

Design and Access Statement

RE: Planning application for Storage/shipping container at the Telephone Exchange

This statement has been provided in support of the planning application for siting of storage containers at a British Telecom Telephone Exchange.

The proposal is site storage containers on the existing grassed area next to the working Telephone Exchange.

The Government has set a target to connect a minimum of 85% of premises to gigabit-capable coverage by 2025. This is a huge infrastructure upgrade for the UK and one that will generate considerable benefits to both the economy and society. The Centre for Economics and Business Research has estimated that it will boost productivity by at least £59bn and enable a million more people to enter the workforce by 2025, including working-age carers, older workers and parents of dependent children. In addition, the research shows that more people will choose to move out of high-density urban areas; more people will choose to work from home and there will be larger reductions in commuting related carbon emissions.

Openreach has said it will build ultrafast full fibre to 20 million homes and businesses under our own programme, including 3.2 million in rural areas. We are one of several network builders delivering this world-class connectivity to the UK and have hired over 6,500 new recruits over the past couple of years to support it. In December last year we announced a further 5,300 jobs both directly and within our supply chain as we increase our capacity to deliver. Supporting these new jobs requires us to enlarge or establish new depot sites within our existing premises. These units are vital for the secure storage of the equipment required by our engineers. Having a regional network of containers/sites is the least disruptive, most efficient and environmentally sensitive way to support the required rate of rollout - as it minimises the travel required whilst maximising the time available to build the new network.

Local Authorities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are keen to ensure that businesses and residents within their area are at the forefront of this digital upgrade. They are working with Openreach and other network builders, encouraged by the approach of DCMS, on ways to support ultrafast full fibre build. Openreach is committed to doing this in both rural and urban UK and being able to quickly establish or enlarge a secure facility can have a positive impact on our plans. By working in partnership with national and local government we will be able to deliver the new network which will support people for decades to come.

The use of storage container allows the client to move and flex at relatively short notice and low cost to suit areas which require the teams. The containers can be moved and effectively recycled to avoid traditional construction and potential for empty buildings in the near future. The solution is both sustainable and effective in meeting the needs of the roll out.

The client British Telecom have committed to supporting the expansion and improvement of the telecom's infrastructure throughout the country. Shipping containers have been chosen to provide secure and weather tight storage at a large number sites with the expansion of the Openreach teams.

The prefabricated containers are easily available and a relatively inexpensive way to provide the storage required. With virtually zero build time a small compound can be put in place almost immediately and provide safe secure storage during the expansion period. There is no need for welfare or utilities as this is already provided within the Telephone Exchange building.

The containers will ensure that the operatives will have easy access to the kit required and speed up the time taken to reach the site and efficiencies within the business.

The compound will also be easily moved to a new site as the expansion moves through the country.