



Maureen Watt MSP
Convener
Infrastructure and Capital Investment
Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

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Dear Ms Watt

Thank you for your letter of 29 March enclosing your Committee's inquiry into Broadband Infrastructure in Scotland and for your interest in the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP).

The aim of the MIP programme is to improve mobile coverage across the UK. The focus is on voice coverage and total not-spots (areas where there is no coverage from any operator), but rest assured that we are looking closely at potential synergies with other programmes. You will be pleased to hear that BDUK is currently engaging closely with the Scottish Government at official level on the overall development of the MIP and my Secretary of State has also met recently with Alex Neil to discuss MIP alongside wider telecoms issues.

In selecting the not-spots to treat, the intention is to objectively rank the premises and roads in not-spots across the UK. For premises that means we will select 60,000 to treat across the UK – meaning that those in those areas will have coverage from all four MNOs. We will prioritise the not-spots to be addressed in a single UK-wide tranche on the basis of number of people living, working, visiting or in education in the not-spots balanced against cost. The costing model is intended to allow us to take account of proposed support from local areas – either directly financing, purchasing land or other elements such as support in achieving planning. All of these would be expected to reduce the cost to serve in any particular area.

For roads, that means we will cover the roads specified in the Budget and seek to cover as many other roads as the overall MIP budget allows. The initial list was largely derived from Ofcom's exercise of identifying and ranking the busiest UK roads where complete not-spots are present (roads which have at least 300m where no coverage is provided by any operator), based on the average traffic flow on the road, derived from the DfT measuring-point nearest to every 100m length of not-spot along that road.

On coordination of MIP with the 4G auction, there is exceedingly close working contact between the MIP team in BDUK and Ofcom, as well as Ofcom being represented on the MIP Project Board. The interaction of the MIP and the 4G auction is, and will continue to be, regularly reviewed to ensure that the interactions are effectively managed.

On the specific question of the not-spot mapping, the exercise Ofcom have undertaken is based on current coverage, so does not take account of anticipated 4G coverage. As above, we are working closely with Ofcom to ensure that any potential synergies are captured.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.J. Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Robert Sullivan
Chief Executive
Broadband Delivery UK