

Reforms to Permitted Development Rights in Scotland for Digital Communications

Response from Mobile UK

November 2020

Introduction

1. Mobile UK welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on proposals to reform permitted development rights (PDRs) for digital infrastructure.
2. Mobile UK's submission represents the collective view of the UK's mobile network operators (EE, Three, O2 UK and Vodafone) as well as their respective joint ventures Cornerstone (who acquire and build for O2 and Vodafone) and MBNL (who acquire and build for EE and Three). This response has been submitted on behalf of each of those operators as also Cornerstone and MBNL and should be considered as such.
3. The Scottish Government has set out clear ambitions for Scotland's digital economy, as set out in its strategy for 5G and similar documents. For example, a Priority Theme in Scotland's updated digital strategy is the 'No one is left Behind: Improve 4G mobile coverage; Digital inclusion that tackles inequality and promotes wellbeing'.¹
4. Urgent reform of the planning regulations for telecoms is a crucial element in delivering the nation's ambitions, both for the rollout of 5G in Scotland but also for the deployment of rural coverage through the 4G infill and Shared Rural Network (SRN) programmes, which is designed to bring a 4G signal to some of the remotest parts of the country.
5. Speed and ease of deployment are of particular importance to the goal of building a digitally inclusive society (by ensuring rural areas are not left behind) and to be world leaders in 5G.
6. The impact of the Covid-19 outbreak has brought into high relief the essential nature of digital infrastructure. It has proved crucial for keeping us all connected during the lockdown period. It will also be crucial to driving economic recovery as we emerge from lockdown.
7. During the lockdown, one mobile network saw a 50% increase in voice traffic. We understand that the majority of businesses expect to maintain, or even increase, the use of mobile infrastructure, as they adapt to the 'new normal'.
8. A new survey by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), which represents 75,000 UK businesses, carried out in association with Mobile UK, reports nearly 80 per cent of respondents to expect to either maintain or increase their higher levels of mobile network usage over the next 12 months.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/renewing-scotlands-full-potential-digital-world/>

Summary of Key Points

9. We are supportive of many of the Scottish Government's proposals. We have provided our detailed responses, and further suggestions, against each of the Scottish Government's consultation questions.
10. In one very important aspect, though, Mobile UK is very disappointed that the Scottish Government is currently intending to delay consideration of new PDRs for ground based masts in designated areas and to re-prioritise consideration of PDRs for the associated access tracks. We strongly urge SG to reconsider this course and to update PDRs for these items alongside SG's other proposals.
11. Moreover, these reforms must be implemented as quickly as possible. In recent years, reforms to permitted development were made to assist the deployment of 4G but came into force only when the vast majority of the network had already been deployed.
12. The objective now should be to implement meaningful planning reforms at an early stage of 5G and SRN deployment, so that the reforms have real practical impact. Mobile UK would urge the Government that, following the publication of this consultation, the follow-on legislation is tabled as soon as possible, and not later than the 1st quarter of 2021.

Mobile UK - Overview of proposed planning reforms in Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA)

13. Mobile UK's starting point is that it would be better for the development of connectivity in the UK and proportionate for all mobile development to fall within permitted development (PDR) - albeit with prior approval retained for some aspects.
14. That said, our overview is that the potential changes proposed in the consultation would, if implemented, have a very positive impact on mobile operators' and others' ability to improve mobile connectivity.
15. As mentioned above, though, we are very disappointed at what is not included – namely Permitted Development Rights for ground based masts in protected areas and a review of PD for mobile mast access track. The further delay of plans to consider Permitted Development Rights on these items and seems to be completely at odds with SG's broader policies for reducing the digital divide between Scotland's urban and remoter areas. This will have significant impact on the cost and speed of the Rollout of the Shared Rural Network and seems to unnecessarily cut against the Scottish Government's ambitions for improved connectivity through the Shared Rural Network (see comments below).
16. In 2016, Mobile UK sought PD rights for new ground-based masts in designated areas, on the grounds that this would go some way to reducing barriers to network roll-out. Since that time, SG has updated PD in several aspects but deferred consideration of ground-based masts in designated areas (and other points) until a Sustainability Impact Assessment could be carried out (which happened between June 2017 and June 2019).
17. The Sustainability Impact Assessment concluded, in summary, that there would be social and economic benefits to rolling out networks in designated areas such as national parks and national scenic areas and that any potential environmental impact could be mitigated and would be reversible.

18. In the meantime, the Scottish Government (through the 4G infill programme), the UK Government (through the Shared Rural Network programme) and the mobile operators have worked very hard together to develop proposals that overcome the considerable economic and practical obstacles of rolling out in the remoter regions of Scotland.
19. By logical extension, it must be the Scottish Government's settled policy that the associated network infrastructure will be installed in such places. The principle of the development must thus be accepted and it follows that granting Permitted Development Rights is the consistent thing to do, albeit with a requirement to obtain prior approval from the appropriate authorities as to the siting and design of the infrastructure.
20. The SRN programme in Scotland will involve approximately 300 new sites being built, around half of which, we estimate, will be sited in designated areas. All of the new sites in designated areas will need access tracks. The programme will roll out over a period of six years. It is truly a once in a generation chance to bridge the digital divide in Scotland (the last deal of this nature in the Highlands was a £40m subsidy for Cellnet and Vodafone to improve 2G coverage of roads in the early 1990s), and any sites that can't get through planning in the six year timeframe will be at considerable risk of being abandoned altogether.
21. We very much recognise that development of structures, such as phone masts, buildings and wind farms in protected areas are sensitive. That is why we are content to work with a prior approval process, where the principle of the development is established but local authorities retain control of siting and design elements and a right to refuse consent for proposals deemed inappropriate. That said, mobile masts are a very different proposition to wind farms.
22. Mobile masts:
 - Do not having moving parts and so do not:
 - a. make a noise
 - b. put bird life at risk
 - c. have shadow flicker
 - d. draw the eye with large moving blades (and so a much less visually intrusive)
 - Are not built in large clusters (the new SRN masts will be built to be shared by all mobile operators and be well spread out) and, with no need to catch the wind, can often be sited in less open areas.
 - Are built to serve the community in which they are located (windfarms in Lewis serve communities all over Scotland). Mobile masts can only serve the areas in which they are situated.
23. Simply put, a telecom mast has a much lower environmental and visual impact and should not be considered in the same context as installations such as wind farms.
24. With respect to the associated access tracks, [virtually all] new masts in remote areas will require an access track, so that they can be built and serviced. There will be little point in granting planning, or PD, for the mast without also addressing the access track point. In most situations, MNOs and local authorities will want to consider a mast and associated access track jointly (the former will be unbuildable without the latter) and so the

respective planning regimes should line up. We urgently request that the 'access track' aspect is not re-prioritised to phase 3 of the PDR revision process.

25. We strongly urge SG to ensure that the planning system is in lock-step with its digital policy and to rethink its current proposals for extending PDRs. Taking account of the time it takes to get legislation through, sites to be acquired and network to be built, the six year window is short. The opportunity must be grabbed now.
26. For those items that are covered in the consultation, we have made some additional suggestions that would have a further positive impact, in terms of lower cost and speed and ease of deployment.

Response to the Consultation Questions

Section One: Installing higher masts

New Ground Based Masts

Current PDR allow for the construction or installation of new ground-based masts up to 25 metres high outside designated areas and we propose to increase this height limit to 30 metres. This will be subject to a continuing requirement that the developer must first apply to the planning authority for a determination as to whether its prior is required with regard to the siting and appearance of the development.

Q.1 Do you agree with an increase in permitted height for new ground-based masts to 30 metres

27. The proposal to increase the height at which a new mast can be built under permitted development is very positive. This is important both for sites where active radio access network (RAN) equipment is installed but also for masts that are used as 'hops' in any radio-based backhaul network.² The increased height (albeit still much lower than countries such as Sweden) will help operators meet the particular challenges presented in rural Scotland.
28. One additional point we would strongly like the Scottish Government to consider is to allow some new masts to be built under PDR without the need to obtain prior approval.
29. The rationale behind this is to achieve some parity between mobile and fixed operators who can deploy street furniture and telegraph poles of various (undefined) sizes under PDR (without prior approval being required).
30. There should be an ability for mobile operators to erect vertical structures too. Fixed-line operators can deploy telegraph poles (and the associated wiring) under PDR, with no prior approval. Fixed operators, however, are not subject to any restriction on height, design or materials. A practical and expedient equivalent for mobile operators would be to permit to build up to 20m without prior approval.

² The 'backhaul' is the network element that connects the radio access masts into the core network. As a rule of thumb, in urban/suburban areas this consists of an underground fibre network. In remote rural areas, radio based backhaul is the only practical option and it is vital that these masts can be built, so that remote radio access sites can be connected to the core network.

31. Amending the PDR rights to permit installation of just cabinets will have minimal impact in itself; this must be aligned with the ability to deploy poles also (a base station consists of an equipment cab, a pole and antennas). Parity with fixed, i.e. the ability to install a cabinet and pole supporting antennas will be a significant benefit to the development of mobile connectivity. (See Appendix_Fixd_mobile_converge_1120_PDR_reform).

Existing Ground Based Masts

Currently PDR exists for the replacement or alteration of an existing ground-based mast. There are limitations on the increase of the overall height and/or width of the structure as follows:

We propose to amend the limits on the increase of the overall height and/or width of existing masts, as set out in the following questions.

Q.2 Do you agree that existing ground based masts should be able to be increased in height up to 30 metres (i.e. the same maximum height as for new masts proposed in Q.1 above) and that the increase should be limited to no more than 50% of the height of the original mast (whichever is the lower)? If you disagree, please explain why.

32. Our understanding is that this measure would allow an existing 10m mast to be increased to a maximum of 15m and a 22m mast to 30m. If this is a correct understanding, we support the proposal.

Q.3 Do you agree that we should allow existing masts which are above 30 metres in height to be increased to up to 50 metres in height? If you disagree, please explain why.

33. No comments

Q.4 Do you agree that we should allow existing masts which are greater than 50 metres in height to be increased by up to 20% of the height of the original mast? If you disagree, please explain why.

34. Yes

Q.5 Do you agree that we should allow an increase in the width of existing masts by up to 2 metres or, if greater, one half of the width of the original mast (i.e. the increase is on the widest part of the mast and including any equipment)? If you disagree, please explain why.

35. Mobile UK supports this proposal.

36. Updating the PDRs for altering or replacing masts will in this way be very beneficial to the rollout of 5G in Scotland. This will make it easier for operators to upgrade and share sites, reducing the risk of site duplication.

37. Throughout the UK, there are currently around 40k sites (approximately 7-8k of which are in Scotland). Over time, the vast majority are likely to be upgraded. By updating PDRs as described above, this will incentivise the sharing and upgrading of existing infrastructure to accommodate the 5G equipment, which will be additional to 4G, not a substitute.

Q.6 Do you agree that any height or width increase within a designated area should be subject to prior notification/prior approval in order that visual impacts can be assessed? If you disagree, please explain why.

38. No. Mobile UK is strongly against this proposal, which would involve placing additional steps on a process that currently works well. The current system is proportionate and

additional restriction is unnecessary and would be a step back in terms of the respective 5G and SRN delivery programmes in Scotland.

39. Additional impact from existing site upgrade is minimal, especially as the principle of a base station in these locations is established and accepted. Height/width increases of existing are still the most visually and environmentally sensitive means of improving service in a locale by potentially negating the need for a whole additional base station, which may case proliferation, in an area.
40. It is significant to note that on this subject the SG Sustainability Impact Assessment stated:
- Potential significant long term economic benefits associated with improvements in digital connectivity;
 - Minor but reversible impacts in terms of cultural heritage and landscape;
 - Increasing the maximum permitted mast height in designated and undesignated areas could help support delivery of the next generation of digital communication services, and could therefore have a **potential significant positive effect on the objective of supporting sustainable economic growth.**
41. Adding this unnecessary additional restriction to a system that currently works well will add significant cost to MNOs, reduce certainty, affected proposals will take significantly longer to go through the planning system, which will cause significant delays to rollout given volume, and add additional strain on LPA resource in determining numerous relatively minor applications. This backward step is unnecessary and is converse to the intention of PD reform with the ambition of speeding up and promoting the rollout of mobile digital services as outlined in both the Scottish Governments 'A Digital Strategy for Scotland' (2017) and 'Forging Our Digital Future With 5G: A Strategy for Scotland' (2019) papers.

Replacement masts

Q.7 Do you agree that we should increase the maximum distance that replacement masts may be from their original location from 6m to 10m, outside designated areas? If you disagree, please explain why.

42. Yes. This additional allowance will deliver useful additional flexibility if it is necessary to relocate masts to suitable alternatives.

Q.8 Do you agree that in the case of replacement masts, in designated areas the current 6m distance from the original location should be retained? If you disagree, please explain why.

43. No. An additional allowance will deliver useful additional flexibility if it is necessary to relocate masts, as per our response to Q12. It is important to remember that digital connectivity is an essential service.

Mitigating potential impacts on safeguarded sites on PDR for masts

44. There are existing requirements on PDR for new masts, or for changes to height or location of existing masts, for the operator to notify the relevant body for a safeguarded area (e.g. the Secretary of State for Defence, airport operator, Met Office, NATS) for their comments to ensure the safe and efficient operation around an aerodrome or technical site.

Q.9 We propose to retain the current approach. Do you agree? If you disagree, please explain why.

45. Yes

Antenna Systems (please note that this does not apply to small cell systems - which are dealt with in paragraphs 4.18-4.22)

Antenna systems and dish antennas are classified as PDR provided that they meet a number of criteria. Different restrictions apply to antenna systems and dish antennas depending on their relative location on the building on which they are installed (below or above a height of 15 metres above ground level). These limitations do not apply to small antennas and small cell systems.

Table 2 below summarises the conditions and restrictions in relation to the installation, replacement and alteration of dish antennas and other antenna systems on buildings.

Q.10 Do you agree that the PDR for antenna systems on buildings outside designated areas should be as set out in Table 3 below? If you disagree with an increase, please explain why.

46. For dish antennas, Mobile UK supports an increase from 0.9m for an individual dish antenna to 1.3m with a total of 10 metres allowed, upto 15 metres.

47. The proposal would allow a dish antenna to transmit and receive data from a distance much further away than is possible for a dish up 0.9m. The effect may well avert the need for additional dish antennas or to relocate them in a more prominent position on the building.

Q.11 Do you agree with extending PDR for antenna systems on buildings to all or some of the designated areas to which restrictions on PDR for such infrastructure currently applies? Please indicate which designations should have extended PDR and why, or, if you disagree, please explain why.

48. Yes. An operator's interests are served by installing the least amount of equipment and to do so with the smallest equipment possible. As such to enable a transmission link from a longer distance, a greater diameter of dish antenna is required. To allow this under PDR enables far more opportunities to lessen additional equipment or the upgrading of adjacent base stations for the transmission signal to succeed.

49. Indeed, PDR for all telecom rooftop development should be extended into designated areas, albeit with prior approval. Listed Buildings are protected via different legislation and this legislation will not supercede that so there is sufficient protection in place.

Q.12 What controls should apply in designated areas for antenna systems on buildings and should there be any differentiation between area type (e.g. size and number limits, prior notification/ prior approval or greater restrictions in designations such as conservation areas and world heritage sites, to avoid any detrimental impact on the built environment in terms of any potential visual clutter etc.)?

50. The size and number of equipment parameters should be the same inside designated areas as they are outside – the control should come in the form of the prior approval system that establishes the principle for the development but allows the local authority to make an assessment and determination upon siting and design – the 'design' including size and numerical elements associated with equipment.

Small Cell Systems

51. Small cell systems are generally deployed to add local capacity to the main radio coverage infrastructure.

The GPDO contains the following definitions:

- ‘small cell system means a ‘small antenna’ and any apparatus which is ancillary to that antenna.
- ‘small antenna’ means an antenna which – - operates on a point to fixed multi point basis or area basis in connection with an electronic communications service’; - may be described as a femtocell, picocell, metrocell or microcell antenna; and - which does not exceed, in two-dimensional measurement, a surface area of 5,000 square centimetres or a volume area of 50,000 cubic centimetres.

We are proposing to extend PDR beyond small antennas to cover small cell systems (small antennas and ancillary apparatus) on dwellinghouses and on all buildings in conservation areas. This will bring these buildings into line with other buildings as regards PDR for small cell systems.

The number, sizing, scaling and siting of small antennas and small cell systems currently permitted on buildings are defined in Class 67(2)(b) (c) and (11) (12) (13).

Table 4 sets out the current PDR for small antennas that needs to change to small cell systems.

Q.13 Do you agree that we should extend PDR to small cell systems on dwelling-houses (rather than just for small antennas)? If you disagree, please explain why.

52. The deployment of a small cell system is made up of an antenna and ancillary equipment, such as cabling, support bracketing and cabinets. To allow the antennas on certain properties within designated and non-designated areas without the rest of the ancillary equipment does not accord with how the equipment is deployed. The whole ‘system’ is required for the cell site to work. The wording within Class 67 under (2)(a); (2)(b) +(2)(c) is not logical. We therefore concur with the changes that the Scottish Government is proposing.

Q.14 What limitations and restrictions should apply to small cell systems on dwelling-houses (e.g. smaller units, fewer in number than small antennas under PDR)? Please explain your answer.

53. The current limitations of 50k cubic centimetres (50 litres) are appropriate and workable for the permitted development regulations (noting that the 30 litre limit set out in EU Directive should represent what is regarded as de minimis).

Q15 In conservation areas, what limits or requirements should apply to small cell systems on dwelling-houses and other buildings (e.g. prior notification/ prior approval to assess the visual impacts or smaller/lower limits, different provisions for dwelling-houses compared to other buildings)? Please explain your answer.

54. Work with the same allowances as for non-designated areas but consider restricting PDR in Conservation Areas

- Introduce the requirement for prior notification/prior approval within Conservation Areas so that an assessment of visual impacts is undertaken. Prior notification/prior approval would, however, require detailed assessment, providing more limited benefits in terms of relaxing restrictions compared to the existing PDR regime. It would also reduce the benefits of a more efficient planning system.
- Focus on utilising existing sites to limit the visual intrusion of apparatus
- Limiting visual intrusion of apparatus through guidance and best practice on the design and location of small cell systems to minimise visual effects.

Article 57 of EU Directive 2018/1972

We are currently liaising with the UK Government, and the other devolved administrations, on potential amendments to PDR that may be considered necessary to be compliant with the requirements of Article 57 of 18 EU Directive 2018/19728 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/10709 . 4.24 We consider that with the changes to PDR for small cell systems on dwelling-houses and in conservation areas (even if those in conservation areas will require additional limitations or requirements), together with general proposals for PDR for new ground based cabinets in designated areas, we can meet the EU requirements.

Q.16 Do you agree that extending PDR for small cell systems as proposed and the proposed changes to PDR for new ground-based cabinets in designated areas would meet the requirements of Article 57 of EU Directive 2018/1972? If you disagree, please explain why.

55. Mobile UK’s understanding is that the dimensions set out in the EU Directive should entail a designation of de minimis and so we do not agree.

Q.17 Are there any other potential amendments, comments or observations you wish to make in relation to potential changes to PDR that you consider necessary to be compliant with the requirements of Article 57 of EU Directive 2018/1972?

56. Please see our response to Q16.

Equipment housing cabinets (ground based)

Q.18 Do you agree that we should extend existing PDR in designated areas to allow for new equipment housing up to 2.5 cubic metres volume? If you disagree, please explain why.

57. A limitation of 2.5 cubic metres per piece of equipment housing is acceptable; however, this should be permitted development without prior approval in designated areas.

58. Equipment housing is required to host all of the radio equipment for operation and functionality of the base station. If these areas are to have the service, then the radio equipment within this housing is a necessity. Considering base stations could be hosting multiple technologies and generations (2G-5G) across numerous sharing operators, there must be scope within the regulations to permit the necessary equipment housing to deliver these technologies. This is especially relevant when sharing 5G rooftop sites in urban centres.

59. In most 2.5m equipment cabins on rooftops are housed in a building’s existing plant rooms or are not even noticeable/viewable from public realm areas, given line of sight restrictions from ground level etc. (whether inside designated areas or not). The rationale that rooftop equipment housing is subject to a much more restricted regime than ground-

based sites is not really logical.

60. A limitation of 2.5 cubic metres as permitted development without prior approval across all designated areas is a balanced and compromised restriction that is both appropriately sensitive while also facilitating necessary ancillary development. Cumulative permitted volumes should be extended to 90 cubic metres from the current 30 cubic metres restriction given the minimal impact rooftop equipment housing has on the public realm.
61. Another very practical and usefull addition would be to have no restriction on equipment housing volume, either cumulatively or individually, if within an existing fenced compound – both inside and outside designated areas (without prior approval). In such cases there is no visual impact or other environmental aspect, where equipment is being added within an already established facility behind existing compound fencing that obscures or completely restricts views of the equipment housing development. In cases like this where equipment housing is visible, impact is negligible as it is entirly congruous in this setting within a compound erected specifically to hosts telecoms equipment.

Q.19 Should this be subject to prior notification/prior approval on the siting and appearance to mitigate visual impacts? If you disagree, please explain why.

62. Please see our response to Q18.

Q.20 If this were to be introduced do you agree that we should differentiate between types of designated areas by, for example, having smaller size limits in conservation areas than in National Parks? If you disagree, please explain why and give your view on what limits should apply in which areas.

63. There should be no difference – deployment necessity will depend upon local site specific demand – whether it is in a Conservation Area or National Park is irrelevant. All of these places need service provision and digital connectivity for their overall long term sustainability and so the PDRs need to be relative to that.

Equipment housing cabinets on buildings

64. Equipment housing on buildings is classified as permitted development provided that the development meets the following criteria:

- the equipment housing must not exceed 3 metres in height or 30 cubic metres in volume; and
- the equipment housing must not exceed the height and/or the volume of the original equipment housing.

65. We propose to extend PDR for new equipment housing in designated areas as set out in the following questions.

Q.21 Do you agree that we should extend PDR for new equipment housing on buildings in designated areas, with a limit on size of up to 2.5 cubic metres volume? If you disagree, please explain why.

66. A limitation of 2.5 cubic metres per piece of equipment housing is acceptable; however, this should be permitted development without prior approval in designated areas.

67. Equipment housing is required to host all of the radio equipment for operation and functionality of the base station. If these areas are to have the service, then the radio

equipment within this housing is a necessity. Considering base stations could be hosting multiple technologies and generations (2G-5G) across numerous sharing operators, there must be scope within the regulations to permit the necessary equipment housing to deliver these technologies. This is especially relevant when sharing 5G rooftop sites in urban centres.

68. In many cases plant rooms/equipment cabins are not even noticeable/viewable on rooftops from public realm areas given line of sight restrictions from ground level etc. (whether inside designated areas or not). The rationale that rooftop equipment housing is subject to a much more restricted regime than ground-based sites is wholly illogical.

69. A limitation of 2.5 cubic metres as permitted development without prior approval across all designated areas is a balanced and compromised restriction that is both appropriately sensitive while also facilitating necessary ancillary development. Cumulative permitted volumes should be extended to 90 cubic metres from the current 30 cubic metres restriction given the minimal impact rooftop equipment housing has on the public realm.

Q.22 Should this be subject to prior notification/ prior approval requirements on the siting and appearance to mitigate visual impacts? If you disagree, please explain why.

70. See our response to Q21

Other apparatus on buildings

Q.23 Do you agree that PDR for other apparatus should be extended in designated areas, beyond the basic 'like for like' alteration or replacement that currently applies? If you disagree, please explain your answer.

71. Yes, antennas and their support structures should benefit from PDR. We agree that the proposal is an appropriate way forward that will promote and facilitate network deployment, establishing the principle of the development while ensuring development is appropriately sensitive by giving LPA control of siting/design via the prior approval process.

72. Particular pieces of ancillary rooftop equipment should be permitted development without prior approval given they may be necessary for health and safety reasons – handrails, rooftop safety equipment etc. The regulations should be clear that these pieces of equipment are permitted and not subject to prior approval.

Q.24 Should any new PDR for other apparatus in designated areas have specific limits and restrictions regarding size and visual intrusion? Please explain your answer, and, if you agree, please indicate what sorts of limits and restrictions should apply and why. If you disagree, please explain why.

73. There should be no specific limits. All of the other equipment is necessary for the functionality of an operating site so there should be no additional constraints.

Q.25 Do you agree that PDR for new development of other apparatus on buildings in designated areas should be subject to prior notification/prior approval to mitigate visual impacts? If you disagree, please explain why.

74. Parameters for other equipment should be the same inside designated areas as they are outside – the control should come in the form of the prior approval system that

establishes the principle for the development but allows the local authority to make an assessment and determination upon siting and design – the ‘design’ including size and numerical elements associated with equipment.

75. Safety equipment – anchor points, fall arrest systems etc should all be PD without prior approval in designated areas

Underground equipment

Q.26 In which designated areas do you consider that PDR for underground development could be extended? Please explain your answer, particularly with regard to those designated areas where PDR for underground development could not be extended.

76. No comments

Q.27 In those areas where PDR for underground development could be extended, what limitations, restrictions or requirements should apply (e.g. prior notification/ prior approval, a requirement for an archaeological assessment or specific limitations)? Please explain your answer.

77. No comments

Access Tracks for Digital Telecommunications Infrastructure

78. The Sustainability Appraisal also considered possible changes to PDR for new access tracks associated with digital communications infrastructure. However, as a result of the re-prioritisation of the PDR work programme, a review of PDR for hill tracks has been temporarily postponed and will now take place in phase 3.

65. Please see our comments in Paragraph 24.

79. Access tracks are an integral and necessary element for many (if not most) ground-based sites in remote rural areas and need to be considered, for planning purposes, in an integrated way.

General Comments

Q.28 Do you have any further comments to make which are specifically related to the potential changes to PDR for Digital Communications Infrastructure which have not been addressed in the questions above?

80. No comments