

A Collaborative  
Approach to Town  
Planning

Infrastructure  
Acceleration



## 5G Case Study

A Collaborative Approach to Town Planning

# Synopsis

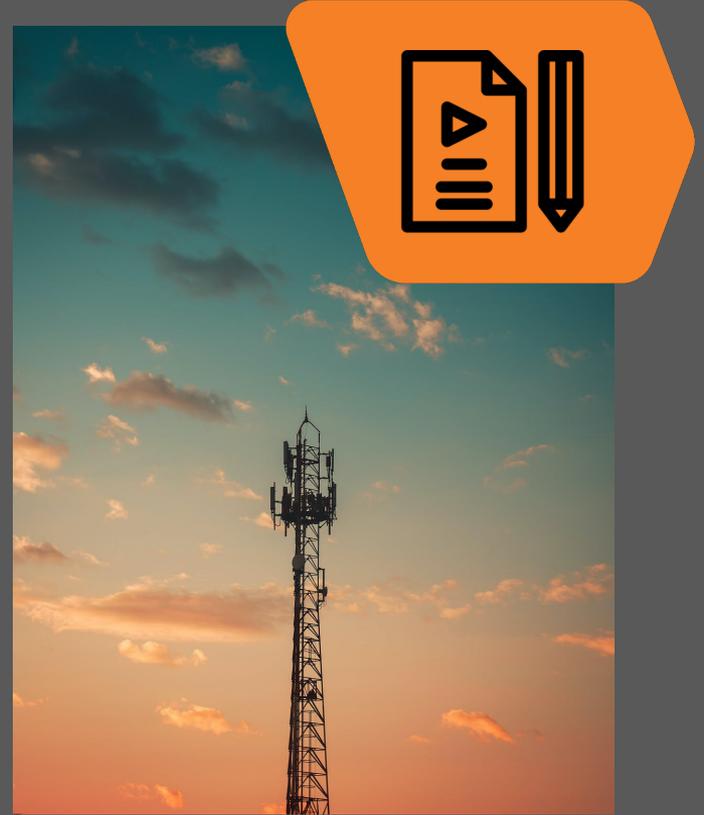
West Midlands 5G has been working to facilitate better and more collaborative relationships between Local Authorities (LAs) and Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in relation to the Government's 2019 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidelines.

The NPPF sets out the Government's nationwide planning policy for how local councils approach new applications, including the installation and upgrading of 5G masts and infrastructure.

WM5G has facilitated discussions between the LAs and MNOs to find an appropriate balance between the economic and social benefits of 5G infrastructure and its visual impact.

With its support and expertise, WM5G has advised all parties on adhering with the principles of the NPPF, moving from conflict to collaboration, through improved communication and a willingness to compromise.

Growing the region's 5G infrastructure will allow the West Midlands to remain at the forefront of digital innovation and reap the social and economic rewards of 5G technology.





## Problem

Government recognised the strategic need for 5G to enable both social and economic benefits. Its ambition is to deliver world-class 5G connectivity for the UK population by 2027.

The challenge for local planning authorities, who are required to ensure that their policies and decisions support the expansion of communications networks, is weighing up the wider benefits against visual impacts locally.



## Solution

WM5G has encouraged the MNOs to comply with best practice, which means sharing their plans with planning departments and committees.

The MNOs have taken steps to ensure that they pre-consult with planning departments on all individual planning applications and continue the dialogue to resolve any applications that are likely to be controversial.

With improved relationships and communications, LAs and MNOs are able to openly discuss any applications that may have otherwise been rejected.



## Benefit

The roll-out of 5G in the West Midlands will attract investment and innovation as part of a technological renaissance.

Collaboration, in-line with the NPPF, between LAs and MNOs has led to a speedier roll-out and lower attrition in the processing of planning applications. The benefit of this is that the social and economic benefits of 5G will be realised much sooner across the region.

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To deliver the vital infrastructure required to support 5G, a combination of defined working processes and high levels of collaboration and communications between MNOs and LAs is needed. With ongoing changes to policies and installation requirements, we knew that education, intervention and support would be key in ensuring that the rate of progress was not halted or reduced. Thanks to our work we have been able to accelerate the installation of 5G sites within the West Midlands.

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Rhys Enfield, Director of Infrastructure  
Acceleration, West Midlands 5G

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In respect of planning applications, WM5G has provided valuable feedback on pre-consultation activities and has facilitated meetings between councils and the operators' planning teams. This has enabled dialogue and intervention where planning may otherwise have been refused due to a misunderstanding.

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Sean McHenry, National Planning &  
Community Manager, Cornerstone

# Takeaways

## Sustain



To ensure an efficient roll-out of 5G across the West Midlands, we will continue to encourage and facilitate engagement and co-operation between LAs and MNOs, providing the necessary information, guidance and balanced views.

## Learnings



Specialist knowledge, insight and access to expert advice is key in ensuring the efficient delivery of 5G. As legislation, policy and technology change, we must continue to instill a culture of collaboration and relationship-building between LAs and MNOs.

## Contacts



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## More info



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