

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

#### 1. Site Details

Site Name:	Southgate SW	Site Address:	Southgate, Shaffon, South Yorkshire, S72 8QG
National Grid Reference:	E: 439803 N: 410694		
Site Ref Number:	CS 23613521	Site Type: <sup>1</sup>	SW - 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?	<b>Yes</b>	No
If no explain why:  N/A		
Were industry site databases checked for suitable sites by the operator:	<b>Yes</b>	No
If no explain why:  N/A		

##### Site Specific Pre-application consultation with local planning authority


Was there pre-application contact:	<b>Yes</b>
Date of pre-application contact:	28/04/2026
Name of contact:	N/A
Summary of outcome/Main issues raised:  Consultation letters and information were sent to the Planning Authority on 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2026 but there was no response.	

<sup>1</sup> Macro or Micro

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### Annual area wide information to planning authority

Has annual area wide information been provided?	No
If no explain why:	
<p>Summary issues raised:</p> <p>Cornerstones commercial relationship with VMO2 has changed, effectively increasing our independence to work with other companies in the deployment of mobile infrastructure. It means we no longer have visibility of VMO2s full update plan. However, Cornerstone is fully committed to working closely with Local Planning Authorities and following best practice guidance.</p> <p>We aim to engage and work with the planning department at the earliest opportunity from when we are instructed to deliver new infrastructure within your Local Authority area and often conduct strategic pre-rollout engagement meetings to discuss our wider rollout. If your Local Authority would like a meeting to discuss wider Cornerstone rollout plans then please advise. We recognise the importance of developing long term partnerships and will always work with you to deliver improved mobile connectivity. Accordingly we conducted a pre-rollout engagement meeting with Barnsely Metropolitan Borough Council on 28/04/26.</p>	

### Community Consultation


Rating of Site under Traffic Light Model:	Amber
<p>Outline of consultation carried out:</p> <p>On 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026 consultation letters with drawings and other supplementary information was sent to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward Cllr Ashley Peace</li> <li>• Ward Cllr Ruth Booker</li> <li>• Ward Cllr Dorothy Coates</li>   <li>• Shafton Parish Council</li>   <li>• Mr Dan Jarvis MP</li> </ul>	

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

No response was received.

### School/College

Location of site in relation to school/college:

The nearest school to the proposal is Oakwood Academy which is situated some 535m South West of the proposal.

Outline of consultation carried out with school/college:

This school is sufficient distance from the proposal, with intervening development between the proposal and school. As such, it was felt that consultation is not deemed necessary or appropriate as per the Code of Practice.

Summary of outcome/main issues raised:

N/A

### Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence or the operator of the civil safeguarding area or defence safeguarding area notification

Will the proposed development be on a civil safeguarding area or a defence safeguarding area?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Has the Civil Aviation Authority/Secretary of State for Defence/operator of the civil safeguarding area or defence safeguarding area been notified?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Details of response:		
N/A		

### Developer's Notice


Copy of Developer's Notice enclosed?	<b>Yes</b>	No
Date served:	18/05/2026	

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### 3. Proposed Development

#### The proposed site:

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Cornerstone in support of a proposed telecommunications installation required to address a critical gap in network coverage and capacity within south Shafton area.

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.

This poor network performance is demonstrated in the crowdsourced network performance data mapping shown further below within this document. This shows actual network performance data from peoples phones and looks beyond just 'coverage'. Capacity is an ever increasing issue where the network cannot handle the additional traffic created by data hungry applications and given the volume of people and devices accessing the network. This leads to dropped calls and constant buffering of data services. This capacity issue is often more of an issue than coverage in urban and suburban areas where there is a density of people and devices trying to access data services on the network, however in addition to the capacity issues here, coverage is also poor given the area simply does not have any site for the necessary infrastructure to provide the required service.

The great effort has gone into finding a location that minimises impact while delivering that improved service.

#### **Background and Planning History**

This has been a longstanding problem in this area and there have been previous attempts to address it. Most recently, there was an application submitted and approved in June 2019. This was determined under Council application reference **2019/0548**.


This proposal was never implemented due to issues with delivery of power. The consent has since expired. The image below shows the location of this expired consent (marked red) in relation to the current proposal (marked green), subject of this application, some 270m apart:-

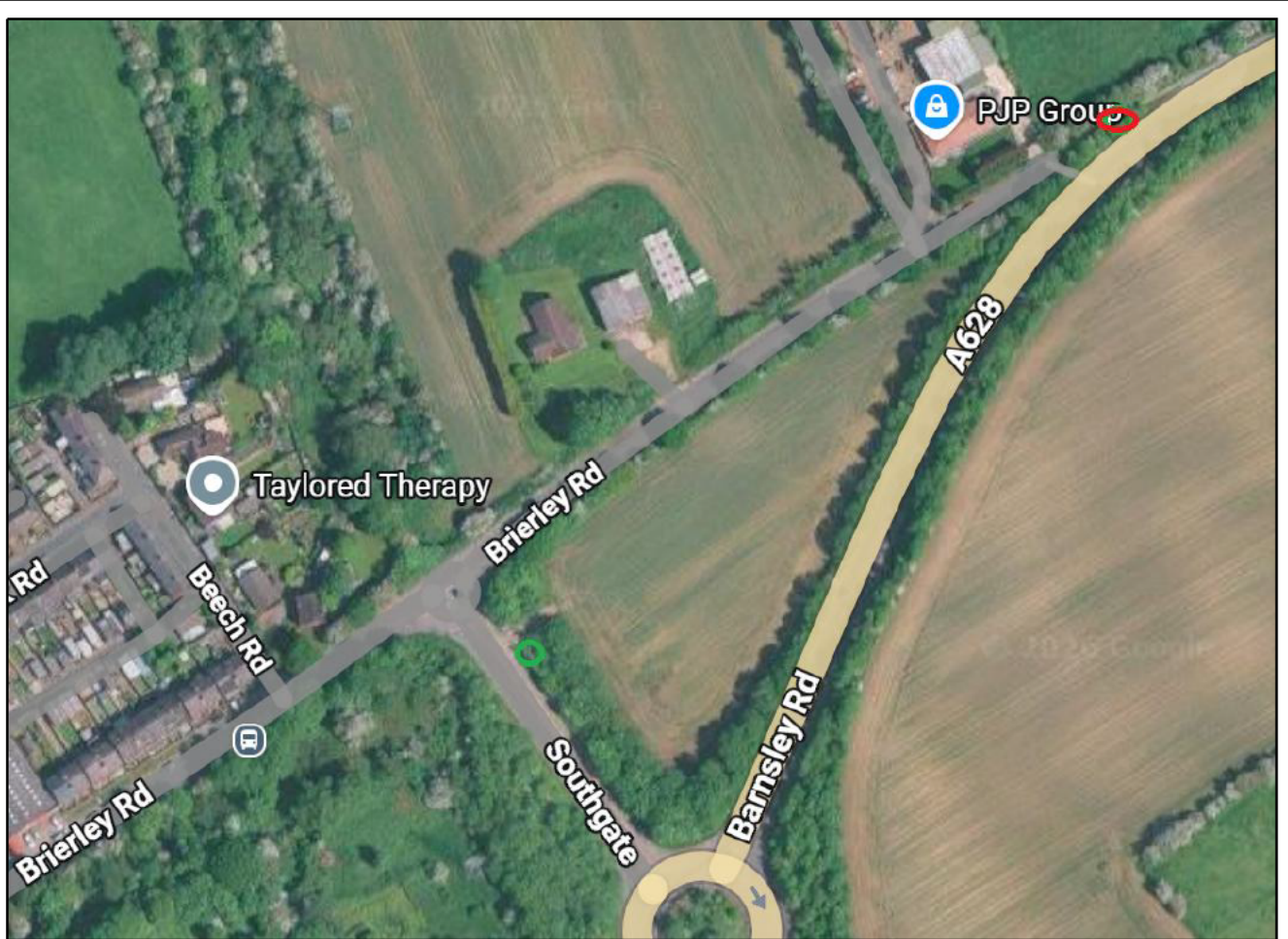
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This previous location was obviously reconsidered as an option to deliver the necessary service uplift, however, the power delivery issues remain and, critically, the previous proposal was only capable of delivering up to 4G service.


Seven years on 5G service is now a requirement and being rolled out. As will be discussed further within this document, 5G has more technical challenges than previous generations in that the higher frequencies used do not travel as far or propagate through materials as well – in practical terms that necessitates the infrastructure site to be closer to the target service area to deliver the service where the people and devices whom depend upon it are.

The previous site, which was suitable for 4G, is now too far east from the target service area (the main populated and residential area to the west/north west of the proposal) to provide the most up to date 5G service given the technical constraints alluded to.

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As such, the previous expired location is no longer viable while the new option is. Critically, the new location still facilitates service provision to the populated and residential area to the west/north west from a location outside the residential area – keeping the site away from residential streets and cul-de-sacs. In doing so it is providing important local service while negating and minimising impact upon residential amenity, visual amenity and streetscene.

The Crowdsourced network performance data map embedded further below demonstrates the current issue clearly – the whole wider area clearly has very poor network service and this is shown by the red or very dark red colouring.

This has been a long standing issue for the area and efforts in the past to address this have failed. These previous failures is the reason for the existence of the connectivity issues evidenced by the crowd sourced network performance data provided.

Additionally, while it was supported and approved by the Council, the previous decision was made on a proposal that was not delivering 5G standalone, with all additional relevant material socio-economic benefits associated, that this proposal will deliver. In the past 7 years societies dependence upon digital connectivity has increased significantly and continues to increase exponentially - the policy context and various Government strategies has changed to reflect that.

In fact, UK Government have just concluded a consultation on both Part 16 of the GPDO to further reduce restriction on this type of development and the NPPF so that even more weight may be given to the material benefits.

As such, for all the reasons above including technical constraints and material policy and guidance change, this is a significantly materially different proposal than what was considered some 7 years ago but is equally acceptable in planning terms.

### **Site Location**

As alluded, 5G radio technologies operate in higher radio frequency bands than previous technologies and these higher frequencies do not propagate as far as the lower frequencies of previous generations and, additionally, naturally result in more signal loss and greater interference from obstacles (like trees or buildings).


As a result, 5G sites must be located directly where the local demand is. This is an incredibly challenging target service area that is made up of dense built-form with predominantly low-rise residential property and public service buildings. This is all

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compounded further by a proliferation of underground services that the proposal cannot be sited on top of.

This means there are very, very limited acceptable or viable siting options directly within the target service area. However, the surrounding area just outside the settlement boundary is largely characterised by agricultural fields with some sporadic commercial premises of different scales. Significantly, the area also has a row of large lattice pylons running north to south.

Shafton is north east some 6km from Barnsley. It is a short distance to west from Brierley, north of Cudworth, east of Royston and south of South Hiendley. Each of these small settlements are connected via local roads but separated by a Green Belt designation.

In a general sense this part of Shafton is characterised simply by dense suburban style one and two storey residential development, often in terrace form, with some sporadic commercial landuse. There is a wooded area that fronts a row of terrace housing and demarks the settlement boundary that also conveniently acts as a buffer between the settlement area and the proposal.


The immediate character of the site itself is uneventful – a standard single lane road leading to a small roundabout. The roads are all lined by tall trees, streetlighting poles and dense vegetation and the only notable development are the row of large pylons running immediately adjacent to the site. This is shown below:-



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The lack of other development, presence of the trees and large pylons is all significant – it ensures that the siting of proposal will have no significant or unacceptable impacts upon amenity as there are no views from any property. From most locations it will be well screened by the trees with only the upper most section visible and those views will be from distance so certainly not overbearing nor prominent. Even when viewed it will be viewed in the context of the significantly larger pylons that are more numerous and less sympathetic design – in this context the proposal will create no additional harm beyond existing and will not be incongruous in the setting.

The site is also off the pavement on the grass verge and while the area is very low footfall, this negates any potential pedestrian impact entirely.

Visibility does not essentially equate to harm and the careful siting demonstrated by the points above ensures amenity and landscape is protected with minimal impact.

Given the technical constraints alluded, any other siting option would be within a residential streetscene with significantly greater overlooking, and subsequent impact upon residential amenity, than the proposal.

It is felt that the proposal put forward certainly minimises harm and is the best and least impactful viable option in a challenging target service area.

As noted, the siting makes use of the tree screening and backdrop, and is also sited adjacent to similar vertical structures like street lighting columns and the pylons – as advocated in Best Practice. This will assist in the assimilation of the pole and minimise impact on visual and residential amenity – these principles are outlined in Para 39 of the Government ‘Code of Practice’ Planning Guidance document:-


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

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*tree-line and the trees may need to be maintained to prevent growth above a certain level."*

The proposal aligns with this Best Practice principle and policy in terms of finding the best viable option.

While the area is designated as Green Belt, for the reasons previously mentioned it is felt that the proposal has no material impact upon the Green Belt – the proposal is on the northern edge of the Green Belt that prohibits the spread of built form to the settlements previously alluded.

For clarity, Green Belt designation can be given limited weight under an application for prior approval where the principle of development is established in law, even in green belt designations. As such the principle of a telecoms mast of this height in the green belt cannot be questioned. It is deemed acceptable in law.

The principle of a Green Belt is to stop the spread of built form - this site is on the edge of the built up area of Shafton and the site is also wholly surrounded by tall trees that will largely screen it - for these reasons it also will not impact the openness of the green belt.

For additional clarity on this procedural point, appeal cases have been included in the appeal submission and they note...

*"The Council has also raised the issue of the mast's Green Belt location. Under Class A of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Order, the only issues which can be considered in respect of a prior approval application for telecommunications equipment are its siting and appearance. Whilst the refusal reason makes reference to the open character of the surrounding Green Belt area, it stops short of the officer report's assessment of stating that the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, in any event and for the reasons I have set out, **the principle of the development and such Green Belt matters are not relevant to my determination of the matter before me.**"*

Another appeal (attached) also confirms....


*"The decision notice states that the proposal would be harmful to the visual amenities and openness of the Green Belt, within which the site is located, and cites conflict with Policy 49 of the Local Plan. Whilst I see no reason why the land being in the Green Belt ought not to indicate the openness of its character, Policy 49 **is not***

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**material to the determination of this appeal** as the issues it pertains to do not include character and appearance."

In these particular cases Costs were awarded due to the Councils reference of Green Belt consideration – these have also been attached for clarity.

As noted, the majority of the search area is dense residential development locating the site outside the green belt siting would need to be on residential streets or cul-de-sacs. It is strongly felt that this selected location that finds the best balance - negligible impact on green belt (where the principle is established in law) over potential impact upon residential amenity.

## Design

The height of the monopole at 20 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 tall 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.

As a result, 5G requires taller structures to achieve the same level of coverage footprint.

The antennas are placed in stacked apertures – 5G antennas at the top, above the 4G antennas. This top-height at 20m 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 trees.


It is felt that this slimline streetworks pole type design is the most sensitive that could be used. It is necessary to have this type of design that would be structurally

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capable of hosting the antennas at the necessary height while also being the most slimline pole possible.

The use of this pole, 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. The height also ensures ICNIRP compliance and so this 20m height is the lowest height that is viable.

The mast is proposed grey colour – this was intentional to minimise contrast against the typically a grey sky backdrop it will be viewed against and will assimilate with the existing streetlighting poles of similar colour.

The antennas have been placed in a very narrow aperture 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. Between the antenna and remote radio apertures there is banding to merge the apertures and keep it appearing streamlined, unfussy and uncluttered.

There are two 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 streetscene that can be seen in other deployments. The are also very narrow to minimise streetscene impact. The cabinets are of green colour as it helps assimilate with existing and this typically blends with soft 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.**”*

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For all these reasons, the slimline streetworks monopole design is the most suitable design in this particular circumstance.

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. These applications carry significant socio-economic benefit, all underpinned by the connectivity provided by infrastructure such as the proposal.

Type of Structure:	
Description:	
<p>The proposed development comprises the installation of a 20m high slimline Orion streetworks monopole supporting 6 no. antennas and 3 no. ERS radio units, together with equipment housing and associated ancillary development.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Overall Height:	20m
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:	Pole painted 'Light Grey' (RAL 7035) with grey antennas (as noted, happy to amend colour depending upon LPA preference).
Equipment housing – type of material and external colour:	Steel equipment cabinets coloured Green.

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

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 NPPF and Code of Practice encourages site sharing and the efficient use of existing telecommunications infrastructure. However, within the defined search area, there are no existing base stations that are capable of being shared to provide this new service.

Policy also advocates the use of buildings where possible and, as discussed at length previously, the buildings in the search area do not provide sufficient height. In any case, their nature as dwellings mean that the rooftops would not be suitable structurally or aesthetically.

The latest 5G service is delivered via higher frequency radio. This higher frequency is helpful 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 the trees to assist radio propagation to minimise the need for additional sites in the area and by utilising a colour finish that will minimise contrast when viewed adjacent the typically grey sky.

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 Governments 'Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England' Planning Guidance document (attached to this application).**

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### Health and Safety - including ICNIRP compliance

The proposal is designed to be fully ICNIRP compliant and is submitted with an ICNIRP compliance certificate.

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.

## 4. Technical Justification

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

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.

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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 Operators 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 Crowd Sourced network performance data show the failing network in the area.


The NPPF then requires that operators find an acceptable or 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

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the proposal is acceptable or the most suitable option in terms of siting and appearance.

This is significant in an area as constrained as this, especially when such careful consideration has been given to siting and design to minimise impact while remaining functional and addressing the technical constraints.

Under the terms of its licence with UK Government (controlled via Ofcom on Governments behalf), Virgin Media O2 Limited (VMO2) 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 VMO2 in Little Aston addressing existing gaps in service coverage, adding additional capacity and improving overall network performance in the locality.

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.

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

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


This is shown in the crowdsourced network performance data below. Anything that is not demarked green is sub-standard performance. Anything marked red is very poor performance. It is clear that the whole area is suffering from very poor service.

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Given the network performance issue evidenced below, there is a specific requirement for a new base station installation (the proposal). This additional site will allow upgraded service to be delivered with improved coverage and capacity across the surrounding area required to handle the volume of data traffic accessing the network via devices and phones.



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## 5. Site Selection Process

In seeking to meet growing network demand in the Shafton area, 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 previously alluded.

The **local urban environment** presented further constraints. Outside of the immediate area around the proposal site, which is characterised by dense mature trees lighting an A-Road, the target service (search) area is predominantly comprised of one and two storey residential property on suburban streets and cul-de-sacs. **These are all** unsuitable for installations for visual and residential 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.


Alternative sites considered and not chosen:-

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	= Proposal site		D# = Discounted Option		=Search Area
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Option	Easting	Northing	Address	Site type	Summarise why this option has been discounted
D1	440002	410866	Shafton Barnsley Barnsley Road A628 Barnsley South Yorks S72 8QW	Street works	As alluded previously in this document, this was the original option for a 4G site and planning was gained in 2019 but never implemented and now expired (LPA Ref:- <b>2019/0548</b> ). However the site is remote from a permanent electricity supply, nor can a viable route to site be identified. Additionally, this location is too far from the target service area to deliver 5G given the higher frequency that 5G uses meaning it cannot travel as far. So while it was viable for 4G it is not viable for new 5G service. Therefore, this site has to be discounted.

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Option	Easting	Northing	Address	Site type	Summarise why this option has been discounted
D2	439820	411024	Arqiva Mast Ref 1465032 41 Brierley Road Shafton Barnsley South Yorks S72 8QW	Greenfield	<p>As part of a sequential approach to site selection the existing mast was reviewed, however, it is not a shareable structure in its current form and cannot accommodate any further operators without significant redevelopment to a much larger structure.</p> <p>Given this is owned by a third party it is not within the applicants control to do that necessary redevelopment.</p> <p>Additionally, this site is outside the search area and is too far for useful 5G service to be delivered to western parts of the target service area.</p>
D3	439407	410587	Apollo Cradles Limited 3 WeetShaw Close Shafton Barsnsley South Yorks S72 8PZ	Greenfield	<p>Given the site's existing use as a works Yard and the frequent vehicle movements and access arrangements, there is no practical space available to accommodate a ground-based installation of the nature and footprint required without having a significant impact on the business operations of the landowner and therefore was discounted</p>

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Option	Easting	Northing	Address	Site type	Summarise why this option has been discounted
<b>D4</b>	439495	410776	Shafton Crown Green Bowling Club Ash Road Shafton South Yorks S72 8QE	Greenfield	Given the site's existing use as a Bowling Club there is no practical space available to accommodate a ground-based installation of the nature and footprint required.
<b>D5</b>	439911	410919	PJP Scrap Metal 39 Brierley Road Shafton Barnsley South Yorks S72 8QW	Greenfield	Given the site's existing use as a Scrap Metal Yard and the frequent vehicle movements and access arrangements, there is no practical space available to accommodate a ground-based installation of the nature and footprint required without having a significant impact on the business operations of the landowner and therefore was discounted
<b>D6</b>	439791	410731	Streetworks Brierley Road Breirley Road Shafton Barnsley South Yorks S72 8QW	Street works	A site in this location would be too close to overhead power lines/services/pylons to be safely installed and maintained in line with health and safety requirements
<b>D7</b>	439761	410923	Field Off Brierley Road Shafton Barnsley South Yorks S72 8QW	Greenfield	A site in this location would be too close to overhead power lines/services/pylons to be safely installed and maintained in line with health and safety requirements

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Option	Easting	Northing	Address	Site type	Summarise why this option has been discounted
<b>D8</b>	439862	410581	SW at Two Gates A628 Shafton Barnsley Sout Yorks S72 8QW	Street works	When taking into account the ground height, the topography of the wider target area, as well as the extent of the built and natural clutter immediate to the site in question, an option here would be too low. To pursue a proposal in this location would prevent the effective propagation of radio signals towards the whole of the target area and so it would not fulfil the operator's technical requirements.
<b>D9</b>	439431	410784	High Street Field 48 High Street Shafton Barnsley South Yorks S72 8NF	Greenfield	This location is in a park used for recreation and adjacent to the school . it is also on the edge of the search area and therefore has been discounted on the basis of the proposed site offers a better solution against planning and coverage requirements
<b>D10</b>	439492	410606	Cudworth West End FC Shared Access High Street Shafton Barnsley South Yorks S72 8QE	Greenfield	This is a School Playing Field . Shared Access are a provider for these sort of locations for Telecoms however this site was not available and its proximity to a School it has been discounted on the basis the proposed site offers a better solution.

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Option	Easting	Northing	Address	Site type	Summarise why this option has been discounted
<b>D11</b>	439454	411010	Poplar Avenue, Shafton, Shafton Two Gates, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 8PE,	Streetworks	<p>This location has a wide enough footpath to host a site, however, it is directly overlooked on various sides from residential property.</p> <p>As such, it is felt that this option was more impactful on residential amenity and streetscene than the significantly more discrete proposal.</p> <p>As such, it was discounted as an option in favour of the more sympathetic proposal.</p>
<b>D12</b>	439552	411040	Park View, Shafton, Shafton Two Gates, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 8RF	Streetworks	<p>This location has a wide enough footpath to host a site, however, it is directly overlooked on various sides from residential property.</p> <p>As such, it is felt that this option was more impactful on residential amenity and streetscene than the significantly more discrete proposal.</p> <p>As such, it was discounted as an option in favour of the more sympathetic proposal.</p>

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Option	Easting	Northing	Address	Site type	Summarise why this option has been discounted
<b>D13</b>	439590	410984	Park View, Shafton, Shafton Two Gates, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 8RF	Streetworks	<p>This location has a wide enough footpath to host a site, however, it is directly overlooked on various sides from residential property.</p> <p>As such, it is felt that this option was more impactful on residential amenity and streetscene than the significantly more discrete proposal.</p> <p>As such, it was discounted as an option in favour of the more sympathetic proposal.</p>
<b>D14</b>	439490	410937	Park View, Shafton, Shafton Two Gates, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 8R	Streetworks	<p>This location has a wide enough footpath to host a site, however, it is directly overlooked on various sides from residential property.</p> <p>As such, it is felt that this option was more impactful on residential amenity and streetscene than the significantly more discrete proposal.</p> <p>As such, it was discounted as an option in favour of the more sympathetic proposal.</p>

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Option	Easting	Northing	Address	Site type	Summarise why this option has been discounted
<b>D15</b>	439430	411002	Poplar Avenue, Shafton, Shafton Two Gates, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 8PE	Streetworks	<p>This location has a wide enough footpath to host a site, however, it is directly overlooked on various sides from residential property.</p> <p>As such, it is felt that this option was more impactful on residential amenity and streetscene than the significantly more discrete proposal.</p> <p>As such, it was discounted as an option in favour of the more sympathetic proposal.</p>
<b>D16</b>	439561	410578	Brierley Road, Shafton, Shafton Two Gates, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 8QQ	Streetworks	<p>This location has a wide enough footpath to host a site, however, it is directly overlooked on various sides from residential property.</p> <p>As such, it is felt that this option was more impactful on residential amenity and streetscene than the significantly more discrete proposal.</p> <p>As such, it was discounted as an option in favour of the more sympathetic proposal.</p>

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

N/A


Land use planning designations:

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The site is located in designated Green Belt. As noted previously in this Statement, and evidenced by appeals providing clarity on procedural matters, Green Belt designation can be given limited weight in the consideration of an application for prior approval.

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

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development is accepted in law (even in designations such as public open space or green belt).

### **Local Strategy and Planning Policy**

It is a Strategic goal of Barnsey Council to be digitally connected. This will be via the 'Digital Barnsley 2021' Council initiative and Barnsley Council **Local Development Plan**. Through these initiatives the Council states:-

*"While we have achieved much in recent years, the pace of change is unrelenting. The COVID-19 crisis has reaffirmed the importance of digital in a world where the workforce is increasingly and necessarily dispersed, and the speed of change is increasing. We have a simple vision for Barnsley as a place:*

*Barnsley is a connected, smart town with a culture of innovation, collaboration and strong digital leadership"*

Paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of the Local Development Plan discuss how digital infrastructure aligns with our strategies (the Digital Infrastructure Superfast Broadband Project):-

*"The four local authorities of the South Yorkshire Region (Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster) are embarking on a Superfast Broadband project to deliver improved broadband infrastructure to areas where it is acknowledged that the market is unlikely to deliver. Broadband connectivity is considered essential for building a strong and competitive economy resulting in economic growth and creating more and better jobs."*

Paragraph 25.3 also alludes to the importance of communications infrastructure:-


*"There are many examples of infrastructure. These include a need for new or improved provision of roads and other services, public transport, Green Infrastructure, recreation and open space facilities and infrastructure that will make Barnsley a better place such as public realm improvements, educational accommodation, affordable housing and also adequate community facilities. Investment may also be required to ensure the local economic infrastructure can accommodate the new development including shopping facilities and the availability of suitably skilled labour to support economic regeneration. **New forms of infrastructure are also relevant including communications technology, it is particularly important to ensure provision for Superfast Broadband.**"*

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The proposal wholly aligns with these policies in that it will deliver superfast 5G mobile broadband to the area.

### **Regional Policy and Strategy – Superfast South Yorkshire**

Superfast South Yorkshire is a partnership of the Local Authorities of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. It was established to deliver faster broadband to areas where it had not been commercially viable to for the private sector to invest in building infrastructure.

Superfast South Yorkshire are working to support BDUK to deliver Project Gigabit across South Yorkshire on behalf of the local authorities.

Crucially, mobile broadband, delivered via 5G dongles and routers, is becoming an alternative to fibre – increasing competition in the market. This can also deliver broadband on the move outside the home. 5G also provides a means of connectivity where it is impossible to deliver fibre.

As such, the proposal wholly aligns with the aspirations of Superfast South Yorkshire.

### **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.*

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*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 adjacent to existing grey vertical infrastructure and grey antennas as they must clear the trees for radio propagation and will be seen against a typically grey sky. Additionally, para 30 specifically advocates siting adjacent to trees for screening and backdrop to minimise impact.

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**

First published in 2012 but updated as recently as December 2024 with a Government consultation just concluded, the NPPF is the central planning policy document for England. It sets out the government's expectations for how planning decisions should be made and how development should be delivered.

The golden thread of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Chapter 10 'Supporting High Quality Communications' sets out the main policy tests for telecoms proposals. It states...


*"Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is **essential for economic growth and social well-being**. Planning policies and **decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G)** and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to*

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services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).”

“The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum **consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion**. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be **sympathetically designed** and camouflaged where appropriate.”

The policy also notes that when applying for a new mast evidence should be provided to show how the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure.

Again, the proposal wholly aligns with the policy tests required in the NPPF. It is significant to note the policy test specifically and purposefully notes ‘consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion’ – this is an acknowledgement of the technical constraints associated that directly influence siting and design (also noted in the Code of Practice Guidance) and gives clear indication and direction that weight must be applied to those operational matters.

The policy concluded that sites should be designed sympathetically – it is been demonstrated throughout the document that through considered siting and design impact has been minimised – siting away from residential property, siting adjacent to vegetation for screening/backdrop, colouring to assimilate with other adjacent structures, the lowest height that will keep the site viable operationally/technically and the most slimline a pole design possible as it is the most sympathetic to the locality even when a more robust pole or lattice would be better operationally.

Evidence has also been provided of a robust sequential test that explores many numerous siting options, including on buildings and other structures, and clearly concludes that this is the most appropriate and least impactful siting.

With all this is it clear that the proposal wholly aligns with NPPF policy tests and requirements.


Furthermore, beyond Chapter 10, NPPF Chapter 6 ‘Building a Strong, Competitive Economy’ specifically advocates support for Digital Connectivity proposals....

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*“Planning policies should...*

*pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a **modern economy**, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, **digital infrastructure**, freight and logistics”*

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

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

This policy goes further in adding great weight to the material benefits of the proposal as a counterbalance to perceived harm.

Mobile connectivity will be vital for the modern economy, connecting people and AI with data centres. Connecting IoT devices in Smart Cities with numerous benefits, including carbon reduction. Mobile infrastructure is clearly the ‘infrastructure that is needed to support the growth of these industries’.

Furthermore, this section of this document has gone into great detail in demonstrating how the proposal aligns with local, regional and national digital and economic aspirations – as such it also aligns with the NPPF policy supporting ‘industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth’.

In short, the proposal wholly aligns with both Chapter 10 and Chapter 6 of the NPPF and that must be given great weight in this determination and Planning Balance assessment.

### **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

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- 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.

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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 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*

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requirements of a taller mast due to lower typography, 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.

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**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.***

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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."**

Note other appeals related to Green Belt have been quoted previously within this Statement and submitted with this application but not quoted in this section.

### **It is clear that this proposal complies with...**

- Barnsley Council Local Planning policy
- Barnsley Council and Superfast South Yorkshire digital and economic aspirations
- National Planning Policy (NPPF)
- National Planning Guidance (Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development)
- Wider national economic and digital aspirations and strategies
- Meets appropriate procedural and 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**.

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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 enhance mobile network coverage in the Shafton area. The siting of the installation has been carefully selected within a **defined search area**, ensuring the structure delivers the necessary coverage and capacity while avoiding duplication of infrastructure, in line with the NPPF policy and guidance on **minimising mast proliferation**.

It is important to acknowledge that it is rarely possible to introduce new telecommunications infrastructure into an area without some degree of visual impact. However, through **sensitive siting and design**, that impact has been minimised as far as practicable in this case.

The proposed location, a road lined with a high density of tall trees and existing vertical infrastructure in the form of lighting poles and large pylons will comfortably accommodate the proposal within this context would not create any unacceptable additional harm beyond what is there already. In fact, siting adjacent trees to provide screening and backdrop is directly advocated in local and national Planning Policy and Guidance.

Crucially however, the proposed development lies **outside the direct line of sight of the nearest residential properties and utilising natural vegetation screening/backdrop** to preserve residential amenity.

Due to the careful siting, surrounding **landuse**, presence of a dense mature trees adjacent to which the proposal is sited, the proposal does not result in any **unacceptable visual dominance or overlooking** of sensitive receptors. Where visible it will create minimal material harm.


An extensive sequential site search was carried out and it has been robustly demonstrated that this is the only viable location in the search that will cause no significant impact to streetscene, residential amenity, visual amenity or heritage

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assets. There are other technically viable locations, however, they would be significantly more impactful on the local area than the proposal.

### **Visual appearance & Design**

The height of the tower is the minimum height required to provide high-quality 4G and 5G coverage to the intended target area while addressing the technical constraints alluded, including clearance of adjacent trees which would obstruct signal propagation and the need for ICNIRP compliance given the larger exclusion zones associated with 5G equipment. Even at close range the proposal will not be readily visible given the extent of screening barring the uppermost section. This will be fleeting glimpses as people pass by. This minimal view, in the context of existing vertical infrastructure and tree screening, ensures there is no significant harm.

The design of the pole is done to minimise impact – a slimline streetworks pole is the most suitable design for this particular area as a lattice or open headframe tower would appear incongruous.

The grey colouring will assimilate with the existing vertical infrastructure it will be sited adjacent to. This will minimise contrast as advocated in local and national planning policy and guidance. The antennas will remain grey as they need to 'see over' the nearby trees so grey will ensure they do not contrast from the typically grey sky it will be viewed against. If the Council feel a green colouring of the pole is preferable given siting within the trees then we would be happy to implement that. The height is the lowest possible that will work and the cabinets will be painted fir green to blend with street level vegetation, maintaining a tidy and consolidated area. The proposal is set away from the pedestrian paths so will cause no impact on pedestrian flow.

Regarding antenna design, it is technically essential that the latest 4G and 5G antennas remain unshrouded. Higher-frequency signals required for fast data transmission are unable to effectively propagate through materials such as Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP), which would be used in any shrouded enclosure. This limitation applies particularly to 5G but also affects advanced 4G antennas. Shrouding the antennas would compromise their performance, necessitating additional infrastructure elsewhere, again leading to a proliferation of masts. Shrouding would also act as a wind sail and add significantly greater windloading, necessitating a significantly more bulky structure than what is currently proposed. As an alternative to shrouding, banding is added between the antenna apertures to make the pole appear less cluttered and more streamlined.


In summary, the proposed design is the least visually intrusive whilst achieving the required level of continued coverage, providing brand new 5G coverage and

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capacity to the area (as well as improving the existing 4G coverage). As such the proposal development is sited and design to minimise the impact on the visual amenity, character and appearance of the surrounding areas. The structure makes the most of the existing setting and is the minimum possible height to be ICNIRP compliant, clear the urban clutter and for the antenna signal to reach the target coverage area.

As a result, the proposed development fully accords local and NPPF policy by striking a balance between visual and amenity concerns with the operators technical requirements.

### **Residential Amenity**

The nearest residential properties are located some 80m away and the proposal will be not be viewable from any of these. The distances involved, orientation of the houses and intervening screening ensure that the site will not be visible from any residential property.

As such, there will be no impact upon residential amenity. In such a densely residential target service area this location certainly minimises impact on residential amenity given the points alluded to. In fact, siting here negates the need to place a base station directly within the residential streets or cul-de-sacs which will benefit from the service uplift and therefore this proposal safeguards residential amenity.

The development will not result in any loss of privacy, nor will it emit any noise, odour, artificial light, or vibration that could impact residents. The cooling fans within the equipment cabinets only operate under high temperatures and are not audible beyond a few metres. Site visits for maintenance are minimal and infrequent, generally once or twice per year with handheld tools only.

Given these considerations, the proposed installation would have zero **impact on residential amenity**, with no material harm to outlook, privacy, or noise conditions. The proposal therefore complies with both national and local planning objectives for protecting amenity.

### **Sequential Test and Lack of Alternative Options**


This is a very defined search area. This is due to the limitations of 5G discussed throughout this document and the fact that the new site must be directly where the demand for service is. Simply put, the higher frequency cannot travel far or through material as well and so sites must be directly where the demand is.

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The small and defined search area is made up of Public Open Space, Green Belt and dense residential streets and cul-de-sac. Great effort was made to identify a location that could still deliver the necessary service while minimising impact on these sensitive receivers.

There were 16 alternative options discounted in this very small and defined search area. These were discounted due to impacts on visual/residential amenity, pedestrian obstruction, impacts on heritage assets, ICNIRP challenges and underground services.

The proposal is the least impactful, technically viable, location in the area – it is sited in a discrete setting with significant existing street furniture with which it will assimilate and natural vegetation for screening/backdrop.

The robust sequential test with numerous discounts, and through design consideration, confirm proposal is certainly the least impactful, viable, siting and design capable to delivering the necessary service uplift. With that in mind it the proposal meets the NPPF policy test related to 'minimising harm (while taking account of the technical considerations)'. This principle also aligns with the appeal decisions referenced above.

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 acceptable or the most suitable option in terms of siting and appearance.

This is significant in an area as constrained as this, especially when such careful consideration has been given to siting and design to minimise impact while remaining functional and addressing the technical constraints.

Given the robust sequential test applied, and the relevant principles, this proposal is acceptable in planning terms.

### **Conclusion and Planning Balance**

To conclude, there is a well-documented gap in mobile phone coverage and capacity within the Shafton area, north east of Barnsley. The proposed development addresses this critical gap by delivering improved 4G coverage and brand-new 5G capability to the area.


The selected site is adjacent to a road lined on both sides by mature trees and lighting poles, in the context of a row of large pylons. It avoids direct proximity to residential

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properties and sensitive uses, while making optimal use of vegetation to minimise visual impact – as directly advocated in national and local planning policy and guidance.

A comprehensive site search and assessment of discounted alternatives has demonstrated that this is the most suitable and sustainable location available within the defined search area. All other considered options were ruled out due to visual sensitivity, impact upon heritage assets, impact upon residential amenity, impact upon streetscene or lack of structural capability.

The design is the lowest height it can be to attach the antennas at the necessary height to meet technical requirements of 5G. It is the most slimline it can be while being structurally capable while hosting antennas at height and in the context of windloading. It uses suitable colouring to minimise harm. All of these technical constraints align with principles noted and established in the UK Govt Planning Guidance – ‘Code of Practice’.

The proposed development would not cause harm to residential amenity in terms of noise, privacy, or outlook, and accords fully with the requirements of both **local planning policy** and the **NPPF**, particularly in relation to digital infrastructure provision and sustainable development. It meets the NPPF policy test to minimise harm (minimise, not invisibility) **while taking account of the technical constraints**, as noted in the Code of Practice.

The robust sequential test with numerous discounts, and through design consideration, confirm proposal is certainly the least impactful, viable, siting and design capable to delivering the necessary service uplift. With that in mind it wholly meets the necessary tests for an application for ‘prior approval’, where the principle of development is established in law via Part 16 of the GPDO.

As this is an application for prior approval where the principle is established by law in the Green Belt and so that principle cannot be questioned – appeals have been appended to the application to demonstrate that point.


In terms of Planning balance - any visual impact is considered minimal and localised. When that minimal and localised harm is weighed against the technical constraints, lack of favorable alternatives and public benefits of improved 4G and new 5G mobile connectivity, it would not significantly or demonstrably outweigh the scheme’s material socio-economic benefits and contribution to national, regional and local digital and economic objectives, as set out in the NPPF and other documents referenced. This ensures this is a wholly acceptable proposal on balance in Planning terms.

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For these reasons, the proposed telecommunications installation is considered wholly appropriate in planning terms and is respectfully submitted for the local planning authority's approval under the prior approval process.


### Confirmation that submitted drawings have been checked for accuracy

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Company:	Causeway Telecoms Planning		
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Signed:	██████████	Date:	18/05/2026
Position:	Director	(on behalf of Cornerstone)	

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