plans/above
Equipment Housing:	
Length:	As per plans/above
Width:	As per plans/above
Height:	As per plans/above
Materials:	
Tower/mast etc – type of material and external colour:	As per plans/above
Equipment housing – type of material and external colour:	As per plans/above

Reasons for choice of design, making reference to pre-application responses:
The design of any communications infrastructure is dictated primarily by operational requirements and secondly by the development's setting. From an operational perspective, the operator must ensure the following when devising a final design solution for any site: • Antennas need to be located at a height and specifically orientated to transmit effectively and efficiently without signal being impeded. They also need to be located to ensure ICNIRP compliance. • Dish links (if required) achieve a direct line of site connection with other base station sites within the network; and • GPS modules achieve a direct satellite link.

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To achieve this, operators undertake a panoramic assessment to determine what is the minimum height for transmission equipment to be located in a context of local topography and clutter, such as manmade or natural features, and what antenna tilts and orientation are required to provide an effective solution.

Please be aware that modern network technologies operate in higher frequency bands than older technologies and therefore attenuation of the radio signal is naturally higher and more prone to the effects of clutter. This means that operators will normally require a higher structure to achieve the same coverage footprint.

It is also imperative that the supporting mast structure is structurally capable of accommodating the amount of transmission apparatus being proposed and the design is ICNIRP compliant.

In all cases the operator is committed to limiting the size and amount of apparatus to an operational minimum.

Health and Safety - including ICNIRP compliance

International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection Declaration has been attached.

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

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

In order to minimise interference within its own network and with other radio networks, the lead operator in this development:

- Vodafone Limited

Operate their network in such a way the radio frequency power outputs are kept to the lowest levels commensurate with effective service provision.

As part of their network, the radio base station that is the subject of this application will be configured to operate in this way.

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

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

4. Technical Justification

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

Coverage Requirement

The applicant is seeking to address the following specific coverage requirement:

- The proposed development will maintain and improve 2G, 3G and 4G network coverage whilst also providing ne 5G connectivity and services within the Salisbury Station area, to benefit of all those customers that live, work and travel there; the proposed antennas will transmit the signal with the associated cabinetry and ancillary equipment servicing these antennas.

The reader should appreciate that the dynamic nature of technological advances in the telecommunications industry coupled with ever increasing demand from subscribers dictates a continual reinvestment programme on the part of licenced operators. As a result of these licence requirements, mobile operators are constantly developing their networks as well as refining and modernising their infrastructure, hence the need for the subject proposal and the upgrading of the existing site.

5. Site Selection Process

Site	Name/Address	NGR	Reason for discounting
	N/A		

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

This is an upgrade proposal.

Please also note that the Code of Best Practice (see below) advises that the assessment of alternative sites is not generally required when, as in this case, an existing site is upgraded.

Land use planning designations:

The subject site is located within the Churchfields Road section of the Salisbury City Conservation Area. The nearest listed building is that of the Former GWR Station, Grade II Listed, which is located approx. 40m to the west.

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

Background

Cornerstone as a company was originally established by two mobile network operators, Vodafone Limited and then Telefónica UK Limited (O2) (now operating as Virgin Media O2 (VMO2)[2]), to deploy and operate a shared single grid

[2] Virgin Media O2 was formed in June 2021 as a 50:50 joint venture between Liberty Global and Telefónica through the merger of their respective Virgin Media and O2 UK businesses.

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network providing 2G, 3G and 4G coverage. However, the company now operates independently from the mobile operators.

Both Telefónica UK Limited (O2) and Vodafone Limited are an Electronic Communications Code Operator licensed under the terms of the 2003 Communications Act, as amended, to provide mobile personal digital communications networks in the UK.

Demand and Expectation

The dynamic nature of technological advances in the telecommunications industry coupled with ever increasing demand from subscribers dictates a continual reinvestment programme on the part of licenced operators and as a result, and in line with their licence requirements, companies such as Cornerstone are constantly developing, refining and modernising mobile network infrastructure.

To set the scene on the growing demand for effective communications networks over recent years we would refer the reader to the following Ofcom publications. One would first draw attention to an Ofcom discussion paper publication entitled 'Mobile Networks and Spectrum'[3], dated 09 February 2022, which considers the future demand for mobile services encouraging longer-term thinking about spectrum for mobile networks and how consumer and business needs can be met. Section 2 of the paper includes the following information under the subheading 'The growth of mobile':

> *"In the UK there are four Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) – EE, Three, Virgin Media O2 and Vodafone. The MNOs also provide wholesale mobile access to many mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs), such as Tesco, iD (Carphone Warehouse), Sky Mobile and others.*
>
> *In recent years we have seen an average 40% year-on-year growth in demand for mobile services provided over public mobile networks. This growth has been driven by the development of new applications and enabled by evolving technologies and consequent changes in consumer behaviour.*
>
> *We expect demand for mobile data will continue to grow as we rely on it ever more to carry out daily activities like shopping, gaming, banking and watching movies. Demand is likely to be stimulated further as new and more sophisticated applications are developed, and by the development of machine-to-machine and machine-to-device applications."*
>
> Paragraphs 2.5-2.7

In publishing the discussion paper, Ofcom welcomed stakeholder inputs on the initial thinking, including on the potential opportunities and challenges associated with network densification in the UK and whether there are opportunities for more spectrum to be made available for mobile use on a local basis, so that they may then develop a future strategy for mobile spectrum.

Following on from the above, a conclusions paper has since been published by Ofcom on 06 December 2022, entitled 'Ofcom's future approach to mobile markets and spectrum'[4], within which Section 1 'Overview' confirms:

> *"We expect demand for mobile data to continue to grow as greater use is made of data-hungry services and as new technologies enable new uses."*
>
> Paragraph 1.1

And continues under the subheading 'Our future approach':

[3] https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/232082/mobile-spectrum-demand-discussion-paper.pdf
[4] https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0036/248769/conclusions-mobile-spectrum-demand-and-markets.pdf

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"Network quality is likely to be of growing importance to customers."

So, there should be no doubt that there is a customer expectation and Ofcom requirement for continued investment by operators to ensure network quality and improvement where necessary.

How Mobile Networks Operate

Cellular networks are made up of several individual cell areas, each of which has a base station within it. A good analogy for describing a cellular network is that of a patchwork quilt with each cell area being one of the many patches that are sewn together making up the network 'quilt'.

The base stations themselves will require a supporting structure, such as a mast or high building, to support antennas and dish whilst elevating these transmission elements above clutter, such as tall trees, buildings, or topography that could otherwise impede signal. Associated cabinets for housing radio equipment and power connections are also deployed to service the antennas. Base stations then receive and transmit to mobile devices using radio waves. The antennas operate like an aerosol spray with signal transmitted along a central orientation and dissipating with distance. The dishes operate on a direct line of sight basis, linking with dishes on other base station sites elsewhere within the wider network. The dish links also link the base station to a master control centre that manages the call handover process that occurs when a mobile user moves from one cell area to another. They also provide telemetric monitoring to ensure the site is working properly and offer remote maintenance.

In the early days of mobile communications, peripheral locations, high-level topographies and large-scale masts were often identified in order that transmission from a new base station could cover an expansive geographical area. However, whilst this approach was viable for early network generations, the number of mobile handset users has dramatically increased with time, as have the advancements in mobile technology itself. As a result, the cellular network construction and operational criteria have changed too. Because modern networks use higher frequencies with faster data rates whilst serving significantly increased numbers of mobile device users, typical network cell areas (i.e., the geographical area targeted for coverage for which a base station development provides a solution), are now smaller in their geographical expanse and tend to be directly proportionate to the number of users within it. They are also therefore greater in their number with base stations operating at a lower power output than their predecessors.

Mobile connectivity and service is required where customers live, work and play and good connectivity allows people to access a wide range of essential services including emailing; downloading apps; social media; helping with homework; researching local events, businesses or transport timetables; managing personal finances; shopping; contacting local authorities; arranging medical appointments; general business functions; and much, much more. 5G coverage and superfast mobile broadband data capacity demand will continue to increase exponentially with the introduction of IoT (Internet of Things), machine to machine connectivity, automated transport/industry and other 'smart' applications. To this end the existing shared infrastructure within the built environment has had to be reviewed and adapted as appropriate.

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

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to necessary infrastructure variations cell to cell, depending on site specific demand, local constraints and requirement. As such, the various networks will have variations in how their infrastructure is deployed and developed.

Public Benefits

It is undeniable that mobile communication is now a key part of sustainable development and a vital tool in our personal lives and in all business and government operations. Indeed, the demand for faster and improved mobile connectivity continues to grow with modern society now expecting to be able to make use of mobile devices to their full potential where people live, work and travel. Each new generation of mobile communications technology has provided us with higher speed, better connection, and many more advanced features on our mobiles, and now with 5G, we can expect to experience an even more extensive range of telecommunication services. There is, therefore, currently a drive by the Government to ensure that all communities, both urban and rural, have access to the most up to date mobile technology, given the clear sustainability, social and economic benefits for doing so.

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

- Economic benefits

  - Creating more productive and cost efficiencies for businesses
  - Businesses offering online services can extend their products to a broader audience
  - Local areas and businesses can benefit from tourists and visitors as hotels, attractions, and restaurants can be booked online from anywhere in the world
  - Business owners and services like doctors can provide a faster and more cost-effective service by offering both online appointments and ordering
  - Digital connectivity facilitates economic growth, something which the Government is keen to progress and promote
  - 5G's ability to deliver real-time information (low latency), ultra-fast speeds (critical for high-definition images and video), increased capacity and heightened security will also facilitate learning on the job procedures, thanks to technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) goggles, which, for example, can give the likes of engineers real-time instructions on how to fix a machine on a production line.

- Social benefit

  - Mobile communications can help people to stay in touch wherever and whenever, which can help improve social wellbeing
  - Convenient access to online commerce or businesses
  - Contacting emergency services is easier, especially in remote areas
  - Giving the ability to manage our personal finances and information 24/7
  - Using a mobile wherever you go can provide better personal security
  - Having access to social networking sites and applications can keep people entertained with their lifestyles and interests
  - Access to real-time transport information or timetables
  - Smart meter reads for utilities such as gas or electric
  - Contacting local authorities
  - Promotion of smarter and productive ways of working. For example, working from home can help minimise commuting which can provide better work and home life balance

- Sustainability benefits

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

- Health Benefit

  - Support the delivery of healthcare provision and accessibility by enabling people greater access to online services, NHS appointment reminders, reminders to take medicines, make appointments etc.
  - Patients across the country are now becoming accustomed to using remote healthcare services such as NHS 111, virtual GP appointments, and ordering online deliveries of essential medical supplies.
  - 5G's ability to deliver real-time information (low latency), ultra-fast speeds (critical for high-definition images and video), increased capacity and heightened security are going to be fundamental in scaling the patient benefits of remote healthcare and keeping medical records secure and private. For instance, trials have shown that connecting ambulance crews to expert resources using 5G allows paramedics to work with doctors and conduct specialist procedures in real time whilst on the road.

- Educational Benefit

  - Facilitates access to educational establishment databases or booking systems for securing places for the likes of school dinners, field trips, extra-curricular activities, student/teacher reviews, etc.
  - Provides access to school/college/university apps for setting and submitting homework/coursework, ensuring news and notifications are delivered efficiently, and for parent/student/teacher interactions.
  - The relationship between modern network services and education is evolving at a massive rate with educators exploring the relevance of Virtual Reality (VR) technologies for education and training. Crucially, VR can support remote learning, allowing students a presence in the classroom even when working elsewhere.

Who will be affected by a lack of coverage?

In considering the merits of the subject prior approval application for essential infrastructure, it is important to give due cognisance to those that would be impacted upon if the current network requirement for the operator(s) in question were not to be addressed.

The following paragraphs will provide some context on this issue using recent statistics and data.

According to a www.which.co.uk article updated 27 April 2023 and titled 'Who are the biggest UK mobile networks'[5], the approximate percentage of mobile device users in the UK marker using VMO2 network are as follows:

- Vodafone Limited, (a Mobile Network Operator - MNO), and their Mobile Virtual Network Operators which use their network (MVNOs) (i.e., Asda Mobile, Lebara, Talk Mobile and Voxi), make up approximately 21% of mobile device user market in the UK.

It is therefore fair to assume that at a similar pro rata percentage of the mobile device users in the local area will be relying on the operators in question to provide an effective and long-term solution for UpToDate mobile network coverage and capacity at the earliest opportunity.

How people use their mobile devices

[5] https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/mobile-phone-providers/article/mobile-phone-provider-reviews/best-mobile-networks-overview-amhDx1F0z41t

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It is also important to evaluate the proposal within a context of how people in the UK are using mobile communications networks and industry trends, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. We would therefore refer the reader to 'Online Nation 2022'[6] which has been produced by Ofcom in June 2022. The report confirms:

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

With regards to app usage via smart phones the report confirms that:

> *In September 2021, 88% of UK online smartphone-using adults visited WhatsApp, the top-reaching smartphone app, followed by the Facebook app (87%). Comparing average daily visitors, Facebook was visited by 61%, WhatsApp by 50%, Instagram by 35% and Facebook Messenger by 27% of UK smartphone-owning adults who went online. Instagram was the top smartphone app among UK online 15-24s, of whom 60% visited it daily, on average. One in five adults use all three Meta-owned communication services. Nearly all (94%) UK adult internet users aged 16+ said they used an online communications service for making voice/video calls or sending messages in 2021, and 80% of children aged 3-15 did the same.*

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

> *"More people are using only a smartphone to go online. People were more likely in 2021 than in 2020 to only use a smartphone to go online (21% vs 11% in 2020).[7] There could be many reasons, but this may be because people were spending more time at home in late 2020 and early 2021 than in late 2021, and therefore used a wider range of devices. It may also reflect the larger screen size and better-optimised app functions of many smartphones, making them easier and potentially more cost-effective to use as a sole device for accessing the internet.*
>
> *In September 2021 73% of the time spent online by UK online adults per day was on a smartphone. UK online adults are also spending slightly more time using tablets than computers, demonstrating that there is a clear preference for using mobile devices to go online. Those aged 25 to 34 spend the highest proportion (85%) of their online time using a smartphone, followed by 35-44s (80%); 15-24s (78%); 45-54s (74%) and those aged 55+ (55%).[8]"*

With regards to usage of smart phones by children:

> *"Research from Ofcom's Children's and Parents' Media Literacy Tracker shows that smartphones (68%) and tablets (72%) are the main ways for children aged 3-15 to go online, and this varies significantly by age. Children are increasingly likely to use a smartphone to access the internet as they get older; from 39% of 3-4-year-olds to 71% of 8-11-year-olds and 94% of 12-15s.9 Our research shows that by the age of ten, the majority of children (61%) own their own smartphone."*

[6] https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/238361/online-nation-2022-report.pdf
[7] Ofcom Adults' Media Literacy Tracker 2021: Core survey IN1. Which of these devices do you use to go online? (single coded) Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online at home or elsewhere (excluding those who did not give a response at the postal survey) – 3,577
[8] Ipsos, Ipsos iris Online Audience Measurement Service, 1 September– 30 September 2021, adults age: 15+, UK. Note: Custom data supplied by Ipsos.
[9] Ofcom Children's and Parents' Media Literacy 2021: Parents Only survey.

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It also tends to be the case that those living in lower income households are less likely to have fixed line broadband, relying instead on mobile digital connectivity. These households will be further disadvantaged if the current infrastructural need is not met.

Emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic and its context with the provision of mobile network services

One must consider the operational context of modern communications in the management of the pandemic and the long-term implications it will have on the way we do business, socialise and function.

It is clear from the above that the heavy reliance on mobile connectivity has continued throughout the pandemic and it is fair to assume that increased use of and expectation for reliable mobile digital connectivity will see this upward trend continue given a widespread societal shift to a mix of office-based and home-working practices and the adoption of a mix of both face-to-face and remote-learning in the educational sectors.

Since the pandemic began many schools and colleges have adopted the use of bespoke apps or the likes of 'seesaw' or 'google classrooms' for teachers, students and parents/guardians to interact on a daily basis. Such apps allow schools/colleges to record what is happening, set and receive homework/coursework, and to notify parents of important information about operations. Whilst these apps can be used on many devices and work with both Wi-Fi and mobile communications networks connections, the dependence upon the latter is undoubtedly significant given the ease with which one can do so.

The Department have also published a further press release entitled "Industry and Government Joint Statement on Telecommunications Support for the NHS'[10] which highlights the NHS need for broadband and mobile services now that many healthcare services (e.g., hospital outpatient appointments) are being provided remotely and which outlines a new set of commitments including:

- Ensuring that hospitals have the connectivity they need;
- Enabling front line staff and clinicians to work remotely without service limitations; and
- Offering generous data allowances for their vulnerable mobile customers, so that patients have sufficient data to partake in video consultations.

One must also recognise the fact that mobile connectivity is the main means by which patients and the more vulnerable persons in our society can stay in touch with friends and family members who are unable to visit them in hospital, in care or when shielding. Connectivity also facilitates remote working for NHS staff and clinicians, where necessary.

It must be appreciated that Connectivity via mobile networks is no longer a luxury; it is an essential service for the reasons outlined in this statement, i.e., working from home, education, accessing services online, shopping online, keeping in touch with friends and family, and negating the need to travel.

The provision of uptodate network services is therefore a key element in the post-pandemic recovery plan.

In October 2020, the Centre for Policy Studies published a report titled 'Upwardly Mobile: How the UK can gain the full benefits of the 5G revolution'[11] in which it indicated that the next few years were critical for economic growth and that delays to the future rollout of 5G could cost the country tens of billions of pounds in lost economic output. The report also suggests that if delays continue at their current rate, by 2027, over 11 million households and businesses could be missing out on vital digital connectivity. Improving digital infrastructure supports the

[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/industry-and-government-joint-statement-on-telecommunications-support-for-the-nhs

[11] https://www.cps.org.uk/research/upwardly-mobile/

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Government's 'levelling up' agenda, by helping local areas to retain and attract businesses and talent as well as by reducing regional inequalities. However, the Report suggests that, without reform to existing legislation, millions of households and businesses will suffer.

The Report also includes the following statements from its author, Alex Jackman, a former digital adviser to the Government:

> *"Digital networks and the services they support have underpinned our resilience to Covid-19 and they will drive our recovery. By expanding them, we deliver not only immediate benefits but also the essential foundation stone for 5G. This is no time for the government to be passive on the deployment environment - the difference between the UK as a 5G pioneer and ceding leadership to others is as much as £173bn.*
>
> *"Productivity gains to business, equality gains for regions and economic gains for the country are only as achievable as the networks we can access."*

Following on from the above, it is worth noting that the then Digital Infrastructure Minister, Matt Warman MP, recently gave a Keynote Speech at Connected Britain 2020[12], in September of 2020, and spoke about ongoing work by the government and telecommunications industry to boost the UK's world class digital connectivity. In his opening paragraphs, he stated thanked the telecommunications industry as a whole, stating:

> *"You have kept school children connected with their teachers, allowed isolated grandparents to speak to their grandchildren, and enabled great British businesses to power the economy through these difficult times."*

Before going on to suggest that:

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

The Minister went on to refer to modern communications networks as 'game changing technology' and referenced its endless opportunities before concluding that

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

Government Ambition and Legislative Reforms

It is important to consider this proposal in a wider context of National Government ambition which clearly recognises the benefits that modern communications networks bring.

- **'The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2022**[13] The reader will be aware that amended planning legislation was introduced on 04 April 2022. This amendment saw permitted development rights extended and a relaxing of planning laws in relation to telecommunications infrastructure developments.

[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/matt-warmans-keynote-speech-at-connected-britain-2020
[13] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/278/contents/made

Registered Address:
Cornerstone Telecommunications, Infrastructure Limited,
Hive 2, 1530 Arlington Business Park, Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4SA.
Registered in England & Wales No. 08087551.
VAT No. GB142 8555 06

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

- **The Government's UK Digital Strategy Policy Paper[14]**
  The paper was also updated on 04 October 2022, within which 'Section 1 Digital Foundations' reiterates that digital infrastructure plays a vital role in the daily lives of modern society and is the foundation of a thriving digital economy. The Strategy confirms that every part of the UK needs world-class, secure digital infrastructure that enables people to access the connectivity and services they need, where they live, work or travel, and clearly states the ambition to supply the majority of the UK's population with access to 5G by 2027. The Strategy also highlights the fact that enhancing digital connectivity is 'Mission 4' of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper[15].

- **Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FITR)[16]**
  In 2018, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport published the FITR outlining the Government's intent on being the best place to start and grow digital business with the aim of providing the majority of the population with 5G coverage by 2027. The FITR made it clear that 5G networks will deliver faster and better mobile broadband data services to consumers and businesses and will enable innovative new services for industry sectors, including manufacturing, transport, immersive technologies and healthcare.

- **'The Electronic Communications Code (the Code) 2017[17]'**
  Government ambition and recognition for the benefits that modern communications networks bring is also clearly evident in the publication of the Code which has made it easier for network operators to install and maintain apparatus, such as phone masts, exchanges and cabinets, on public and private land with Part 4, Paragraph 20, providing a mechanism for the courts to impose terms of occupation on a landowner and the Operator or infrastructure provider. Further amendments to the Code are imminent, to help streamline the acquisition process and clarify relationships between infrastructure providers and site owners.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021[18]

The NPPF outlines the Government's strategies for economic, environmental and social planning policy in England providing a set of objectives that have been designed to foster the delivery of sustainable development, not to hinder or prevent development. Local planning authorities are directed to approach planning decisions positively and to attach significant weight to the benefits of economic growth. The NPPF also states that where a development plan is absent, silent or out of date then permission should be granted unless the adverse impact of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF.

The NPPF supersedes all Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes, including the telecoms specific PPG 8.

Section 10 of the NPPF is entitled "Supporting High Quality Communications" and continues the vein of the preceding NPPF's Section 5, reiterating that:

- Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being
- Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology
- Upgrades will be necessary in time

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uks-digital-strategy/uk-digital-strategy
[15] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom
[16] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-telecoms-infrastructure-review
[17] https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/information-for-industry/policy/electronic-comm-code
[18] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

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And advocating that:

- Site/mast sharing potential should be investigated
- Sites should be carefully designed using a minimum size and scale of apparatus and disguises where necessary

Section 10 goes on to confirm that developers must provide evidence in relation to their site selection process that confirms that every effort has been made to identify the best available site option. It also places an emphasis on the fact that LPAs must determine applications for communications infrastructure on planning grounds alone.

Other relevant points from the NPPF

- Section 2 'Achieving Sustainable Development' continues to promote sustainable development via the support for economic, social and environmental objectives

- Section 4 'Decision Making' confirms the need for LPAs to approach decisions on proposed developments in a positive and proactive way, seeking to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

- Section 6 'Building a strong, competitive economy' outlines the need to support economic growth, highlighting the need to appreciate specific locational requirements; a matter that is which is very relevant to communications development which is based upon very specific geographical necessities. With modern technologies, coverage requirements must be addressed from within or extremely close to the target area.

- Section 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' confirms the need to distinguish between international, national and locally designated sites confirming that *'…great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'*

- Section 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' confirms the need to consider the potential impact of development upon historic assets, advocating that any proposal that does result in harm to a designated heritage asset must have clear and convincing justification. Importantly it also confirms where a development proposal leads to less than substantial harm, then this harm must be weighed up against the public benefits of the proposal.

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England[1]

The Code of Best Practice 2016 has now been replaced with this document which provides guidance to Code Operators (referred to as 'operators' throughout the Code of Practice), including the Mobile Network Operators and wireless infrastructure providers, their agents and contractors, local planning authorities, and all other relevant stakeholders in England on how to carry out their roles and responsibilities when installing wireless network infrastructure. It is also a useful tool for other interested stakeholders such as community groups, amenity bodies and individuals with an interest in mobile connectivity.

[1] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057999/Code_of_practice_for_wireless_network_development_in_England.pdf

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

It is also important to note that, although led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), this Code of Practice has been developed in collaboration with representatives of the mobile network industry, other government departments and public bodies, local planning authorities, and protected landscapes.

The document outlines the Legal and Policy frameworks within which the document has been produced and reiterates the following:

> *"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."*
>
> Paragraphs 8 and 9

It is also important to note that the Code states that:

> *Section 10 of the NPPF sets out the planning policies for communications development in England, and states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. The NPPF also sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technologies (such as 5G). Other sections of the NPPF set out how these policies should be balanced with other considerations, including conserving and enhancing the natural environment and historic environment."*
>
> Paragraph 15

With regards to how wireless networks function, and with specific reference to 5G, the Code states that:

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

The Code also outlines its 'Principles and Commitment' as follows:

Operators should develop their networks and install wireless infrastructure according to the following principles and commitments:

- *"Site sharing and use of existing infrastructure: make use of existing structures, sites and masts wherever possible to reduce the need for new development. The NPPF states that, when installing mobile infrastructure, the number of masts and sites should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion.*
- *Consultation with local planning authorities, local communities and other stakeholders: participate in dialogue with local planning authorities, along with other relevant stakeholders such as the highways*

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authorities, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty bodies, Historic England, and Natural England, including pre-application discussions, where appropriate. Maintain clear procedures, and high-quality communication and consultation with local communities and other interested parties. Operators should agree community engagement with local planning authorities and share information as appropriate (see pre-application consultation with local communities below).

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

Paragraph 18

Equally importantly, the new Code outlines the role of the Local Planning Authority stating:

"Local planning authorities should support the deployment of digital infrastructure by:

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

Paragraph 19

Local Plan[19]

The Local Plan Review has recently been considered by the Full Council and will soon move to the final public pre-submission consultation stage, which will be the opportunity for all interested parties to have their say on the proposals. This will be held in the autumn of 2023.

[19] https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy

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The Development Plan includes the Wiltshire Core Strategy incorporating saved policies from district local plans, Chippenham Site Allocations Plan, Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, Minerals and Waste Plans and made Neighbourhood Plans.

These documents do not include telecommunications specific policies. However, there are a number of Core Strategy strategic objectives and policies within that, when applied in a weighted manner, are considered relevant. These are as follows:

- Delivering strategic objective 1: delivering a thriving economy
  - CP36 Economic Regeneration
- Delivering strategic objective 5: protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment
  - CP55 Air Quality
  - CP57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Space Shaping
  - CP58 Ensuring the Conservation of the historic environment
- Delivering strategic objective 6: to ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to support our communities

It is also important to labour the fact that the development being proposed is essential infrastructure with specific functional and operational criteria that cannot be expected to adhere strictly to more general policy criteria.

It must also be acknowledged that it is almost impossible for such development to enhance the character or setting of the area in which it is required to be deployed and more often than not all that can be done is to seek to minimise impact to an acceptable level through sensitive siting and design practices, as has been the case.

Decision Makers must also not forget to weigh the impact of telecommunications developments against the many significant social, economic and sustainability benefits it brings.

Planning Summary

A summary as to why the subject proposal adheres to all relevant policy criteria is outlined below:

- Operational Requirement
  There is a clear operational need for the development. The subject proposal will result in maintained and improved network services allowing residents, businesses, and visitors in the locale to access the many social and economic benefits associated with modern communications network services.

- Siting
  The siting of any new base station development is directly linked to operational need, which in this case relates to the upgrade of an established base station. The site has previously been considered acceptable by the LPA as it is located in a commercial area and is set in a context of other infrastructural elements, most of which are associated with the adjacent railway. It is removed from residential vistas, has limited impact upon built heritage assets and other sensitive viewpoints, and makes best use of topography and existing features for context, screening and backdrop purposes. The subject site is within the Conservation Area close to a number of Grade II Listed Buildings but there is no alternative to such context if the subject operational requirement is to be met. Because this is an upgrade proposal, no alternative sites have been considered.

- Design
  Similar to siting requirements, the design of any new base station development is directly linked to operational need. It also has to be tailored to the bespoke nature of the site in question, i.e., with

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consideration in a context of topography, proximity to other natural and manmade features, planning policy and other local sensitivities, and it must be structurally capable of accommodating the necessary transmission apparatus. Following the nomination of the site, a well-considered design process has been implemented with the applicant having to balance technical requirements including ICNIRP compliance, operational, wind loading and structural calculations, with the minimisation of visual impact. A minimum amount and size of apparatus has been proposed and, whilst a larger mast is to be installed on site, a lesser mast girth and height would not be able to achieve ICNIRP compliance or provide an optimum coverage solution from this site.

- Equipment colour
  The proposed colour scheme reflects that which has already been consented on site.

- Impact upon trees/vegetation
  Although there are trees present nearby, none are in close proximity. Therefore, no impact will occur

- Flooding
  The proposed site is not in an area identified as having any significant flood risk. A flood risk assessment is not therefore deemed to be necessary.

- Cumulative Impact
  The proposed development will not increase the number of base stations in the area so no increase in cumulative impact will occur.

- Impact upon built heritage
  The established nature of the subject base station site when taken with the efforts of the applicant to limit the amount and size of the proposed telecommunications development to an absolute minimum means that impact upon built heritage has been kept to a minimum. Whilst some impact will occur, it is felt that any harm would be well outweighed by benefit.

- Impact upon natural heritage
  The development is well removed from any natural heritage assets in the wider area.

- Impact upon residential amenity
  There are residential properties in the wider locale, but none will be adversely affected by this upgrade proposal. Impact upon residential amenity is considered to be limited and acceptable.

- Impact upon general amenity
  Although the development remains visible from within certain areas of the public domain, it does benefit from some screening, backdrop and context provided by existing features. Potential impact will be limited, and any harm would also be well outweighed by benefit.

- Benefit
  As indicated above, the proposed essential infrastructure will allow local residents, businesses and visitors in the locale to access the many social and economic benefits associated with modern communications network services. High quality and reliable communications infrastructure are essential for economic growth and social well-being and the demand for mobile data in the UK is increasing rapidly as households and businesses become increasingly reliant on mobile connectivity. The infrastructure must therefore be in place to ensure supply does not become a constraint on future demand. There should be no doubt that the Government fully supports the development high quality communications infrastructure and decision makers must appreciate that the NPPF advocates that local planning authorities should also support the

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expansion of electronic communications networks where impact is deemed to be acceptable or outweighed by benefit.

- Weighing up Harm versus Benefit
  Introducing any new infrastructural element into a street scene will undoubtedly result in some degree of visual impact. However, the impact that will occur as a result of this essential infrastructure being deployed here is considered to be both acceptable and outweighed by the many benefits of providing an effective modern communications service.

- Health
  An ICNIRP Certificate has been supplied. As such, the issue of health is not a material planning consideration. However, for the benefit of further information on this matter, we would refer the reader to the additional supporting information that has been submitted with this application.

We trust that the above and enclosed information is to your satisfaction and would be happy to expand upon any aspect of this proposal if required.

Confirmation that submitted drawings have been checked for accuracy for an on behalf of Cornerstone

Name:	J Kane	Telephone:	[redacted]
Company:	Galliford Try Telecoms		
Address:	Galliford Try Telecoms PO Box 17452 2 Lochside View Edinburgh EH12 1LB	Email Address:	[redacted]
Signed:	[redacted]	Date:	08/08/2023
Position:	Consultant Planner		
	(on behalf of Cornerstone)		

Registered Address:
Cornerstone Telecommunications, Infrastructure Limited,
Hive 2, 1530 Arlington Business Park, Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4SA.
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