

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
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9th November 2017

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing on behalf of Mobile UK, the trade body for the UK's mobile network operators.

Ahead of the upcoming Budget, I wanted to take the opportunity to set out measures that would ensure individuals, families and businesses across the UK can benefit from access to the highest-quality digital connectivity, delivering improved business productivity and economic growth for the country.

Crucially, we urge that the Government ensures parity towards the deployment of all telecommunications equipment, whether fixed broadband or mobile infrastructure. This will mean that the UK can rapidly deploy much-needed infrastructure and prepare for the rollout of 5G.

Moving towards better parity will not only speed up the rollout of mobile infrastructure roll out and be more cost effective to mobile operators but it will also greatly enhance the Government's ambition to maintain the UK's position as a leading digitally connected country.

To achieve this, Mobile UK believes that the following measures be introduced in order that the UK can benefit from enhanced mobile infrastructure:

- **Communicate a clear plan as part of the industrial strategy to foster a better policy and regulatory environment for mobile infrastructure deployment.** High-quality mobile coverage and connectivity is a foundation of a modern, dynamic and successful economy. The government's planned Industrial Strategy presents an excellent opportunity to highlight the strategic importance of effective mobile infrastructure deployment. Mobile UK is keen to work with the Government to deliver this.
- **Introduce Business Rates Relief for new mobile infrastructure deployment, especially for harder to reach areas** providing parity with fibre infrastructure to better enable deployment in rural and harder to reach areas. The Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill enables 100% business rates relief for operators who install new fibre on their networks. Mobile UK urges that this is extended to the installation of mobile infrastructure, which is currently not covered by the Bill.
- **Commit to continue and enhance full fibre deployment to facilitate mobile/5G roll-out** – full fibre gigabit capable networks are essential to mobile deployment and full fibre rollout must be expedited. Mobile UK is keen to work with Government to consider how the tax system could be used to more readily facilitate investment in full fibre networks.
- **Ensure additional funding to assist the planning and development functions of local authorities to aid mobile infrastructure deployment.** Cuts to planning and development functions across

local government are having a tangible and large-scale impact on mobile network operator's ability to deploy mobile infrastructure. Investment by government to deliver sufficient resource to planning departments across the UK is critical to achieving long-term economic success.

The mobile network operators are determined to continually improve and expand the UK's mobile capacity and are currently part-way through a £5bn investment programme to extend coverage and capacity.

However, as an industry, we need to work in partnership with government – and other policymakers – to maintain the UK's position as a leading digitally connected country. Our *Building Mobile Britain* campaign – launched earlier this year - is focused on fostering greater partnership working between the industry and public bodies.

Delivering the measures set out above would play a significant part in helping us to achieve this. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, or relevant colleagues, to discuss these issues and how they can be addressed in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Hamish MacLeod
Director, Mobile UK