

**Mobile**<sup>UK</sup>

# Improving Rural Connectivity

The Shared Rural Network

**Gareth Elliott**

Head of Policy and Communications – Mobile UK



# Mobile<sup>UK</sup>



## Mobile UK – Who are we?

---

Mobile UK is the trade association for the UK's mobile network operators - EE, O2, Three and Vodafone.

### ❖ What is our goal?

- ❖ Our goal is to realise the power of mobile to improve the lives of our customers and the prosperity of the UK as a whole.

### ❖ Our mission

- ❖ Mobile UK's mission is to work with Government, regulators, civil society and others to harness the power of mobile to improve the lives of our customers and the prosperity of the UK as a whole.



## Our Priorities

---

- ❖ Extending rural coverage through the **Shared Rural Network**
- ❖ Enabling effective mobile infrastructure deployment through **planning reform**
- ❖ Informing and educating about mobile technologies including **4G and 5G**





## UK mobile coverage today

- ❖ Industry investing £2bn p.a. enhancing and expanding network capacity and coverage
- ❖ All four operator (calls)
  - ❖ 93% of UK premises
  - ❖ 79% of UK geography
- ❖ All four operators (4G)
  - ❖ 80% of UK premises
  - ❖ 66% of UK geography
- ❖ 5G Commercial operations launched by all four operators

Mobile<sup>UK</sup>

# Shared Rural Network (SRN)

A cross-industry solution



## A Shared Rural Network

---

- ❖ The Shared Rural Network (SRN) is a **collaboration between MNOs and Government** to improve 4G coverage for people living, working and travelling in poorly served rural areas.
- ❖ The network will **ensure geographic coverage from at least one operator to 95%** of the UK, broadening consumer choice for mobile services in rural areas.
- ❖ Across the UK, there will be a significant increase in the areas where **all four operators deliver coverage, from 66% in 2020 to 84%**.
- ❖ **MNOs are collectively investing £532 million** to extend their coverage by upgrading their existing networks, working together on shared infrastructure and building new sites. Government is investing a further £500 million to build new masts in areas with no 4G coverage from any operator.



## Benefits of the Shared Rural Network

---

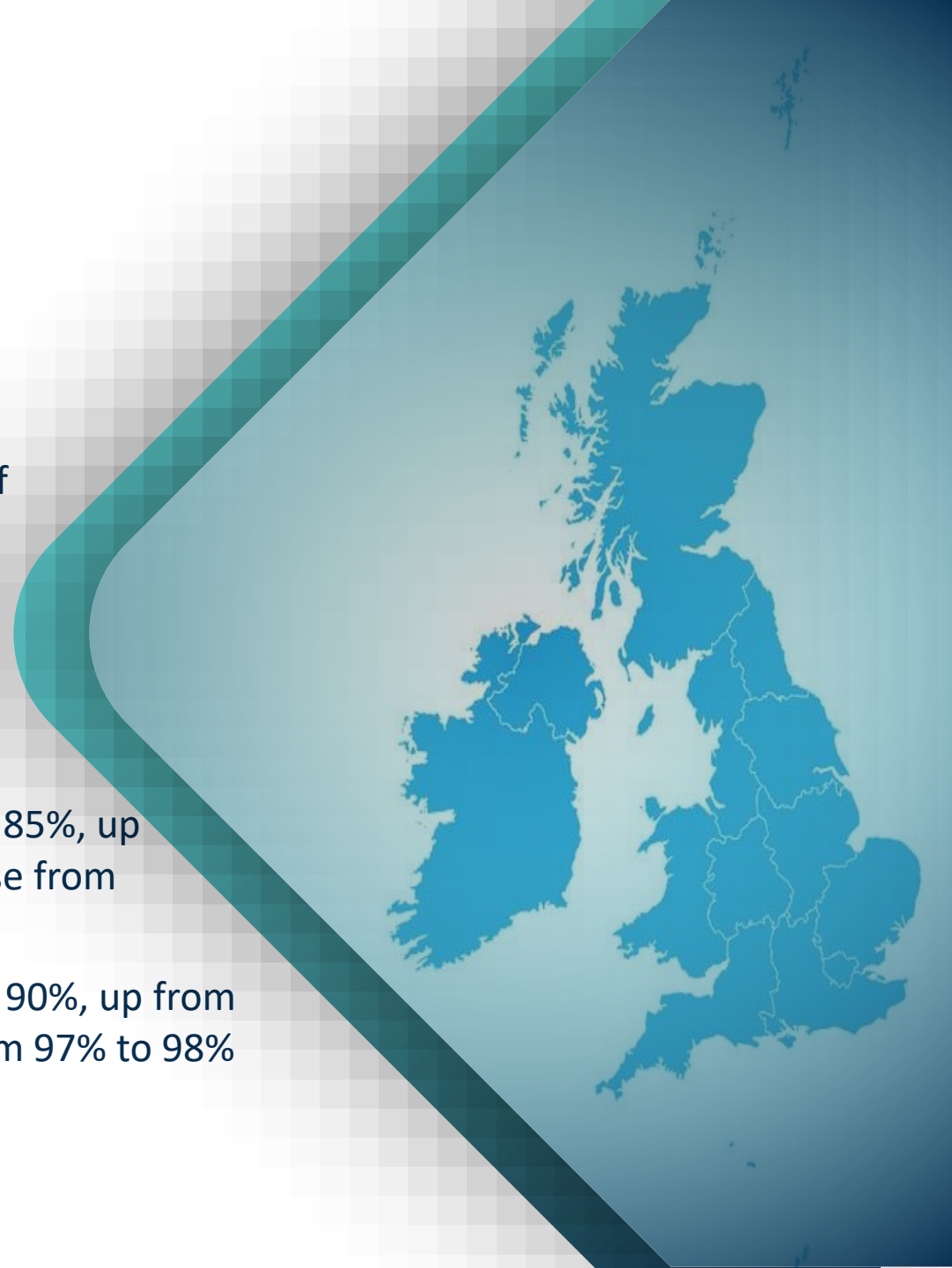
- ❖ The SRN will deliver **reliable 4G mobile connectivity** allowing rural business to prosper and rural communities to thrive.
- ❖ The new infrastructure is guaranteed to bring mobile coverage and **economic benefits to areas of the UK currently missing out**.
- ❖ The SRN will **address the urban rural digital divide**, delivering improved digital infrastructure to the areas that need it most.
- ❖ Better connectivity has **real, tangible benefits** for people and businesses, such as booking GP appointments online, using apps to communicate with friends and family, making the most of search engines and finding the best financial deals.



## Coverage improvements by nation

---

- ❖ In **Scotland**, coverage from all four operators rise to a minimum of 74%, up from 42% in 2020. Coverage from at least one operator will increase from 80% to 91% by the end of 2025.
- ❖ In **Wales**, coverage from all four operators rise to a minimum of 80%, up from 58% in 2020. Coverage from at least one operator will increase from 89% to 95% by the end of 2025.
- ❖ In **Northern Ireland**, coverage from all four operators rise to a of 85%, up from 75% in 2020. Coverage from at least one operator will increase from 97% to 98% by the end of 2025.
- ❖ In **England**, coverage from all four operators rise to a minimum of 90%, up from 81% in 2020. Coverage from at least one operator will increase from 97% to 98% by the end of 2025.





## SRN Progress and Milestones

---

- ❖ **Initial radio plans agreed** – MNOs submitted their initial radio plans to Ofcom on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. These will be subject to change as more work is undertaken to assess feasibility of sites.
- ❖ **First PNS sites already activated** – One MNO has already activated two new sites as part of its PNS efforts: one in Wales and one in the Peak District
- ❖ **State aid and market engagement** – For the publicly funded elements of the SRN, engagement with the supplier ecosystem through an open process and inline with public contract regulations. Procurement process has begun and PIN notices published.
- ❖ **Regular public announcements will be published online and via a comprehensive stakeholder engagement programme.**



## How To Make the SRN Happen

---

- ❖ Political championing of mobile connectivity and tackling misinformation
- ❖ Communication of the benefits of 4G to communities.
- ❖ Encouraging updates to Local Plans and the sharing of guidance and best practice
- ❖ Encouraging digital champions
- ❖ Planning reform (DCMS Consultation)
- ❖ Granting business rate relief for shared rural network relief sites.



## Planning Reform

---

### A planning system ready for 5G

- ❖ Updating current planning law and guidance
- ❖ Acknowledging new infrastructure requirement and aligning planning law with policy
- ❖ Removing anomalies between fixed and mobile infrastructure
- ❖ Incentivising infrastructure sharing
- ❖ DCMS consultation on proposed planning reforms expected soon



**Mobile**<sup>UK</sup>

**Information and Education**  
**5G and Health**



## 5G and Health

---

### What is 5G and should I be worried?

- ❖ **5G** is a true game changer technology that will provide the underlying wireless infrastructure to support a host of new applications such as connected cars, and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies.
- ❖ The Future Communications Challenge Group has estimated that the economic impact of 5G on the **UK could be around £112bn in 2020 per annum**, rising to £164bn in 2030.
- ❖ The radio signal exposure characteristics of 5G are similar to those of existing mobile technologies.
- ❖ Current UK and international **guidelines cover all frequencies used for mobile telephony**, including those being allocated to 5G (updated March 2020).
- ❖ The position of the WHO is that: “To date, **no adverse health effects have been established** as being caused by mobile phone use.”



## Ofcom 5G Testing

---

### Ofcom 5G EMF Measurement Testing 2020

- ❖ The tests covered 16 locations in 10 cities across the UK where 5G-enabled mobile base stations had been set up and measured the strength of the electromagnetic field (EMF).
- ❖ Ofcom, found no identifiable risks in its first tests since 5G technology was deployed.
- ❖ The highest result Ofcom found for the 5G band was 0.039% of the recommended exposure limit.
- ❖ "The emissions at each site were a tiny fraction of the maximum levels set out in international guidelines" (Ofcom Spokesperson)





**BUILDING  
MOBILE  
BRITAIN**

**THANK YOU**

For Further Information

**Mobile**<sup>UK</sup>

[www.mobileuk.org](http://www.mobileuk.org)



**SHARED  
RURAL  
NETWORK**

[www.srn.org.uk](http://www.srn.org.uk)

