Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Mobile Phone & Broadband Taskforce
Three-year Review

2017 - 2019

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1 Executive Summary

From 2017 to 2019, the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce has delivered over 70 targeted actions, bringing lasting change around Ireland, and reducing the urban/rural digital divide so that all citizens can benefit from enhanced connectivity.

Over its three-year lifespan, the actions of the Taskforce have resulted in practical measures which have helped identify where infrastructure is most needed, reduced both the administrative and capital cost of deploying certain telecoms infrastructure and provided both citizens, business and the telecoms industry with greater transparency as to where services are available.

A cross-Governmental initiative, led by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (D/CCAE) and the Department of Rural and Community Development (D/RCD), one of the most positive aspects to emerge from the work of the Taskforce is the extent to which practical cooperation between State agencies and Industry has developed. This has been fundamental to achieving tangible results which have delivered 'on the ground' improvements in services for citizens and business.

The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Implementation Group, in addition to the establishment of a number of associated groups such as the Telecommunication Action Group (Broadband Officer Network), the Focus Group on Mobile Coverage, the Road Openings Monitoring Committee and the Joint Utility Local Authority (JULA) Group, has been at the heart of the Taskforce's success.

Similarly, the Taskforce has held an Annual Stakeholder Forum in each of the three years since its implementation. Varying each year in its format, the Forum has offered a valuable opportunity for all stakeholders -- industry, local authorities, regulators, consumer groups and policy makers -- to meet and discuss both the successes of the Taskforce and the areas that required further consideration. This yearly opportunity to openly discuss the issues at hand has played a significant part in strengthening the relationships between all stakeholders.

The 'Taskforce in Actions' section of this Three-Year Review provides a more in-depth account of the many success stories emanating from the work of the Taskforce, since its establishment in 2016. The list below offers a snapshot of some of the key achievements of the Taskforce, over the duration of its existence which have included:

- Over 1,000 km of ducting installed nationwide, enabling operators to expand their networks along the national road network.

- Broadband Officers in all local authorities engaging with operators and State agencies to remove obstacles to infrastructure deployment and raising local awareness of digital skills schemes.

- The revision of the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (the 'Purple Book') and support provided by the Road Management Office resulting in improved management of road works by utilities and local authorities.

- Removal of development contributions and the introduction of planning exemptions for new telecoms technology, enabling infrastructure rollout where previously not considered viable.

- A single centralised process and online resource for road opening licences to facilitate deployment.

- Publication by ComReg of a composite national outdoor coverage map to inform consumers and assist them in choosing the best operator for where they live and work.

- The launch of a series of pilot projects nationwide to tackle blackspots.

- Development of new advertising guidelines to ensure that certain marketing terms used by telecommunications operators convey clear meanings that are not misleading to consumers.

The full details of the progress made on each action identified by the Taskforce over the past three years can be found in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

The completion of the 2019 Work Programme marks the end of the current phase of the Taskforce. The two departments, D/CCAE and D/RCD, along with the wider member bodies, consider that the Taskforce has largely delivered upon its original remit, with the level and extent of engagement between industry actors and Government representing a particular high point. Following the award of the contract to deliver the National Broadband Plan to National Broadband Ireland in November 2019, it is now an appropriate juncture to consider the future of the Taskforce and what role it may have into the future.

With many key deliverables having been completed since 2017, there is widespread recognition that future and emerging developments, such as the deployment of small cell antennae to enable IoT, machine-to machine communications and augmented/virtual reality applications, will prove to be highly complex, requiring longer delivery periods and even greater co-operation and co-ordination.

D/CCAE and D/RCD are of the view that the Taskforce has pioneered a new, more collaborative method of working between Government Departments and key stakeholders. These relationships and structures of collaboration will be carried forward and strengthened, and on foot of the discussions held with the Taskforce members and industry, D/RCD and D/CCAE have identified a number of potential new format options and will submit a proposal to Government in the near future.

This Complete Review provides a summary of the past three years of work completed by the Taskforce.

2 Introduction

The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce was established in 2016 from a commitment arising from The Programme for a Partnership Government (2016). It produced a final report in January 2017 and established a Taskforce Implementation Group (the Taskforce) to oversee the delivery of the 40 actions it had initially identified. The Taskforce has recently concluded its third year of identifying and proactively addressing barriers to the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure.

The Taskforce was most recently chaired by Séan Canney T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development, Natural Resources and Digital Development and co-managed by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. The members of the Taskforce were:

- Department of Rural and Community Development (D/RCD)

- Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (D/CCAE)

- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (D/TTAS)

- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (D/HPLG)

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)

- Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and the County and City Management Association (CCMA)

- Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) in an independent advisory capacity

- Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland (ASAI)

- ESB Networks (ESBN)

- Office of Public Works (OPW)

The Taskforce is also supported in its work by Ibec (Telecommunications Industry Ireland), representing the telecommunications industry.

2.1 A Model of Collaboration

Prior to the establishment of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce in 2016, non-regulatory telecommunications issues were often resolved on an ad-hoc basis between Industry, Government Departments and Local Authorities. The absence of streamlined

processes and communications channels often impacted on the timely resolution of underlying issues affecting deployment of telecommunications infrastructure.

It was in this climate that officials from both D/CCAE and D/RCD identified a need to formalise communications structures and actively promote stakeholder engagement, spanning central and local government, Industry, regulators, public bodies and agencies, and consumer groups. The resulting Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce aimed to break down traditional decision-making silos, and cultivate a sense of collaborative ownership of the Taskforce, in order to harness resources and ultimately facilitate increased access to telecommunications services.

2.2 A Vehicle for Open Dialogue

One of the more welcome outcomes to emerge from the work of the Taskforce is the extent to which practical cooperation between State agencies, public bodies and Industry has developed, within the confines of competition law. This has been fundamental to achieving tangible results which have delivered 'on the ground' improvements in services for citizens and business.

Liaison between stakeholders resulted in the development of a strong spirit of trust and mutual understanding. It was essential to future-proof stakeholder engagement by agreeing and codifying long-term structures which are resilient to political change and sectoral developments.

Most of the following formal structures of engagement arose from the initial Taskforce Work Programme and were envisaged as lasting only for a year. However, they have proved to be an invaluable tool and have become an integral part of the Taskforce structure.

Quarterly Reporting of the Implementation Group

The Taskforce has been chaired at Ministerial level and has been supported by senior officials from both D/RCD and D/CCAE. The Group reports quarterly to the Minister and provides updates on the progress of actions but also highlights issues that may need to be explored and resolved.

D/RCD and D/CCAE subsequently publish a quarterly progress report summarising all progress made. An Implementation Review has also been published at the end of each year, reviewing the progress made over the past twelve months and identifying appropriate new actions for the following year's Work Programme.

In addition, and in order that the Taskforce remained dynamic and responsive to new developments in the sector, the format of the Taskforce was refreshed in 2019, with a wider array of stakeholders invited to participate in quarterly thematic sessions, where emerging trends in the wider electronic communications and digital spheres were presented and debated. This new Taskforce format afforded a greater range of stakeholders the opportunity to feed into the decision-making process, ensuring that telecommunications policy aspects of the work of the Taskforce remained fair, proactive and future-focused.

The topics discussed included 'Improving access to mobile phone services', 'The Internet of Things' and the 'Telecommunication Advertising Guidelines'.

Road Openings Monitoring Committee

Under the Taskforce, in 2017 the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (D/TTAS) established a Road Openings Monitoring Committee, which has played a strong role in overseeing the road opening licensing system, in addition to addressing wider issues impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and utility works.

Joint Utility Local Authority group (JULA)

JULA was established in January 2018 as a forum for dialogue between applicants/licence holders and road authorities, and seeks to address matters of significance relating to road

openings and licensing. The forum has four plenary meetings each year. All parties to JULA now work together on a collaborative basis with the objective of:

- focusing on shared outcomes to improve customer service and response times

- improvement of road restoration quality

- accident/claims reduction, and

- agreement on a schedule of charges which is fair and reasonable to all parties.

Telecommunication Action Group

Originally divided into two different Regional Action Groups (North and South), the combined Telecommunication Action Group (TAG) meets once a month, in a different local authority each month. The group is comprised of all Broadband Officers (BBOs) and is chaired by D/RCD. The TAG offers a monthly opportunity to take stock of telecommunications developments happening across the State, and to build strong relationships between central government and local authorities as well as between the local authorities.

TAG meetings also provide Broadband Officers and others the opportunity to share information and experiences. At each meeting, speakers are invited to present on a range of topics relevant to the work of the group.

Broadband Officers at a TAG meeting in Wexford, February 2020. Also in attendance are officials from D/RCD, D/CCAE and NBI

At least twice a year, the Minister chairing the Taskforce has also attended TAG meetings to meet the Broadband Officers, Director of Services and Local Authority CEs. This provides the chance to discuss issues and highlight progress being made at a regional level.

As much as possible, BBOs are also brought out to visit local initiatives show-casing local innovation and best-practice. Many of these initiatives have the potential to be replicated in other counties.

Focus Group on Mobile Coverage

The Focus Group on Mobile Coverage was established on foot of a recommendation subsequent to Action 40 of the Final Report of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce: "to establish a focus group to provide guidance with respect to categories of location where high quality reliable mobile coverage should be made available as a priority. The focus group should take account of the increase in consumer expectations to have high quality, reliable mobile coverage in these locations". The report of the focus group:

- Set out a ranked list of categories of location where high quality mobile coverage should be available, and

- Recommended the level (quality and reliability) of coverage for these locations with respect to mobile voice and data services.

The output of the focus group should influence the actions of the mobile network operators in their work to reduce mobile phone blackspots. It will inform policy in the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in respect of priorities for mobile phone services and has been considered by the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) in its future spectrum allocation strategies.

State Assets Working Group

A working group was established with the remit of investigating the feasibility of developing standardised policy for accessing and utilising State and publicly-owned assets for the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure, as a direct response to Action 19 of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Implementation Review 2017 Report.

This Working Group met on numerous occasions throughout 2018 and 2019, and developed a draft Policy on the Strategic Importance of Facilitating Telecommunication Provider Access to State and Publicly-Owned Assets.

Meath Enterprise @MeathEnterprise · Nov 15, 2019
Telecommunications Action Group members touring the excellent facilities available to new startups in #digitaltechnology at #KellsTech Hub this morning with @GaryOMeara_ CEO Meath Enterprise.
#MEW2019 #GEW2019
#MPBT2019

2.3 Unleashing Creative Solutions to Telecoms Barriers

A central challenge faced by the Taskforce was in encouraging operators in a highly competitive commercial market to cooperate to deploy networks to rural and underserved areas. The structures established by the Taskforce fostered a collaborative environment which unleashed creative solutions to seemingly intractable impasses in network delivery. Some of the innovative initiatives championed by the Taskforce since 2016 have included the following:

- D/RCD co-funded an innovative community-led project in Malin Beg, in collaboration with Donegal County Council and Vodafone, in which a new model of community / industry cooperation has led to the resolution of a notorious mobile blackspot. Learnings from this project may inform a revised approach to addressing blackspots in the future.

- A Focus Group, established by the Taskforce, and including a wide membership encompassing Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Government, has identified categories of location where high-speed broadband should be made available to consumers as a priority.

- Operators are participating in a limited number of shared infrastructure pilots to accelerate rollout and delivery.

- All Local Authorities are developing Local Digital Strategies under the stewardship of the Taskforce. These strategies will support the evolving needs of our digital society by, for example, providing a policy underpinning for digital training to vulnerable citizens and farmers, and promoting local online entrepreneurship.

3 National Stakeholder Fora

Action 1 of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Report was to hold an Annual Forum for all stakeholders involved in the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure.

The inaugural Forum was hugely successful and had a lasting positive impact on the removal of barriers to telecoms deployment. Originally envisaged as a one-off event, 'The Forum' became firmly established as a key structure to continue dialogue between stakeholders.

Three Annual Fora have taken place in each year since the publication of the Taskforce's recommendations. Varying each year in its format, the Forum provided an invaluable opportunity for stakeholders, Industry, local governments, regulators and policy makers to meet and discuss emerging and extant issues. It gave an opportunity for participants to freely exchange ideas and views, as well as listen to presentations from a wide range of actors in the telecommunications sector.

The discussions held during each Forum directly contributed to the formulation of the following year's work programme.

3.1 Forum 2017

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Denis Naughten T.D. and Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development, Seán Kyne co-hosted the Forum which took place on Friday, 6 October 2017 in the Athlone Springs Hotel.

The event included a moderated and interactive panel discussion, with senior representatives drawn from the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, ComReg, Virgin Media, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, and the County and City Management Association.

3.1.1 Thematic Breakout Sessions

Following the high-level panel discussion, four thematic breakout sessions, aligned with the original subgroups of the Taskforce, took place. Each breakout session was facilitated by a moderator and comprised of panel members from Industry, Government bodies and State Bodies to discuss the four main themes. The objective of the sessions was to identify gaps and persisting issues impacting on delivery of Taskforce actions and to identify new actions which could be captured and added to the Taskforce's formal action list. The themes were as follows:

Access to Infrastructure

This session explored the ability of operators to access appropriate locations to house their infrastructure and equipment in order to deliver telecommunication services effectively and reach the widest possible number of consumers. Road opening issues and access to State owned infrastructure were a few of the topics discussed during this session.

Network Improvements (Incorporating Fixed and Wireless Networks)

This breakout session focused on issues around optimising fixed and wireless networks to deliver enhanced performance. Communication and information sharing between stakeholders, dual purpose infrastructure and exempted development regulations, amongst other issues, were discussed during this session.

Consumer

This session discussed ways to equip consumers with the right information to help them choose the right mobile device and/or provider and to ensure consumers are aware of their rights. Complaints handling, coverage issues and the role of the Broadband Officers were a few topics mentioned during this discussion.

Planning & Licensing

This session discussed issues relating to the planning process, at a national and local level, relevant to the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure. Subjects like infrastructure beside, underneath or along roadways, development contributions, exempted development regulations and planning processes were discussed during this session.

Minister Kyne with the panellists and moderator of the first National Stakeholder Forum

Output

On foot of the discussion held during the Forum, the Taskforce secretariat, in agreement with the Taskforce members, identified a number of actions to be taken in 2018. They

included the review of the Section 254 licence application process, development of a comprehensive database of and policy around accessing State-owned infrastructure, ongoing revision of the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Purple Book) and the Guidance on the Potential Location of Overground Telecommunications Infrastructure on Public Roads (Green Book), and the development of a communications stream for a wider dissemination of information to consumers and to facilitate information sharing between stakeholders.

3.2 Forum 2018

The second Annual Forum was hosted by the Minister for State with responsibility for Natural Resources, Community Affairs and Digital Development, Sean Kyne TD.

This event was held on the 12th of October 2018 at the Shearwater Hotel in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway and was attended by representatives of the telecommunications industry; several Government Departments; the EU Commission; the Commission for Communications Regulation; all local authorities (at Broadband Officer and Director levels); the City and County Managers' Association; the Local Government Management Agency; and consumer bodies.

The event was live streamed on the websites of both D/RCD and D/CCAE, and the public was invited to live tweet questions for the panel members at the hashtag - #MPBT2018.

The Forum was moderated by Jess Kelly, radio and TV broadcaster and technology expert.

The keynote speech was given by John Kennedy, former editor of Silicon Republic, while the panel of speakers included Robert Finnegan (CEO Three); Brian Donnellan (Maynooth

University Vice President and Dean of International Affairs); Anthony Whelan (Director – Electronic Communications Networks and Services, DG CONNECT); Carolan Lennon (CEO Eir) and Conor Pope (Journalist & Broadcaster).

The panellists were asked to identify the key future challenges facing the government and Industry in rolling out telecommunications infrastructure required for the continued development of our digital society and economy. A Q&A followed with the audience, discussing key points from the presentations and identifying potential new actions.

3.3 Forum 2019

The most recent Annual Forum took place in Windmill Lane, Dublin on 11 October 2019. Building on the success of the events held in 2017 and 2018, this latest occurrence, as in previous years, provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss issues affecting the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure.

Mobile Phone and Broadband Plenary Session

The Forum was chaired by Seán Canney, TD, Minister of State for Natural Resources, Community Affairs and Digital Development, Chair of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce.

Minister Canney with the members of the first panel

A number of leaders from across Industry, local and central Government, academia, consumer rights and community groups took part in two thematic sessions. One examined the role of mobile technologies and how they can influence our society and economy into the future. The other addressed how broadband connectivity can help bridge the digital divide with a focus on remote working and co-working growth. A wide range of other topics were also discussed, including the ASAI's new advertising guidelines for the telecommunications sector and the future deployment of 5G technologies

Two panels of speakers from diverse backgrounds were invited to discuss the topics at hand. The first panel included: Elaine Carey (Chief Commercial Officer, Three), Liam O'Brien (Director of Strategy and External Affairs, Vodafone), Dermott Jewell (Policy & Council Advisor, Consumers' Association of Ireland) and Seamus Neely, (Chief Executive, Donegal County Council), while the following panel was composed of Ciaran Gilsenan (Smart Cities Program Manager, Dogpatch Labs), Anna Marie Delaney (Chief Executive, Offaly County Council), John Keaney (CEO, Siro), Ken Tobin (Director, HQKerry). The event was moderated by Jess Kelly, Radio and TV Broadcaster and Technology expert.

Minister Canney with the members of the second panel

4 The Taskforce in Action

4.1 Introduction

Throughout its lifespan, the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce has changed the face of telecommunications sector engagement in Ireland. Over the course of three annual Work Programmes, ten core member bodies have addressed more than 70 targeted actions. These actions have brought lasting changes throughout Ireland, and helped reduce the rural/urban digital divide so all citizens can benefit from increased connectivity. Since 2017, the Taskforce has been an exemplary model for how government departments can lead a unified collaborative approach to resolving issues across a specific sector.

The success of the Taskforce can be summarised as follows:

- managed delivery of a suite of targeted actions which have led to lasting coverage and connectivity improvements for citizens and business, particularly in rural Ireland; and

- a new approach to coordinating national and local government to directly engage and cooperate with Industry to resolve issues, supported by new structures at local authority, regional and national level.

This section of the report outlines some key achievements of the Taskforce action-holders, from 2017 to 2019.

4.2 Strategic Initiatives

When it was first constituted in 2016, the Taskforce faced a telecommunications landscape which was often defined by loose structures of engagement and lacked, at times, joined-up thinking. In its first year, the Taskforce moved to implement some strategic foundational actions, which would entrench robust structures and facilitate better practices. These initial actions would go on to contribute to a smoother and quicker rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and services over the course of the succeeding Work Programmes.

An update is provided below on a selection of the early actions taken to instigate a more strategic culture in the telecommunications sector.

Establishment of the Taskforce Implementation Group

The Taskforce was chaired at Ministerial level and supported by senior officials from both D/RCD and D/CCAE. Government Departments and agencies that are central to the delivery

of the Taskforce actions were represented on the Group and played a vital role in monitoring and driving progress over the years.

Since 2017, the Taskforce has reported to the Minister(s) on a quarterly basis. At the end of each year, the Group was also tasked with comprehensively reviewing progress made throughout the year, and producing an annual report summarising progress across all actions. The Taskforce was also mandated to recommend further actions that would result in continued improvement of services for consumers.

Over the years, the membership of the Taskforce evolved to stay responsive to emerging challenges, with new stakeholders invited to join the Taskforce as necessary.

Ministers Naughten and Kyne with Taskforce members

Appointment of Broadband Officers

One of the first deliverables of the Taskforce was for D/RCD to provide co-funding to all Local Authorities (LAs) to assign an officer to act as the single point of contact for engagement with operators, to assist with accelerated rollout of the NBP and to create awareness of, and stimulate demand for, broadband services.

Since the establishment of the Broadband Officer role as recommended by the original Taskforce Report, D/RCD has provided €4,774,000 to LAs to support the continued employment of 31 Broadband Officers (BBOs) via a yearly grant.

BBOs attending a workshop with Denis Naughten, T.D, D/RCD and D/CCAE officials (April 2017)

In the intervening years, Broadband Officers (BBOs) have repeatedly proven the value of their role. They have been the driving force behind a number of projects and initiatives including the development of Local Digital Strategies, the success of Irish local authorities in the European WiFi4EU initiative and supporting the Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) initiative.

The assignment of the BBOs to work with telecommunications operators to advance the rollout of infrastructure across Ireland has been strongly welcomed by Industry – a sentiment which has been echoed by stakeholders at all three of the Annual National Stakeholder Forums and more recently by National Broadband Ireland (NBI), the company contracted to deliver the National Broadband Plan.

Improving Public Awareness

D/CCAE and D/RCD jointly developed a communications strategy for the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce in order to increase visibility and awareness of the Taskforce at both a local and national level.
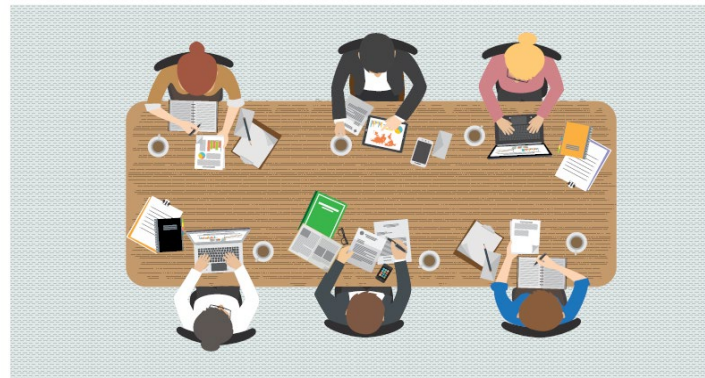
One of the biggest challenges for the Taskforce was translating what are often a series of disparate and complex technical 'actions' into a coherent narrative that the public can engage with. To this end, D/CCAE led on various communications activities designed to improve the messaging of the Taskforce.

D/CCAE represented the Taskforce at the National Ploughing Championships in 2017, 2018 and 2019, offering a valuable opportunity to engage directly with the public. In advance of the National Ploughing Championships 2018, D/CCAE devised a communications-led approach which presented the work of the Taskforce in terms of the day-to-day activities occurring around a representative town. Through the prism of a host of characters, the

consumer could be informed of the improvements made to citizens' lives as a result of the work of the Taskforce. Utilising 'stories' in this way helped personalise the predominantly technical work of the Taskforce, and made it more readily accessible. The resulting infographic was developed for cross-platform social media sharing, and a corresponding pamphlet was created for distribution at public-facing events.

A 'Taskforce in numbers' infographic was created and circulated at the 2019 National Stakeholder Forum, which tells the story of the achievements of the Taskforce from 2016-2019. The infographic was also shared across D/CCAE's social media platforms.

D/RCD and D/CCAE have worked closely on ensuring greater visibility for the Taskforce. To date, a number of events and announcements have been linked to the Taskforce including the Annual Stakeholder Forum, Telecommunications Action Group meetings and announcements regarding Broadband Officer-led projects. As part of the Strategy, all Broadband Officers and stakeholders have also been encouraged to spread the Taskforce impact through their respective local social media platforms.

4.3 Planning and Licensing

Telecommunications infrastructure must be correctly sited in order for quality mobile and broadband services to be provided to consumers. The erection of equipment, such as masts and antennae, or access to or laying of ducts, is essential to the delivery of such services. However, these structures and infrastructures must be sited and erected in a manner that fits within the wider planning framework and within appropriate planning guidelines and principles, requiring Industry to seek development consent or permission in the form of planning permissions or roadwork licences.

The need for a consistent approach in the way road opening and planning procedures are dealt with across local authorities is paramount and a large number of inconsistencies throughout the country were identified by the Taskforce.

Engaging directly with Industry and working with all relevant stakeholders, the Taskforce progressed a number of specific actions aiming to bring more clarity and consistency on the issue.

The following are just a few examples of what has been achieved over the past three years.

Revision of The Guidelines for Managing Road Openings in Public Roads – and Subsequent Actions

The Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (the 'Purple Book') sets out a summary of the legal framework relating to opening or forming openings in public roads in Ireland. It provides guidance and specifications for excavation and road opening works on public roads, material on the legal background and requirements, as well as procedures for the use of the MapRoad Licensing System – the national system for managing roadworks applications.[1]

In April 2017, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (D/TTAS) published the latest version of the Purple Book, which followed on from three years of extensive consultation with utilities and telecommunications companies.

In addition to the support provided by the Road Management Office, the revised guidelines, alongside the introduction of supporting technologies (including on-site apps and a web-based application system), has resulted in the improved management of road works by utilities and local authorities by:

- Providing a national standardised framework for reinstatement requirements, notifications, costings and records;

- Providing a single point of application, incorporating a tracking facility;

- Providing transparency of costs within a national framework;

- Enabling efficiency through the use of technology.

The Taskforce called upon D/TTAS to review the Purple Book guidelines on an ongoing basis so that they keep pace with emerging needs and demands for telecoms services, while ensuring that the integrity of the road network is protected.

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[1] A Road Opening Licence allows the holder to excavate a section of public road, i.e. carriageway/footway and associated grass verge. A licence is required if an individual/undertaking wishes to open a footpath, road or street for any reason.

The national online Road Licensing system is called MRL (Maproad Roadworks Licensing) and is managed and supported by the Roads Management Office (RMO) nationally. All applications for road openings must be made via this new website from the 1st July 2016.

Purple Book Training

D/TTAS provided training sessions to ensure that each local authority and telecommunication operator followed a consistent approach in the application of the Purple Book. In May/June 2017, six regional seminars/workshops for approximately 300 local authority staff were delivered, with one further seminar for local authority staff on 27 October 2017. Those sessions were followed by a seminar for telcos in November 2017, which also included material on the Guidance on the Potential Location of Overground Telecommunications Infrastructure on Public Roads (Green Book). D/TTAS subsequently provided a briefing session for BBOs relating to both the Purple and Green Books.

Road Openings Monitoring Committee

The Road Openings Monitoring Committee, which includes senior officials from D/TTAS, D/CCAE, D/RCD and D/HPLG together with TII, JULA and the CCMA was established by D/TTAS on 5 April 2017 and meets quarterly and/or as circumstances require. It monitors the rollout of actions of the Taskforce on the MapRoad Licensing System and the Road Management Office, and considers ongoing implementation of both the Purple and Green Books.

While it was established in the context of the Taskforce, it has a wider remit in relation to road openings. Among other things, the Committee examines related barriers identified by stakeholders as impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and utility works and, where appropriate, makes recommendations for prioritised, cost effective measures to address these matters.

Joint Utility Local Authority (JULA) Group

The need for a user forum to discuss day-to-day implementation of the Purple Book and road opening policy arose during the consultation process for the revised Purple Book. This was echoed by the Taskforce.

D/TTAS established the JULA Group in autumn 2017, with its first meeting taking place on 14 November 2017. It provides a transparent engagement and feedback process between local authorities and utilities to address road openings and other operational matters. JULA also addresses ongoing operational issues relating to the MapRoad Road Licensing System, the guidance contained within both the Purple and Green books, and review, as appropriate, any subsequent associated guidelines.

Joint JULA chairs have also attended meetings of the Road Openings Monitoring Committee to provide an update on the progress achieved and outline issues to be considered/addressed in the future.

National Charging Framework

One of the actions arising from the 2018 and 2019 Work Programmes was to monitor the implementation of the national pricing framework for road opening licences.

Following consultation with Industry, the CCMA proposed a revised pricing framework. The framework addressed application fees, bonds and refundable deposits and long-term impact charges consistent with D/TTAS guidelines.

By Q2 2018, the CCMA had collated the pricing framework for all local authorities in line with the Purple Book on Road Openings and Trench Reinstatement and all local authorities had implemented the framework.

By Q3 2018, the standardised application fees had been implemented nationally. In addition, a general agreement between the sector and IBEC on the structure and implementation of a National Deposit scheme was met. The National Deposit Scheme (NDS) was implemented in 2019. The JULA Forum also played a key role in allowing simplified communication between all parties.

Long term impact charges are the subject of ongoing review. The pricing framework provided improved clarity in relation to costing for telecommunications companies, other utilities and their customers, for opening roads and pavements.

The good working relationship between the CCMA and the telecommunication companies impacted very positively on the delivery of this important action. JULA has also provided support to NBI, who attend JULA meetings.

4.4 Access to Road Infrastructure

Prior to the establishment of the Taskforce, the lack of consistency of approach from one local authority to another in relation to road opening proved challenging for Industry, and could sometimes result in Industry facing uncertainty when planning large scale investment in infrastructure due to the variance in processes, timelines and prices. Similarly, local authorities sometimes reported inconsistency in the interpretation of the regulatory framework and guidelines amongst operators. It was evident that clearer guidance and more streamlined processes were required for the mutual benefit of all parties.

The Taskforce recognised that greater consistency was required in relation to the interpretation and application of processes. The Taskforce also looked at impediments to Industry using infrastructure already available to them and provided tangible solutions.

Below is a selection of those actions.

MapRoad Roadworks Licensing (MRL) System

Prior to the Taskforce, the local government sector established a new local authority shared service office, the Road Management Office (RMO). Together with the development of a central online roadworks licensing system -- the MapRoad Roadworks Licensing (MRL) system – and with support from D/TTAS, a more efficient approach to the application process for road opening licensing activities emerged. One of the initial actions in the 2016 Taskforce Report was that the MRL system should be used by all local authorities and operators in order to move towards a more standardised approach.

By the end of 2017, the MRL system was being used by 27 of the 31 LAs and the RMO continued to engage with the remaining four major urban LAs towards migrating those LAs to the MRL system.

By the end of 2018, the MRL system was used in 30 of the 31 LAs, with a significant increase in the number of licence applications being processed through the system.

As of the end of 2019, all LAs except Dublin City Council (DCC) were using the system as well as TII, all the utilities and over 1600 applicants/contractors. All licensing management is now completed online and almost 60,000 licences have been processed since 2017.[2]

Year	T1 Notification	T2	T2¹	T3	T4	Grand Total
2017	367	2908	1338	5854	2566	13033
2018	791	4782	2591	11999	2869	23032
2019	739	6182	2831	12345	2972	25069
2020	226	3791	933	4439	2386	11775
Grand Total	2123	17663	7693	34637	10793	72909

This table illustrates the licenses processed through the system in the period 2017 to present

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[2] T1 are notifications. When T1 notifications are excluded, the figure for processed licenses is 59,237 (T2 + T3 + T4 for 2017-2019).

A programme of development and funding has been agreed with D/TTAS to complete the developments needed to meet DCC's technical requirements. DCC is currently trialling the system with a view to implementing the live system in Q4 2020 when the development of the bulk of the gap analysis and new functionality tools will be complete. Implementation planning meetings have also taken place between DCC and the RMO with a goal of implementing the system.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Duct Installation

Over the past three years, TII has worked closely with the Taskforce to deliver on a number of actions. One of those actions has been the year on year development of the ducting network on national primary and secondary roads.

Gaps in ducting were closed over the following sections of motorway and dual carriageway:

- M7 Naas to Newbridge   **14km**

- M7 Portlaoise Bypass   **10km**

- M8 Cashel Mitchelstown   **36km**

- N25 Little Island to Midleton   **13km**

New motorway/ dual carriageway schemes opened, incorporating ducting:

- M17/M18 Gort to Tuam   **57km**

- M11 Gorey to Enniscorthy Bypass &   **27km**

- N30 Link   **4km**

In 2018, and in addition to the planned replacement of ducts, TII commenced a process of "proving" older sections of duct to ensure their adequacy to accommodate fibre infrastructure.

Replacement of deficient ducting was carried out following proving exercise:

- M8 Watergasshill to Dunkettle   **14km**

                                        TOTAL: 175km

Special duct installation will be undertaken on the tanked section of the M7 Kildare Town by-pass, where conventional installation of ducting is precluded by the tanking membrane.

In addition, TII plan to install approximately 40km of ducting on the M18 from Shannon to Limerick and on the Limerick Southern Ring Phase 1, sections of the network that predated the practice of duct installation.

It is anticipated that the planned works will result in ducting being installed on almost all of the M4, M6, M7, M8, M9, M17 & M18 routes apart from a few short gaps. If there is interest from Industry TII will consider installation of ducting along these sections also.

The maps below demonstrates the progress made by TII over the period 2016-2019.
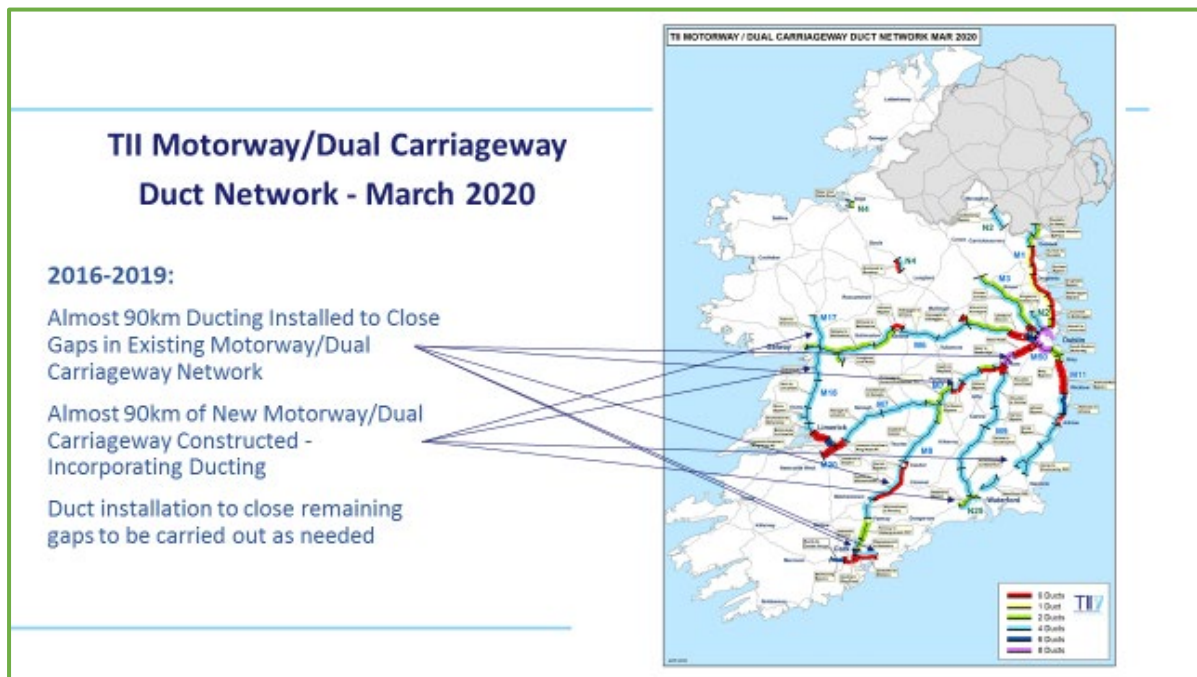
There is currently over 1000km of ducting in place along the motorway and dual carriageway network.

Standards were amended in December 2017 to ensure that, in addition to motorways and dual carriageways, all new major road schemes and minor realignment schemes on two-lane national roads will have ducting installed in the verges.

The work being undertaken by TII, in close liaison with the telecoms industry, on identifying sites where additional overground infrastructure is required will result in improved mobile coverage along the motorway network.

In the medium to longer term the protocol for engagement established between Ibec and TII will provide a platform for engagement on such issues as the rollout of 5G – particularly in relation to the anticipated deployment of connected and automated vehicles.

4.5 Consumer Issues

The quality of broadband and mobile phone services vary considerably according to, amongst other factors, location, topography and the infrastructure used. It is important that consumers are fully aware of the factors that may impact on the quality of services in their area. Equipping consumers with the correct information is an important means of helping them choose the right device and/or to maximise the quality of the services that they are paying for.

Below are a few examples of the actions that have been taken to better inform consumers and enhance the consumer experience.

Advertising of Telecommunications Guidance

The Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland (ASAI) has been a member of the Taskforce since its establishment in 2016.

Under the guidance of the Taskforce, the ASAI and telecoms operators were asked to come together to improve the accuracy of the information provided to consumers and the public in general.

While the ASAI was tasked with undertaking a review of advertising of telecommunications services, operators were asked to review their own advertising to ensure they were not creating a false or misleading impression.

During 2017, the ASAI conducted its review and in January 2018 published the Report on a Review of Advertising of Telecommunications Services. The Report concluded that there were some issues that should be addressed in advertising for telecommunications. Additionally, it stated that consumer knowledge would benefit from increased awareness on the technical aspects related to the services involved.

In 2018, and as a follow up to the Review, the ASAI committed to develop a Guidance note in relation to telecommunications advertising for the benefit of all stakeholders.

The ASAI Guidance Note: 'Marketing Communications for Mobile Phone and Broadband Services' came into effect on 1st September 2019, with a 3 months lead in period to allow the operators to amend their advertising, if necessary.

The ASAI will continue to assess the compliance with the Guidelines' requirements during 2020 through general and targeted monitoring.

Both the ASAI and the operators, as well as Ibec, have acknowledged the very positive engagement of all parties throughout the entire process and the benefit it brought to consumers and the telecoms sector.

Dr Emer Sherry (senior executive Telecommunications Industry Ireland – IBEC), Orla Twomey (CEO ASAI) and Torlach Denihan (Director, Telecommunications Industry Ireland – IBEC) welcoming the joint effort of telecoms operators and the ASAI ahead of the publication of the Guidelines.

The full ASAI Review and subsequent Guidelines are available here.

Outdoor Coverage Map

In order for consumers to fully understand the extent of coverage being offered by different operators, the Taskforce recommended that ComReg create a composite outdoor national coverage map from data provided by operators.

In order to do so, ComReg engaged with all the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and collected and analysed their network data. ComReg also appointed an IT consultant to deliver the map. A test version of the map was released to mobile operators in Q4 2018 and went live in February 2019.

ComReg monitors and updates the mobile coverage map on foot of updated data received by the operators. ComReg updated the map in Q3 2019, Q1 2020, and will again in Q3

2020. ComReg has also developed a mobile app version of the map, which was made available in Q2 2020.

ComReg has reported an increase in usage of the map, which, since it went live, has seen steady quarterly growth. An average of approximately 51,000 visitors have accessed the map per quarter.

The development of a composite outdoor national mobile coverage map was a significant milestone for the Taskforce. For the first time, mobile phone users are able to access coverage data from all operators in a single place. The map supports consumers to make informed decisions when purchasing a mobile phone or choosing a mobile phone service.
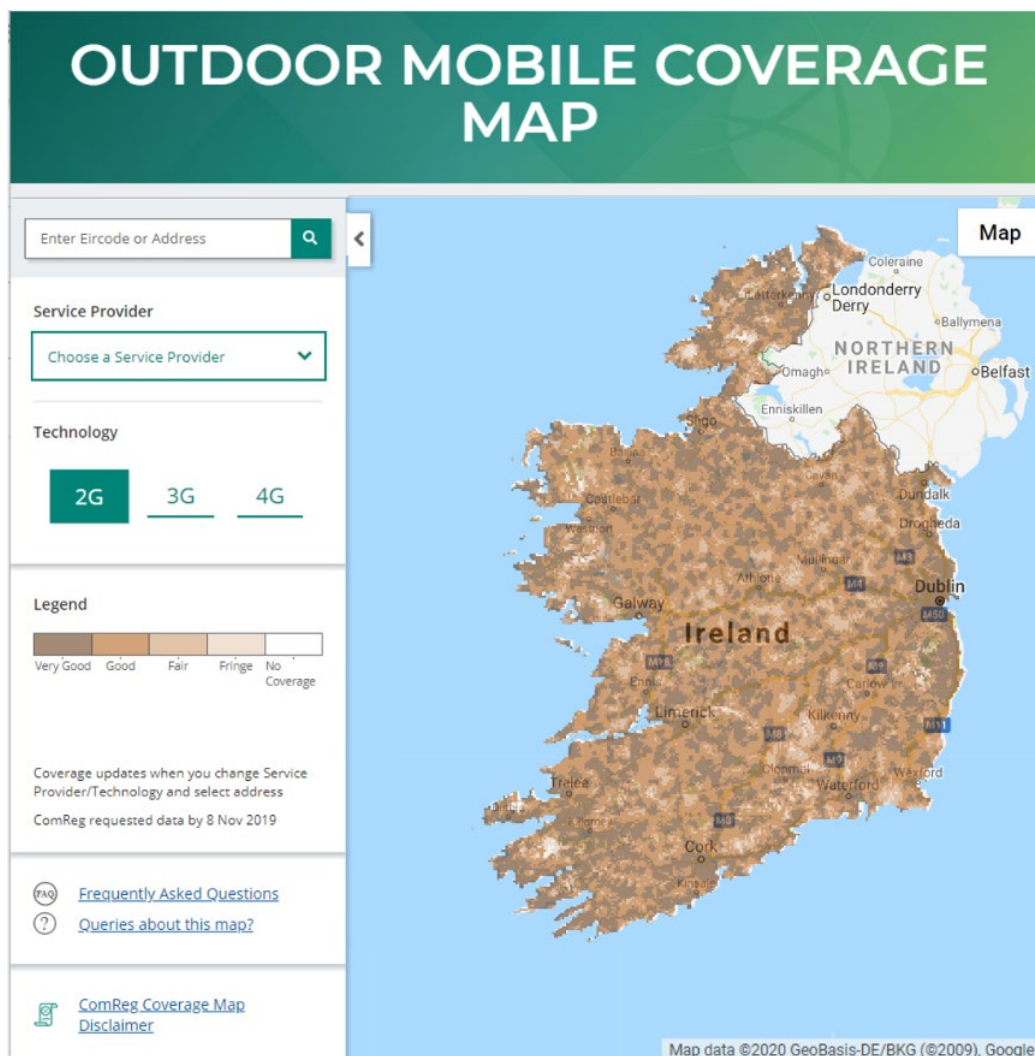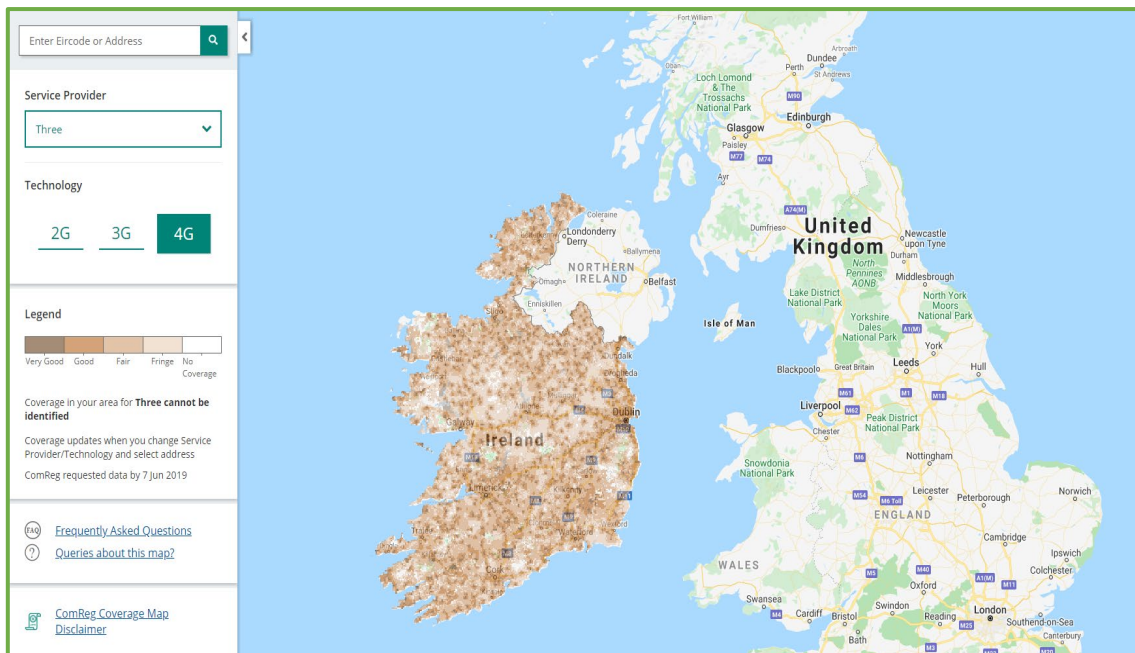
4.6 Engagement and Collaboration

One of the key goals of the Taskforce since its inception has been to facilitate stakeholder engagement and improve collaboration between all involved in the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure. Over the years, this collaboration has gone from strength to strength. The examples below demonstrate what can be achieved as a direct result of Industry and Government working together.

5G Technology

ESB Networks (ESBN) joined the Taskforce in early 2019 to engage with issues around the installation of small cell antennae.

As a first step, ESBN identified and engaged with key stakeholders and commenced a trial in the Dublin City Docklands to investigate the challenges and opportunities associated with using public lighting infrastructure for siting small cell technologies.

Q2 of 2019 saw the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ESBN and Dublin City Council to undertake a 5G trial in the Dublin Docklands area. This trial, while physically located in the Dublin Docklands area, includes the participation of Dublin City, Sligo and Laois County Councils, and Densair. The MoU's objectives were to:

- Provide appropriate electrical connectivity for third party devices housed on local LA/ESB public lighting pole infrastructure.

- Explore and evaluate metered and unmetered connection solutions for 5G cell technology affixed to local authority public light and ESB electricity poles.

- Assess the costs of using existing or new local authority /ESB public lighting poles to housing 3rd party devices.

- Develop smart city solutions to develop the functionality on the management of street lighting assets.

- Develop new opportunities to deploy widespread connectivity and additional 'Internet of Things (IoT)' functionality across a number of priority sites as identified by both parties.

The trial looked at 20 different scenarios to understand the various electrical connection methods available. Each method was evaluated in terms of cost, complexity, speed of connection and impact on ESBN's existing connection and commercial rules.

In Q3 2019, ESBN and Dublin City completed the trial and produced a draft ESBN Project Report. The output of the trial and this report formed the basis for a Draft Guide/Policy document for local authorities planning to utilise their public lighting poles to host small cell technology.

In February 2020 ESBN finalised a draft policy document titled 'Guide to connecting 5G small cells affixed to Local Authority owned public lighting poles'. While the document has been finalised in draft format, it still requires consultation within ESB Networks and Local Authorities. This guide can be used to guide local authorities and ESBN when applying for 5G connections.

Provision of Mobile Phone Coverage to the Community of Malin Beg, County Donegal

Malin Beg is a rural community located in Southwest Donegal. It is one of the most visited discovery points on the Wild Atlantic Way, overlooking the horseshoe shaped beach of Silver Strand.

The community has been without a basic mobile phone service for some time, leading to a lack of a number of essential services that most communities take for granted.

For example, in the case of a medical emergency within the community, the lack of coverage leads to a significant delay in contacting first responders & emergency services.

Being a coastal community, fishing plays a huge roll in daily life. The safety of inshore fishermen and communications with home is most important.

The geographic location and beauty of the coastline is one of the few competitive economic advantages afforded to the area, but the lack of mobile phone coverage is a detriment to the development of the tourism industry. Despite being one of the most visited points along the Wild Atlantic Way, MalinBeg has been unable to take full advantage, with tourists often choosing to stay in other areas due to the lack of mobile coverage.

Vodafone, working with the local authority and the community, identified a solution that would bring mobile phone connectivity to the region. The project was an example of how collaboration between Government, local authority, Industry and the local community can bring transformative change to an area.

The project required Vodafone to build a 54 kilometre "hop" across Donegal Bay to the Bralee mast in neighbouring Co. Sligo, with two large 1.2m dishes located on a community owned building at MalinBeg connecting to two similar dishes in Sligo.
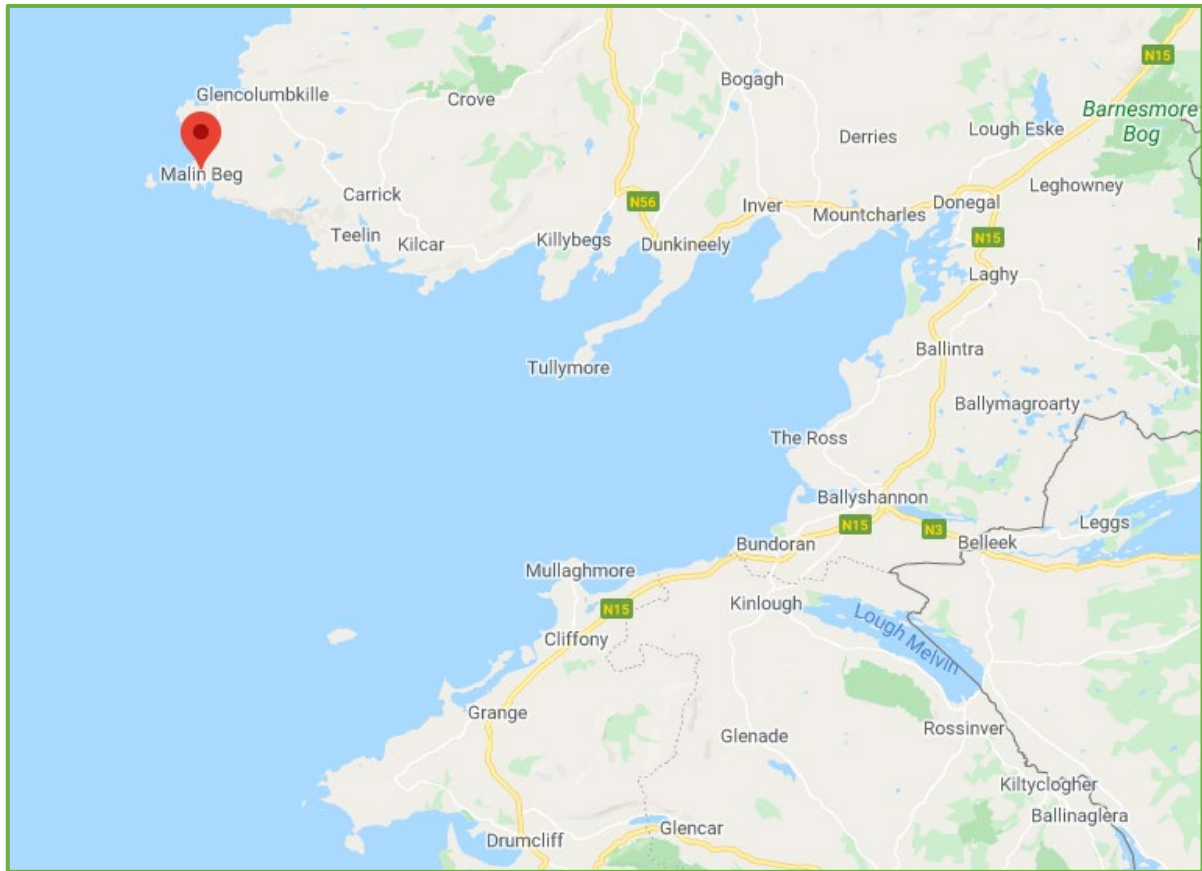
Connection 'hop' across Donegal Bay

The local authority worked closely with the local community to identify a building which could be used to locate the necessary equipment. The Department of Rural and Community Development provided initial funding for the project, with additional funding provided by Vodafone and the local authority.

The service was launched on the 29th of November 2019, and immediately taken up by the local community.

Vodafone have since reported a significant increase in new customers to the local authority, both from within the community and also from friends and family who live elsewhere and switched to Vodafone as a direct result of their work in providing this essential service to the community.

For the community of Malinbeg, this project has been transformative. Not only has it addressed the lack of coverage in the area, it has encouraged students to return to the community at weekends as there is now access to mobile coverage and 4G. Local people

are in a better position to launch online businesses and work remotely. The local GP will now provide house calls when necessary and emergency services can be contacted without delay in the event that they are needed.

Malin Beg project launch

4.7 The Taskforce and Industry

One of the main goals of the Taskforce was to foster greater collaboration between stakeholders involved in the deployment of telecommunications services; including all service providers. In order to reach as many providers as possible, the Taskforce engaged on a quarterly basis with Telecommunications Industry Ireland (TII), the Ibec representative body for the electronic communications industry in Ireland. TII (Ibec)'s member companies are involved in broadband, fixed, mobile, satellite and wireless internet as well as equipment manufacturers and network providers.

Over the past three years, through meetings with TII (Ibec) and its members, the Taskforce facilitated improved communication between Industry, local authorities and Government departments. It enabled a greater understanding of each party's' challenges and to

collectively come up with actions to navigate difficult situations, such as the access to and sharing of infrastructure and the requirement to adhere to a standard process for planning applications.

The Taskforce also identified a number of additional actions to be carried out by Industry aimed at improving the consumer experience, such as promoting existing solutions to poor coverage, introduce Wi-Fi calling and ensure that information aimed at consumers is clear and easily comprehensible by all.

Below is a statement from Ibec on behalf of Industry on their views of the Taskforce as well as a few illustrations of sectoral progress over the past few years.

The Taskforce Viewed by Ibec

"Ibec welcomed the establishment of the Government Taskforce in July 2016 with the aim of identifying solutions to mobile coverage and broadband deficits. Further to a consultation process, the Taskforce published its report in December 2016 setting key actions to be delivered to achieve its aim. A number of these actions addressed specific issues raised by the Ibec submission to the Taskforce and previous engagement between Ibec and Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. Ibec and its member companies have worked closely with the Taskforce Implementation Group over the past three years and participated in the annual National Stakeholder Forum. Ibec recognises and praises the progress that has been made since 2017 and would highlight the following positive outcomes:

- Improved planning - exemptions updated to take account of 3G and 4G

- Improved engagement with local authorities through the creation of the Broadband Officers role

- Greater efficiency in the road opening application process

- Reasonable costs associated with road opening and reinstatement, from the specifications to the local authority charges

Ibec believes that the Taskforce plays a crucial role because it permits regular and structured engagement between Industry and all relevant public service stakeholders on common issues and also provides an opportunity to raise any other concerns.

Ibec considers it is an excellent example of collaboration between Industry and all relevant public service actors.

Ibec members also participate on Taskforce subgroups such as the Joint Utility Local Authority User Group and the working group on shared infrastructure. These groups have proven very productive and have resolved several challenging issues over the past few years.

Ibec pays tribute to the hard work and dedication of all those involved in the Taskforce and welcomes its continuation albeit in a revised and refreshed form, namely fewer and more strategic actions and a radically simplified reporting structure."

Sectoral Progress

Virgin Media

Smart Broadband Deployment

- The period 2016 – 2019 represented a significant period of broadband network investment by Virgin Media under 'Project Lightning'.

- This investment enabled broadband network growth within regions not previously served by Virgin Media, delivered through large scale construction of underground fibre infrastructure.

- As a result of Taskforce influence and impact, our experience working with County Councils and their Broadband Officers during this period (2016-2019) was very positive and constructive.

- Of those County Councils associated with the Project lightning program, many embraced the alternative low impact construction techniques presented by Virgin Media; in addition, County Council approach to public licensing associated with our construction, was managed in a practical and timely manner allowing build progress as scheduled.

- For the most part, Broadband Officer were instrumental in supporting VM construction and investment plans, even to the point of facilitating access to underground duct infrastructure in certain locations.

- In summary, Taskforce initiatives in conjunction with Broadband Officer engagement were jointly instrumental in supporting our investment and business growth plan during this period.
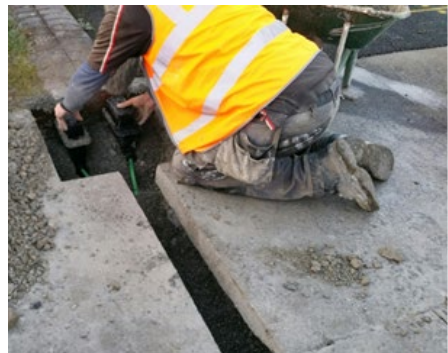
Siro

- The SIRO 100% Fibre to the Home network covers approximately 331,000 homes and businesses across 21 counties with over 67,000 customers bringing SIRO's fibre coverage to 16.75% across Ireland.

- Fibre to the Home (FTTH) is a fixed line broadband network that utilises fibre optic cables and the ESB electrical network to deliver speeds of up to 1 Gigabit per second.

- The introduction of Broadband Officers has been instrumental in SIRO's roll out in 29 local authorities, particularly with road opening licenses, traffic management and the general build of the network.

- The Broadband Officer network has been helpful to SIRO as having a single point of contact (SPOC) in each local authority makes dealing with councils far more efficient.

- The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce has supported SIRO as it has provided a forum to allow us to raise issues with Telecommunications bodies in the industry.

We're Rolling Out to Regional Ireland

331k
premises passed in regional Ireland

50
locations across the country

21
counties powered by SIRO's FTTH broadband

29
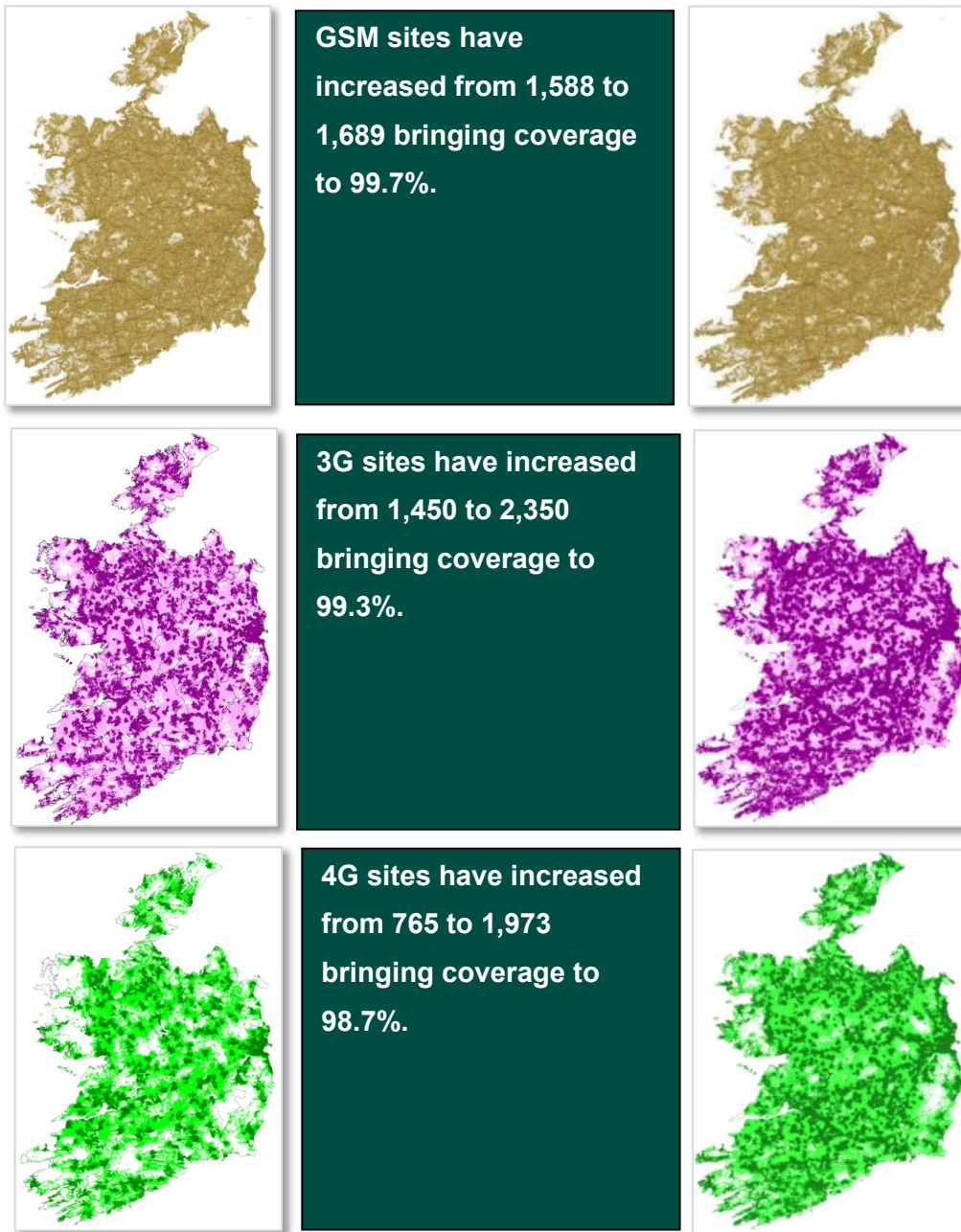local authorities have collaborated on the SIRO project

Vodafone

- The introduction of the Broadband Officer role has been hugely positive, to have a single point of contact for our operations has improved efficiencies, engagement and operational process.

- There has been gradual movement on the accessing of state properties and assets (HSE, local authorities, etc.) – the BB Officer role has accelerated this process and increased the sharing of assets by a large number of LAs.

- Significant steps were taken through stakeholder engagement in the updating of the Exempted Development Guidelines. Specifically for Vodafone, the change in rooftop exemptions have helped us deploy larger antennae on buildings as we rollout 5G.

- Positive steps were taken in starting a positive relationship and engagement with Dept of Housing to review and update the Telecom Guidelines.

- Engagement with TII (formerly NRA) – there was positive engagement in the accessing of sites and considering a model and process which benefits stakeholders, while supporting rollout; even if it is held up by 'state assets' issue.

Three

"Three has made considerable improvement in our network coverage since 2016, bringing the total of GSM sites from 1,588 to 1,689 with 99.7% population coverage; 3G sites have increased from 1,450 to 2,350 with 99.3% population coverage, and 4G sites have increased from 765 to 1,973 with 98.7% population coverage. We have also benefited through increased activity by ComReg (assisted through the Taskforce) to eliminate network interference, and by the availability of standardised repeaters for indoor coverage."

GSM sites have increased from 1,588 to 1,689 bringing coverage to 99.7%.

3G sites have increased from 1,450 to 2,350 bringing coverage to 99.3%.

4G sites have increased from 765 to 1,973 bringing coverage to 98.7%.

Eir

Eir has and continues to be very actively engaged in supporting the positive outcomes of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce. The introduction of the Broadband Officer roles, improvements in the licensing process, improved access to some state assets and the revisions to Exempted Development guidelines have greatly assisted in removing some barriers to enhanced mobile and broadband services.

Over the last 3 years, Eir has:

- Delivered fully on its commitment for Rural Broadband with Rural FTTH extended to over 340,000 homes and businesses

- Commenced and very well progressed on Ireland's Fibre Network increasing the number of FTTH premises passed to over 500k

- Transformed mobile coverage at over 230 blackspots across Ireland

- Developed a streetworks solution to improve mobile coverage in collaboration with Cignal Infrastructure Ltd and local authorities

- Extended national 4G coverage to over 99% population with 18 counties now enjoying 4G population coverage over 99%

- Launched Ireland's largest 5G network with population coverage now extending to 30% of the population of Ireland

Eir looks forward to continued collaboration enabled through this Mobile phone and Broadband Taskforce under the new programme for government.

5 Looking to the Future

When the Programme for a Partnership Government committed to the establishment of a Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce in 2016, it aimed to identify solutions to broadband and mobile phone coverage deficits, and investigate how better services could be provided to consumers prior to full build and rollout of the network planned under the NBP.

Since that time, over the course of three Work Programmes, three Annual Forums and with the participation of 12 member bodies and the support of wide range of interested parties, the Taskforce has delivered upon over 70 targeted actions. These actions have streamlined processes, influenced legislation, improved the consumer experience and removed barriers to investment in networks in both urban and rural areas.
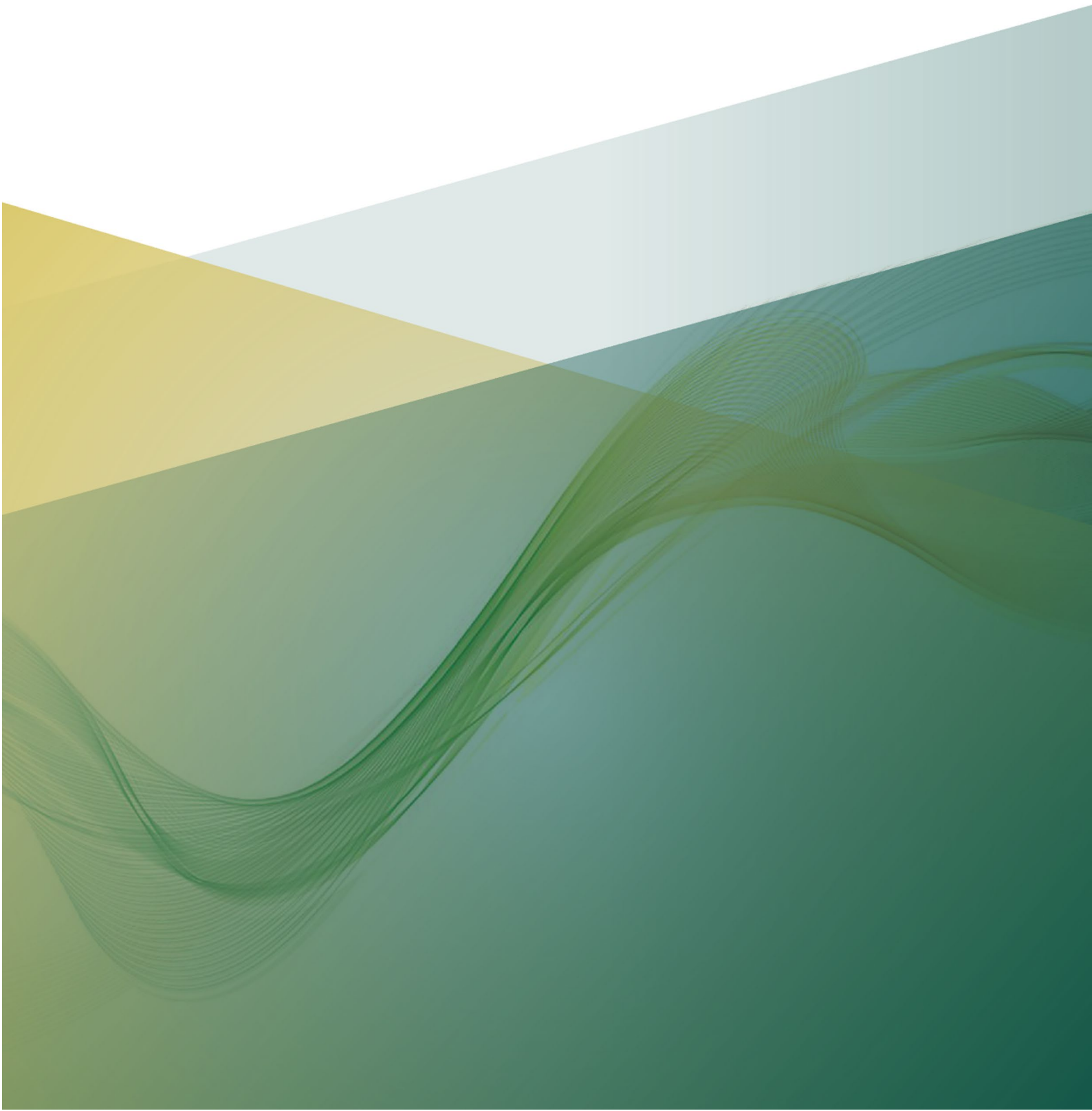
As we enter a new decade, the Taskforce needs to shift focus and consider high-level, long-term, strategic issues if it is to remain relevant. D/CCAE and D/RCD, along with the wider Taskforce membership, are of the view that the Taskforce has paved the way for a new, more collaborative method of working between Government Departments and key stakeholders, and will endeavour to retain the sense of momentum which has been instrumental to the success of the Taskforce since 2017.

Governmentexpects that the relationships and structures of collaboration established so far will be carried forward and strengthened as the Taskforce progresses into the future. Its commitment to the Taskforce was restated and reinforced with the inclusion of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce in the ambitious 2020 Programme for Government. The inclusion of the Taskforce in the Programme for Government underscores the recognition of the new Government that the Taskforce will continue to play a dynamic role in the telecommunications sector, as we migrate towards an increasingly digital future.

The new Taskforce will continue to afford all stakeholders the same opportunity to feed into the decision-making process, ensuring that telecommunications policy in respect of the work of the Taskforce remains fair, proactive and future-focused. It is considered vital that the energy and spirit of collaboration established over the previous three years of the Taskforce be retained and built upon. In this manner, the new body will continue to operate as a driving force in the elimination of telecommunications barriers to a fully connected Ireland.

On foot of the discussions held with the Taskforce members and Industry, D/RCD and D/CCAE have identified a number of potential new format options which will be considered in discussion with all relevant Taskforce stakeholders, ahead of developing a new Work Programme of the Taskforce.

Appendices

Appendix I

Progress on 2019 Actions

Action 1			
Local Authorities (LAs) to share list of all scheduled Road Improvement and Restoration Programmes with all Telecom's operators to assist in scheduling of network improvements.			
Timeline: Quarterly Reporting from Q3	**Timeline Status:** Underway	**Lead Body:** CCMA	**Supporting Bodies:** JULA /D/TTAS
Performance Indicator: Number of local authorities actively sharing details of road improvement programmes.			**Status:** Ongoing
Software licensing has been purchased for a reporting system which will be made available as a web portal for the dissemination of information on local authority roads programmes. Preparation of datasets has commenced with a pilot deployment scheduled for Q1 2020. **Update:** Action as part of JULA (Joint Utility LA User Forum) implementation 2022			

Action 2			
Complete and evaluate the micro-trenching pilot programmes and develop a Method Statement, if appropriate, in line with industry best practice.			
Timeline: Q2	**Timeline Status:** Completed	**Lead Body:** D/TTAS	**Supporting Bodies:** CCMA
Performance Indicator: Pilot programme completed and Method statement agreed.			**Status:** Completed
The Pilot Programme has been completed. Following this a report has been prepared which sets out the results of the pilot programme and includes information on the pros and cons of micro-trenching. It also identifies typical locations where micro-trenching may be suitable for use and sets out a methodology for application.			

Action 3

Develop the GIS module of the MRL to incorporate more geo-spatial data in respect of road openings and underground infrastructure.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Ongoing	CCMA	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Module developed and implemented.	Ongoing

The tool being tested for use as a web portal for LA Roads Programmes will be further expanded for the sharing of information to relevant parties on road opening licenses

Further investigation of utility datasets will be required to consider if this can be transferred to the portal in an efficient manner

Update: MRL has a spatial dataset of all completed road openings. The RMO is sharing this dataset to make it more accessible.

Action 4

The RMO to publish a regular (quarterly) report on the MapRoad Licensing System.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	CCMA	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Reports issued on a quarterly basis.	Completed

The RMO actively supplies extracts on road opening license demand, and these extracts are presented at the JULA group meetings. Further report templates are provided by the RMO on demand.

Action 5

Telecommunications operators to collaborate with the ASAI and ComReg to ensure the use of plain language in information displayed on their websites for consumers on consumer rights and factors that impact mobile phone reception.

ComReg will consider if appropriate further information could be provided by industry and will encourage telecommunications operators (following discussion with ComReg and ASAI), to make such information available on their websites.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q4	Underway	Ibec	Telcos/ ASAI/ ComReg

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Programme of improvements agreed. Relevant, easily understandable information provided by Telecommunication Operators on their websites.	Underway

Companies are in the process of putting the relevant information on their websites.

Action 6

Each telco to produce a quarterly report to the Taskforce Implementation Group on network enhancements, new services and future plans and the benefits to consumers of their products and services.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	Ibec	Telcos

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Quarterly report published.	Underway

Operators to update the relevant Departments on a regular basis.

Action 7

Commercial and non-commercial state and public bodies to increase the number of records listed on the Intra-State Property Register.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q4	Complete	OPW	D/RCD/D/CCAE/ CCMA/LDA

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Increased use of the Intra-State Property Register by State and publicly owned bodies.	Complete

Increased use of the Register was observed after this action was initiated – by 28% in 2019. As the Register is used for multiple purposes, tracking of usage beyond the months after the initiation of the action is a less reliable indicator of increased use across the sector.

Action 8

D/RCD and D/CCAE will work together to improve public awareness of the work and impact of the Taskforce.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	D/RCD/D/CCAE	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Increased media engagements throughout 2019.	Completed

In 2019, D/CCAE and D/RCD jointly developed a new Communications Strategy for the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce, in order to increase visibility and awareness of the Taskforce at both a local and national level.

The Communications Strategy was approved by Minister of State Canney in July 2019, and since then there has been a marked increase in communications activity, with a particular increase in social media engagement around the Annual Stakeholder Forum in October, the various Implementation Group meetings of the Taskforce, and D/CCAE/D/RCD Taskforce attendance at the National Ploughing Championships.

A number of events and announcements were linked to the Taskforce in 2019, including the Annual Stakeholders Forum, Telecommunications Action Group meetings and announcements regarding Broadband Officer-led Digital Innovation Programme projects.

There was also a renewed focus on messaging at a local level, with Minister of State Canney penning editorials for various local, predominantly rural newspapers in 2019.

D/CCAE continues to implement the 2019 Taskforce Communications Strategy, in collaboration with D/RCD.

Action 9

ComReg to continue to provide and promote information for consumers through ComReg's Consumer Engagement programme, including via ComReg's consumer website pages and using ComReg's outreach programme.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	ComReg	Ibec/ASAI

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Consumer Information provided on ComReg's website and directly to consumers by ComReg consumer engagement activities.	Completed

In accordance with its Strategy[3], over the last three years, ComReg has expanded its consumer engagement with the publication of current information on the ComReg website and ComReg Compare value comparison tool, campaigns through social media, digital and traditional marketing, networking events and outreach activities.

In 2019, ComReg hosted a stand at the Holiday Show Limerick/Shannon Airport and the National Ploughing Championships in Carlow, presented to a county Active Retirement Group, displayed consumer guides in county libraries, County Council Offices and in over 1,300 medical waiting rooms nationwide and ran targeted public awareness campaigns through multi-channels.

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[3] ComReg published its ECS Strategy Statement 2019-2021, which also acts as a midterm review of its Five Year ECS Strategy published in 2017.

ComReg continues to provide current and useful information to consumers through www.comreg.ie and the services available there, including ComReg Compare, which was updated in both Q2 and Q4 2019, Service Checker and the outdoor mobile coverage map.

Action 10

ComReg will develop and implement a programme of enhancement of the National Coverage Map.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	ComReg	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Programme enhancement developed and implemented.	Completed

ComReg continues to monitor the outdoor mobile coverage map and usage of the map by the public has been very positive. ComReg published updated coverage data from the mobile operators in Q3 2019. ComReg has received updated data from the mobile operators and is currently processing that data for the next release of the map predictions in Q1 2020. In respect of map functionality, ComReg has developed an outdoor mobile coverage map mobile app with further enhancements planned.

Action 11

Increase the number of local authorities providing reasonable access to their facilities to telecommunication companies for the installation of essential infrastructure.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q4	Ongoing	CCMA	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Number of local authorities that have made their facilities available.	Ongoing

The direction on this will be governed by the recommendations of the subgroup dealing with State Assets.

There is work in progress on harmonization of access to infrastructure with a policy statement in the process of being drafted.

Action 12

CCMA to review the implementation of the national charging framework and deposit scheme.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q4	Completed	CCMA	None

Performance Indicator:		Status:
Review completed and published.		Completed

End of Year review to commence. The implementation of the national charging framework and deposit scheme has been well received by stakeholders.

Following review, IBEC were content to continue with current charging framework.

Action 13

The LUTs committee, with the engagement of the Irish Public Bodies (IPB), to explore the feasibility of agreeing a prescribed indemnity clause for the use of local authority land and assets by telecoms companies.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q4	Complete	CCMA	None

Performance Indicator:		Status:
Feasibility review completed.		Complete

There is a standard indemnity clause in place for road openings and the matter is being discussed with IPB & the RMO

Action 14

Telecommunication operators to appoint a senior person to take responsibility for engagement with local authorities as a designated first point of contact for problematic applications.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q1	Completed	Ibec	Telcos

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Appointment of senior person to role by each telco operator.	Completed

All telcos have designated a first point of contact for engagement with Broadband Officers on applications which are particularly problematic with the understanding that routine communications between local authorities and telcos is to continue along established channels.

Action 15

In the context of existing statutory obligations, telecommunication operators to agree on a voluntary Code of Practice for granting/sharing access to mobile telecommunication infrastructure.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q3	Incomplete	Ibec	Telcos

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Code of Practice agreed amongst telecommunication companies.	Incomplete

Update: The need for a Code has been superseded by market developments i.e., divestment by mobile network operators of mobile infrastructure to neutral host providers

Action 16

Telecommunication sector to work with local authorities to agree a standardised procedure for seeking planning permission for new mast sites –including: taking account of County Development Plan, pre-planning meetings and standardised Application Pack.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q2	Ongoing	Ibec	Telcos/CCMA

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Standardised procedure agreed and implemented.	Ongoing

Telecoms operators welcome the opportunity to participate in workshops which include telcos, infrastructure providers and Broadband Officers.

Action 17

Telecommunication operators to agree a national standardised process for T5s from application to signoff in discussion with LGMA/CCMA including completion of relevant sections on MRL-Works Programme Schedule and Maps and relevant documentation/photographs to improve the timeliness of the application life cycle from open to close.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q2	Completed	Ibec	Telcos

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Standardised procedure agreed and implemented.	Completed

This work stream has been adopted by the JULA group and has been delivered.

Action 18

In the context of the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive, where appropriate, telecommunications providers in response to a request will participate in a limited number of shared telecommunications infrastructure pilots (such pilots to sit within the existing regulatory framework and regulatory requirements).

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting from Q3	Ongoing	Ibec	Telcos

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Participation by telcos in identified pilots.	Ongoing

Operators are willing to participate in any such pilots as appropriate.

Action 19

ComReg's market surveillance team proactively monitors the release of unlicensed equipment into the State through preventive means and with the cooperation of various stakeholders including online selling platforms.

Additionally, ComReg will now establish a quarterly forum with key licenced stakeholders including for example:

- Tetra/Gardaí
- Broadcasters
- MNOs
- Link Operators
- Business radio dealers
- Wireless Broadband Providers

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q2	Completed	ComReg	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Improved collaboration and information sharing.	Completed

The SII (Spectrum, Intelligence and Investigation) Forum has been established and the first meeting took place on June 18. There were 20 participants representing 14 organisations in attendance representing a wide range of stakeholders including fixed, wireless and mobile operators as well as the emergency services and the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA). There was positive engagement from all parties with agreement being reached on the Terms of Reference of the Forum and draft new reporting procedures. The next meeting is scheduled for 24 September 2019.

Action 20

Liaise with local authorities to consider the issues governing the use of public lighting infrastructure for siting small cell technologies.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q4	Completed	ESBN	CCMA/D/RCD/D/CCAE

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Agreement of a policy document for local authorities.	Completed

Update: In February 2020 ESBN finalised a draft policy document titled 'Guide to Connecting 5G small cells affixed to Local Authority owned public lighting poles'

The document was produced following a 5G trial completed in the Dublin Docklands area involving DCC Smart City Project, Dense air and ESB Networks. While the document has been finalized in Draft format it still requires consultation within ESB Networks and Local Authorities.

The document contains the following sections:

1. Introduction

2. Mobile Phone & Broadband Taskforce

3. Responsibilities

4. Dublin Docklands 5G Connectivity Trial

5. ESB Networks Connection Methods

   Procedure CM1: Connection made via new interface box fed from ESB Networks overhead network

Procedure CM2: Connection made via new interface micro pillar fed from ESBN underground network.

Procedure CM3: Connection made via existing interface box fed from ESBN overhead network.

Procedure CM4: Connection made via existing interface micro pillar fed from ESBN underground network.

Procedure CM5: Connection made via Local Authority network fed from an existing interface box connected to ESBN overhead network

Procedure CM6: Connection made via Local Authority network fed from an existing interface box connected to ESBN underground network

6. Connection Methods Checklist

7. Sample Connection Method Schematics (Non-Exhaustive and for information)

8. Cost and Tariff Considerations

9. Additional Requirements

Derogations

Contributors

Terms, Definitions & Symbols Used

This guide can be used to guide local authorities and ESBN when applying for 5G connections.

Action 21

Formulate legislative proposals that may be required to deal with issues arising from the review of legislation governing TII's and the road authorities' statutory roles and functions in so far as they relate to telecommunications operators accessing the assets under their control or TII fully exploiting such assets: -the Communication Regulation (Premium Rate Services and Electronic Communications Infrastructure) Act 2010; and the Road Acts.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:

Q2	Ongoing	D/CCAE	D/TTAS

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Legislative proposal agreed.	Ongoing

TII has raised concerns regarding the inadvertent layer of bureaucracy created by the Communications Regulation (Premium Rate Services and Electronic Communications Infrastructure) Act 2010. Inter alia, the provisions of the Act require that TII must consult with the local authority (for up to 21 days) before granting a license. One possible option, as identified by D/CCAE, is to amend the Act of 2010. The question remains as to whether this also requires corresponding amendments to the Roads Act.

Throughout 2019, D/TTAS held discussions with TII on its preferred option for legislative amendment. There was some concern to avoid making any legislative amendments which might cause unintended consequences, and the matter was given careful consideration over the course of the year.

D/CCAE awaits D/TTAS' views in respect of preferred legislative solution.

Action 22

TII and D/TTAS to evaluate the feasibility of changes required to TII's statutory mandate in order to allow TII to actively promote the use of its ducts.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Incomplete and ongoing	D/TTAS	TII

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Clarity over what changes are required to TII's legislation.	Underway

Discussions have been held between D/TTAS and TII on this matter. Specific amendments would be required to the Roads Act in order to allow TII to actively manage or promote the use of its motorway ducting.

From discussions it is clear that TII does not have the telecoms experience to participate commercially in the telecoms sector. For this reason, the Board of TII has previously

expressed doubt as to whether in present circumstances it would be appropriate for TII to become actively involved in the management of telecommunications services.

However, TII is prepared to facilitate the provision of ducts as part of major projects and also to facilitate the filling of "gaps" along major routes.

Action 23

The MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System will be utilised by all local authorities and road opening licensing applicants as the single national centralised road opening licensing system.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q4	Ongoing	CCMA	D/TTAS

Performance Indicator:			Status:
MRL system used by all local authorities.			Ongoing

All Local Authorities except DCC are using the system as are all the Utilities and over 1600 applicants/contractors. A Programme of development & funding agreed with D/TTAS to complete development to meet DCC requirements; Implementation planning meetings have taken place between DCC and RMO with a goal or implementing the system during 2020.

Update: All local authorities are using the system. DCC have the telecoms companies on the system, work is ongoing to get other applicants on the DCC system. To be completed by Q4 2022/Q1 2023.

Action 24

Utilising the model of the JULA group to look at and propose options for a similar group to address over ground road infrastructure.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q2	Not progressed	D/RCD/D/CCAE	D/TTAS/D/HPLG/CCMA

Performance Indicator:			Status:

Delivery of recommended options.	Not progressed

Update: Not being considered at this time.

Action 25

Initiate a focused review of the statutory Planning Guidelines (1996 and 2012 update), and amend as required, to reflect changes in telecommunications sector.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q3	Incomplete	D/HPLG	None

Performance Indicator:		Status:
Guidelines published.		Underway

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (D/HPLG) is engaging with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (D/CCAE) and other stakeholders, as appropriate, with regard to initiating a focused review of the existing planning guidelines, and any updates required.

As part of the process to try and define the scope of such a review, the Telecommunications Industry Ireland (TII) report, 'Recommendations for the Revision of Telecommunications Guidelines for Planning Authorities' circulated in February 2019, is currently under review by D/HPLG.

In addition, and further to Action 5 and the agreed protocol for engagement, D/HPLG has also met with Industry in this regard. At the latest of these meetings, it was agreed that Industry would identify one or two key elements of the current guidelines which it believes could benefit from a prompt Departmental review, in advance of initiating a more detailed, focused review. D/HPLG is currently awaiting this information.

Action 26

Undertake a review of planning applications for the renewal of temporary permissions for mobile phone masts.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q3	Completed	D/HPLG	None

Performance indicator:	Status:
Review completed.	Completed

D/HPLG has engaged with the Broadband Officers of all local authorities in order to gather accurate and up-to-date information regarding this issue.

Of the 31 local authorities, responses have been received from 27. Of these, 13 have granted no temporary permissions since the issuing of Circular Letter PL 07/12. The 14 local authorities that have granted temporary permissions for telecommunications infrastructure have done so a combined total of 47 times over this seven-year period; an average of approximately 7 temporary permissions granted nationally per annum. However, 35 (approx. 75%) of these temporary permissions were granted before end 2015, meaning only 12 temporary permissions have been granted since then.

The most common reasons for the granting of temporary permissions have been:

- To allow for potential future development.

- To assess the visual and residential impact of the structure.

- To have regard for changes in technology and design.

In this regard, it should be noted that Circular Letter PL 07/12 updated certain sections of the Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines (1996) to, inter alia, advise that where a renewal of a previously temporary permission is being considered, the planning authority should determine the application on its merits with no time limit being attached to the permission, except in certain exceptional circumstances where particular site or environmental conditions apply.

In addition to the planning reasons for the granting of these temporary permissions, the turnover of local authority staff has also been identified as a contributory factor in some instances.

In light of these findings, D/HPLG considers a formal reissue of Circular Letter PL 07/12 to be the appropriate approach to address this Action and will look to do so in due course, pending further engagement with industry.

Action 27

Increase access to publicly available Wi-Fi through EU, Government and private sector initiatives.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	D/RCD	Telcos/LAs

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Number of Wi-Fi points installed.	Underway

To date, Irish LAs have secured 100 vouchers worth €1.5 million under the EUs WiFi4EU scheme. D/RCD has committed to match-funding the initiative with an additional €15,000 per voucher secured. So far this year €331,000 has been provided by D/RCD towards 42 WiFi4EU deployments across the country. It is anticipated that the first networks will go live in Q2 2020.

In addition, D/RCD continues to develop the Broadband Connection Points initiative, an action under the NBP, to bring connectivity – including free public Wi-Fi – to some 319 sites nationwide. Connections will begin in 2020.

Lastly, a number of Digital Innovation Projects have matured in recent months with others coming online soon. These include publicly available Wi-Fi and mobile connectivity in Donegal, Galway City, Fingal, Sligo and Offaly.

Action 28

D/CCAE will continue to explore legislative solutions to ensure that all new-builds are broadband enabled, including mandating that ducting is in place to facilitate connection to high-speed networks.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q2/Q3	Ongoing	D/CCAE	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Appropriate legislative solution identified and agreed.	Ongoing

D/CCAE undertook a comprehensive legislative review in order to identify an appropriate legislative solution. Engagement with the Office of Chief Parliamentary Counsel (OPC)

commenced in Q4 2019. Work, in liaison with legal advisers and the OPC, continues in this regard.

Action 29

Install ducting on new national primary/secondary roads and engage in consultation with industry on where additional ducting is required to improve coverage.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	TII	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Ducting installed where required.	Underway

TII's standards have been updated to require the installation of ducting on all new roads, not just motorways.

A number of schemes are currently being constructed that would not previously have required ducts to be installed. These include the:

- N4 Colloney to Castlebaldwin

- N5 Westport to Turlough and

- N22 Ballyvourney to Macroom.

The installation of ducting on non-motorway national roads at present is determined by where new road schemes are being constructed; we do not install ducts on existing sections of national road.

We have legacy gaps on the motorway network and the prioritization of works on these sections is determined by:

(a) Interest from industry players on potential use of such ducting,

(b) TII's own ducting and communications requirements to service Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) needs.

Action 30

D/CCAE and D/RCD, in consultation with the CSSO, to draft template contracts for use by commercial and non-commercial bodies in respect of siting telecommunications infrastructure on their properties and assets.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q4	Not completed	D/CCAE	D/RCD

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Template contracts drafted and issued to commercial and non-commercial state bodies.	Underway

This action will be progressed by the Mobile Phone and Broadband Working Group on State and Publicly Owned Assets. See Action 19 in 2018 Work Programme.

Update: This action has not been achieved as it was delayed due to Covid-19.

Action 31

ComReg to continue to deepen its understanding of the mobile consumer experience through further surveys.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	ComReg	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
- ComReg to re-run its consumer mobile experience survey in 2019 - Conduct quarterly mobile consumer confidence survey beginning Q2 2019. - Continued engagement with stakeholders.	Completed

ComReg continues to conduct appropriate research and engage with stakeholders.

In 2019, ComReg conducted engagement activities with stakeholders including the Consumer Advisory Panel, Disability Forum, Departmental Consultative Committee,

Broadband Officers (Mobile and Broadband Taskforce), Economic Regulators Network Subgroup and European Consumer Centre Ireland.

ComReg conducted mobile and broadband consumer confidence surveys and conducted and published its 2nd mobile consumer experience survey[4].

Action 32

ASAI to develop guidelines for telecommunications operators on advertising of telecommunications services.

ComReg to support ASAI in the context of ComReg's role in area of open internet access.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Q1	Completed	ASAI	ComReg

Performance Indicator:		Status:
Guidelines published.		Completed

Following circulation of the ASAI Draft Guidance to key stakeholders, additional time for submission of comments was requested as well as a meeting with TII and member companies. A range of areas was covered at this meeting and the companies agreed to put any further comments in writing. Both the initial comments and the output from the meeting were analysed and where appropriate comments taken on Board.

The Guidance Note was published on 20th August 2019 and came into effect on 1st September 2019. A three-month lead in was allowed to give companies time, where necessary, to bring their marketing communications into line with the Guidance Note. The release of the Guidance Note resulted in coverage in a range of national media.

Action 33

ASAI to monitor telecommunication operators compliance with the implementation of the new ASAI guidelines.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:

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[4] https://www.comreg.ie/publication/mobile-consumer-experience-survey-2019

Quarterly Reporting	Completed	ASAI	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Lack of breaches with new guidelines.	Underway

Update:

The ASAI Guidance Note came into effect on 1st September 2019 with a three-month lead in time for companies to ensure that their marketing communications complied with the requirements set out in the Guidance Note. From 1st December, compliance of telecom marketing communications will be assessed against the provisions of the ASAI Code of Standards for Advertising and Marketing Communication taking account of the requirements set out in the Guidance Note.

Assessing compliance with the requirements will be conducted in 2020 through specific and targeted monitoring.

Action 34

D/CCAE's Digital Skills team to liaise with the Broadband Officers to raise local awareness of the Digital Skills Scheme.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting	Completed	D/CCAE	None

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Percentage increase in number taking up the digital skills programme.	Completed

The Department engaged with the Broadband Officers to raise awareness of the "Digital Skills for Citizens" scheme. During 2019 information leaflets for the scheme were issued to Broadband Officers for distribution to their extensive local community networks.

The Scheme provides people who have not yet engaged with the Internet an opportunity to receive 10 hours of informal classroom-based training in basic digital skills. Since training commenced in 2017 some 55,000 citizens have participated.

In 2019 alone over 18,000 citizens received digital skills training nationwide, which is an increase of 11% on the number of people trained in 2018.

Action 35

Telcos to support the promotion of compliant mobile repeaters to improve mobile phone coverage in energy efficient buildings and those in areas of poor mobile phone coverage.

Timeline:	Timeline Status:	Lead Body:	Supporting Bodies:
Quarterly Reporting from Q2	Complete	Ibec	Telcos/ComReg

Performance Indicator:	Status:
Benchmark and tracking of awareness of repeaters by consumers who may benefit from their use via ComReg's consumer mobile experience survey.	Underway

The telcos suggest that the information resource referred to in Action 5 provides consumers with a link to the ComReg list of suppliers for mobile repeaters as a way to promote the use of compliant mobile repeaters. (However, telcos note that the cost of compliant mobile repeaters remains prohibitive for most consumers.)

Appendix II

Progress on 2018 Actions

Legislative Issues/Processes

Action 1

Revise the Guidance on the Potential Location of Overground Telecommunications Infrastructure on Public Roads (Green Book).

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport supported by Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the County and City Management Association.

Action Status:

Not delivered

Progress Made in 2018:

This action was carried forward (Action 10) from 2017. TII has worked closely with telecommunication operators over the past two years to identify sites that may be suitable for siting overground telecommunications infrastructure, as new overground infrastructure improves mobile phone connectivity.

From a long list of fourteen potential sites identified by industry, two were selected as pathfinder projects. TII has continued to engage with telecommunication operators on these two priority sites on the motorway network, one at Kilmacanogue on the N11 and the second at Ballinasloe on the M6.

While the technical assessments at both of these sites have now been completed, the telecommunication operators have expressed a wish to pause further development pending clarity around site leasing costs for state land. As a consequence, the Green Book will not be updated until such time as these sites are progressed further and the need for alternations are identified.

Action 2

Review the Section 254 licence application process and associated guidance. Identify need for additional guidance and/or legislative changes.

Responsible Bodies:

County and City Management Association

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

A subgroup comprised of officials from D/RCD, D/CCAE, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (D/HPLG), the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and the Roads Management Office (RMO) was established under the County and City Management Association (CCMA) LUTS (Land Use and Transportation) Committee and met on 5 occasions in 2018. The objective of the group was to review the section 254 licence (Planning and Development Acts) application process and any associated guidance, to identify any need for additional guidance and any legislative changes and make recommendations to the LUTS Committee.

A draft paper was presented to the LUTS Committee in October, with feedback integrated into a final report that is currently awaiting approval of the new iteration of the LUTS Committee.

Action 3

Revise the guidelines for Development Contribution Schemes to ensure any waivers apply to both mobile phone and broadband.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

Revising the exemption waivers to incorporate mobile phone infrastructure as well as broadband will bring consistency to Development Contribution Schemes.

D/HPLG prepared an update to the 2013 Development Contribution Guidelines to extend the current exemptions for broadband infrastructure to incorporate mobile phone infrastructure by way of a Circular letter issued to planning authorities under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Planning authorities must have regard to guidelines issued under Section 28 in the performance of their functions generally under the Planning Acts. The Circular letter issued on 3 July 2018 and the Department intends to continue to engage with planning authorities in relation to its implementation.

Action 4
Undertake a review of planning applications for the renewal of temporary permissions for mobile phone masts.
Responsible Bodies:
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Action Status:
Not delivered – carried forward to 2019
Progress Made in 2018:
Due to other work priorities D/HPLG was unable to progress this action in 2018 and as a result it will be carried forward into 2019.
The Department will engage with local authorities, through representative bodies, D/CCAE, and Telecommunications Industry Ireland (Ibec)[5] to gather information and get an understanding of issues arising to inform the review.

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[5] Telecommunications Industry Ireland is the Ibec representative body for leading industry and associated interest groups in the field of electronic communications. It represents companies involved in fixed, mobile, wireless, fixed wireless, satellite and cable-based service provisions, outsourcing and internet service provision. **For ease of identification, Telecommunications Industry Ireland will be referred to as 'Ibec' throughout this report**.

Action 5

Agree a protocol for periodic engagement on general planning matters, including exempted development provisions, between the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the industry, in conjunction with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

The final protocol was circulated on 19 July 2018 and will provide for a more structured approach to engagement on planning matters between the Department and the telecommunication companies. The Department will arrange a formal meeting with the industry in early 2019, in tandem with progression of Action 4 and 32.

Action 6

Install ducting on new national primary/secondary roads and engage in consultation with industry on where additional ducting is required to improve coverage.

Responsible Bodies:

Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Action Status:

Completed – carried forward to 2019

Progress Made in 2018:

The availability of ducting (for the installation of fibre) is a vital element of backbone infrastructure for a digitally connected Ireland. Installation of ducting was completed on gap sections of the motorway network in 2018. Ducting is accordingly available along the

M4/M6 Corridor from Kilcock to Galway, on the M7 from Newbridge to Limerick and on the M8 from Portlaoise to Glanmire.

Further ducting works are planned for 2019, with the intention to commence installation of approximately 40km of ducting on the M18 from Shannon to Limerick and on the Limerick Southern Ring Phase 1, both of which are sections of the network which predated the practice of duct installation. This will result in ducting being available on the full M17/M18 corridor from Tuam to Limerick. As part of the widening of the M7 Naas By-pass to three lanes, new ducting is being installed on the motorway from Naas to Newbridge. This will be completed in Q2 2019.

Action 7

Establish structures to enable greater coordination amongst telcos on:

- Engaging with Broadband Officers at the preplanning stage of new planning applications; and

- Sharing of telecoms Infrastructure.

Responsible Bodies:

Ibec

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

Throughout the year, operators have actively engaged, both formally and informally, with Broadband Officers in local authorities. The Broadband Officers are becoming key facilitators for operators to engage early at all stages of the planning application process. Mast infrastructure sharing has been developed by mobile operators and tower companies through bilateral commercial negotiations and is operating effectively. The telecoms companies feel that no further structures are needed at this juncture.

The publication by local authorities of telecoms infrastructure assets and terms of rental/leasing would greatly enhance the early feasibility studies of telecoms deployment especially if the Broadband Officers had this information available.

Companies will continue their engagements with Broadband Officers to deepen their understanding of the sector's needs and its desire to access local authority owned infrastructure at appropriate rates to assist deployment decisions.

Action 8

Monitor progress on:

i. the implementation of the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Purple Book) and

ii. the general efficiencies of Monitoring Committee and Stakeholder (User) Forum.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

The Purple Book provides the framework for utilities opening public roads. The revised Purple Book was published in 2017 by D/TTAS following a lengthy period of public consultation and engagement with industry.

Throughout 2018, the Department has continued to monitor the implementation of the Purple Book, with the Monitoring Committee meeting as required. In addition, the Joint Utilities Local Authority Users Forum (JULA) met 6 times in 2018 and will continue under joint chairs selected by the Forum members.

The Joint Chairs of the Users Forum will attend the next meeting of the Monitoring Committee to provide an update on progress achieved to date together with an outline of issues to be considered/addressed in 2019.

Action 9

Monitor progress on the implementation of the nationally agreed pricing framework for road opening licences.

Responsible Bodies:

County and City Management Association

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

Following an engagement with the telecommunications industry, the CCMA agreed to introduce a standardised pricing framework. This will provide clarity and certainty and, when combined with the new National Deposit Scheme, should serve to reduce the cost to telecommunication companies (and other utilities) of opening roads and pavements.

Standardised application fees were introduced nationally from September alongside standardised Long-Term Impact (LTI) charges. General agreement has also been reached between the sector and the telecommunications companies on the structure of a National Deposit Scheme, which it is hoped to implement in Q1 2019. The next steps will see a move to median rates for long-term impact changes in early 2019.

Action 10

Working with stakeholders, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will lead the development of a roadmap over the course of 2018, setting out the key issues to be considered in response to the ongoing developments in relation to Connected and Automated Vehicles, taking account of emerging and evolving EU and international policies and approaches to the sector.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Action Status:

Incomplete and ongoing

Progress Made in 2018:

Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAVs) are increasingly seen as the future of mobility, with the potential for seismic change for not just the transport industry, but also the telecommunications sector as well as society. Increasing automation and connectivity will allow vehicles to 'talk' to each other, traffic management systems as well as other road users.

The Department's main priority in 2018, continuing into 2019, is to finalise Guidelines for testing CAVs on public roads in Ireland. These Guidelines are at draft stage and will be circulated to stakeholders shortly. Following finalisation of the testing Guidelines, work will commence on a CAV Roadmap and Plan. The CAV Roadmap and Plan will be subjected to Public Consultation as well as stakeholder consultation.

Action 11

Consider the need to develop guidance on alternative methods to trenching such as micro-trenching for application across all local authority areas.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport supported by Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the County and City Management Association

Action Status:

In progress for delivery – carried forward to 2019

Progress Made in 2018

Micro-trenching is a form of trenching that is less invasive than other approaches to road opening. Micro-trenching has been used internationally for many years and its introduction into Ireland promises a number of potential benefits including: reduced costs, quicker delivery and less long terms impacts on roads and footpaths.

2018 saw the commencement of four micro-trenching trials in towns across Ireland, with other alternative methods also being explored by telecommunication companies. Following the conclusion of the trials, recommendations will be made regarding the implementation of national procedure.

It is intended to carry forward this action into 2019 in order to close out the existing trials and identify whether a method statement is required in order to guide future works of a similar type.

Action 12

Expand the mobile coverage blackspots pilot project to encompass all 31 local authority areas.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Rural and Community Development

Action Status:

Complete

Progress Made in 2018:

A revised data collection exercise was completed in Q2 by 17 local authorities to map local blackspots and identify infrastructure that could potentially be used to improve telecommunications services. This activity was followed by multiple engagements with mobile telecommunication companies over the course of the summer.

As a consequence of renewed mobile infrastructure and technology upgrade activity by infrastructure providers and telecoms operators, the Department started considering alternative approaches to redressing blackspots. As a first step, the Department is co-funding a pilot blackspot project in MalinBeg with Vodafone and Donegal County Council. It is hoped that the learnings from this project will directly contribute to a revised approach to addressing mobile phone blackspots in rural Ireland in 2019.

In parallel, a number of local authorities are working with telecoms operators to identify solutions to blackspots. The publication of ComReg's national coverage map will give a more accurate reflection of mobile phone coverage throughout the country (see action 31).

Action 13

Geo-code all new ducting and make information on the ducting accessible to local authorities – where practicable, feasible and there are no security issues.

Responsible Bodies:

County and City Management Association

Action Status:

Not delivered – carried forward to 2022-2025 Work Programme

Progress Made in 2018:

Geo-coding all new ducting will provide a more complete picture of utility infrastructure under the road, which will allow telecommunication companies and local authorities to have a greater insight into what infrastructure is potentially available to share. In addition, knowledge of underground infrastructure should allow utilities to avoid others' infrastructure.

The Maproad Roadworks Licensing system records location of road openings but not the detail of ducting. Location drawings are available – as a requirement of Purple Book. As a pilot exercise, an application for funding under the Digital Innovation Programme 2018 (DIP) was approved for Mayo County Council in November.

It is intended to carry forward this action into 2019 in order to close out the learnings from the pilot exercise and develop a new GIS module.

Action 14

All mobile operators to introduce Wi-Fi calling to enable mobile users to make phone calls indoor over fixed broadband services.

Responsible Bodies:

Ibec

Action Status:

Increased use of the Register was observed after this action was initiated – by 28% in 2019. As the Register is used for multiple purposes, tracking of usage beyond the months after the initiation of the action is a less reliable indicator of increased use across the sector.

Progress Made in 2018:

Wi-Fi calling allows users to use their native Wi-Fi network to make and receive calls when the mobile phone coverage signal is poor. This is particularly useful for people living in rural areas who may not have good mobile phone coverage or where building materials negatively impact the mobile phone signal being received.

Operators are progressing the introduction of Wi-Fi calling. Eir introduced Wi-Fi calling in Q1 2017 and has seen very strong usage by its customer to enhance their mobile

experience. Vodafone has indicated that it intends to introduce Wi-Fi calling prior to the end of Q1 2019. Three is continuing to evaluate the potential introduction of Wi-Fi calling.

Action 15

Establish a focus group to provide guidance with respect to categories of location where high quality reliable mobile coverage should be made available as a priority taking account of consumer expectations.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

A focus group was established in 2018 to provide guidance with respect to categories of location where high quality reliable mobile coverage should be made available as a priority. The focus group held four meetings between January and May 2018. Having completed its work, the report of the focus group was published on D/CCAE's websites on 31 August 2018. The report of the focus group:

- Sets out ranked list of categories of location where high quality mobile coverage should be available.

- Recommends the level (quality and reliability) of coverage for these locations with respect to mobile voice and data services.

It is anticipated that the output of the focus group should influence the actions of the mobile network operators in their work to reduce mobile phone blackspots. It will also inform future policy in both Departments with regards to priorities for mobile phone services.

Action 16

Ensure that broadband and mobile phone infrastructure providers have access to new on-line facilities for planning applications as part of the new e-planning arrangements.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Action Status:

In progress for delivery

Update: Included in 2022 Work Programme for completion

Progress Made in 2018:

The new e-Planning system will facilitate online applications in relation to broadband and mobile phone infrastructure as part of the nationwide rollout of e-planning and online access to planning services. The Planning and Development Amendment Act 2018, passed by the Oireachtas in July 2018, will provide the underpinning legislation for e-planning, which will see the introduction of online planning applications, appeals and associated payment of fees.

Significant development work for the e-planning system was undertaken during 2018. Further focused work was undertaken with the local authority sector to scope the technical implications for rollout and the implications for adjusting current systems to deal with the processing of planning applications files.

User interface testing is continuing into Q1 2019, with a view to commencing pilots in Q2 2019.

Policy

Action 17

The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to consider Transport Infrastructure Ireland request for revised duct access charge on receipt of views from the Ministers for Finance, and Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

Ministerial approval for a reduction in its duct access rental charge was conveyed to TII in July 2018 by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport following receipt of views from the Ministers for Finance, and Communications, Climate Action and Environment. Reducing the duct access rental charge should serve to encourage prompt development of telecommunications infrastructure by telecommunication operators.

Action 18

Develop and publish a policy for all local authorities around access to and use of infrastructure. To be supported by maps of available infrastructure across the country and guidelines on where infrastructure can and cannot be located.

Responsible Bodies:

County and City Management Association

Action Status:

Not delivered – carried forward to 2022-2025 Work Programme

Progress Made in 2018:

This action has been integrated into Action 19 and will be carried forward into 2019 as part of a coordinated effort to agree a standardised access policy to state and publicly-owned infrastructure for use by telecommunications companies to improve mobile phone coverage and access to high-speed broadband.

Action 19

Establish a working group to explore the feasibility of developing a standardised policy for accessing and utilising State assets for the deployment of telecoms infrastructure.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

A working group was established in 2018 with the remit of investigating the feasibility of developing standardised policy for accessing and utilising State and publicly-owned assets for the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure. The working group met on four occasions between July and November 2018, and agreed Terms of Reference and a Work Programme.

Action 20

Explore the feasibility of developing a database for sharing of telecoms operator information and local authority infrastructure information.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Action Status:

Ongoing – carried forward to 2022-2025 Work Programme

Progress Made in 2018:

This action will be considered under the work programme of the Working Group on State and Publicly Owned Assets in 2019.

Action 21

Review the role of Broadband Officers in order to clearly define and standardise the scope of the role across all local authorities. In addition, put in place structures to provide a greater level of support to Broadband Officers.

Responsible Bodies:

County and City Management Association supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development

Action Status:

Delayed.

Update: Included in 2022-2025 Work Programme

Progress Made in 2018

A proposal to establish a Digital Development Office in local authorities is being drafted. This reflects the sector's commitment to a vital infrastructure project (NBP) and an essential service in the form of Digital Engagement with citizens and communities. The CCMA will consider the role of the Broadband Officer/Support Unit in local authorities and determine what expertise and knowledge is necessary to complement the existing skillset of the Broadband Officers and the resources required. A proposal document is to be reviewed by the CCMA in Q1 2019.

Communications

Action 22

Commence the production of a National Digital Strategy, to set out a vision for Ireland to reap the full rewards of a digitally enabled society.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

The development of a new National Digital Strategy (NDS) is being led as a shared effort by the Department of the Taoiseach; D/CCAE; Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI), and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER).

A Digital Strategy Interdepartmental Group including representatives from all Departments is supporting its development ensuring a comprehensive whole-of-Government approach.

As committed to in the Action Plan for Jobs, a Framework for Developing a new NDS has been completed, which went to Government in July 2018, and reflected preliminary stakeholder consultations with civic society, enterprise representatives, industry, education providers and academia.

The Department of the Taoiseach ran a public consultation on the proposed new NDS between 22nd of October and the 23rd of November 2018. This public consultation will ensure that the public's concerns, needs and ambitions are at the heart of the Strategy.

Action 23

Improved dissemination of information on developments in high-speed broadband, and awareness raising of its benefits:

- Broadband Officers to engage with PPNs to increase community awareness around high-speed broadband; and

- Communications at local level to address concerns arising from proposed siting of masts.

Responsible Bodies:

County and City Management Association

Action Status:

Ongoing

Progress Made in 2018:

Regular meetings of the Telecommunications Action Group (formerly the Regional Action Groups) provide an opportunity to disseminate information on telecommunication infrastructure deployment and developments in new technologies. Throughout 2018 regular agenda items covered issues such as 5G deployment, network development plans and the operation of the national charging framework. Engagement with local community groups is underway across a number of local authorities as part of efforts to develop local digital strategies. Additional actions will be undertaken in 2019 following the rollout of high-speed broadband in the intervention area.

Action 24

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASAI) to develop guidelines for telecommunications operators on advertising of telecommunications services

Responsible Bodies:

Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland
Action Status: Delayed – carried forward to 2019 **Update:** Completed
Progress Made in 2018: As part of an engagement process the Authority held bilateral meetings with nine telecommunications companies. The ASAI undertook research on how advertising of telecommunication services are advertised in other markets, most notably the UK. As many of the companies in Ireland also operate in the UK, the focus of this research was on newly developed guidance in relation to telecoms advertising as well as decisions of the ASA UK. Analysis was carried out on ASAI decisions and on the trends in complaints related to telecom advertising. An initial draft guidance note has been prepared and is being reviewed internally. A short consultation process will be undertaken prior to the Note being finalised; the ambition is now to deliver by end Q1 2019.

Ongoing Actions from 2017

Action 25
Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government will complete the necessary legislation to ensure that all new-builds are broadband enabled, including mandating that ducting is in place to facilitate connection to high-speed networks.
Responsible Bodies: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment supported by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
Action Status: Delayed – carried forward to 2019 **Update:** Carried forward to 2022-2025 Work Programme.
Progress Made in 2018:

Directive 2014/61/EU has been transposed in its entirety, with the exception of Article 8, which obliges member states to ensure that all newly constructed and renovated buildings which are subject to a building permit must be equipped with in-building physical infrastructure, from the access point to the network termination point.

It had initially been considered that a possible legislative vehicle for transposing Article 8 was via an amendment to the Building Regulations under the Building Control Act 1990. However, legal advice received in Q3 2018 indicated that a revised, or an alternative, transposition approach would have to be considered. D/CCAE continues to explore alternative legislative vehicles in an effort to identify the optimal solution to ensuring appropriate and effective transposition of Article 8.

Action 26

The MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System will be utilised by practically all local authorities and road opening licensing applicants as the single national centralised road opening licensing system.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport supported by the local authorities and the telecommunications operators

Action Status:

Completed – carried forward to 2019

Progress Made in 2018:

The MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System is an online application system that processes applications from utilities to open roads and footpaths. It is now in use in 30 of the 31 local authorities, with a significant increase in the number of licence applications being processed through the system.

Necessary upgrades being progressed to enable Dublin City Council's entry onto the system and it is currently projected that all local authorities will be using the MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System by the beginning of 2020.

Action 27

Formulate legislative proposals that may be required to deal with issues arising from the review of legislation governing TII's and the road authorities' statutory roles and functions in so far as they relate to telecommunications operators accessing the assets under their control or TII fully exploiting such assets: -the Communication Regulation (Premium Rate Services and Electronic Communications Infrastructure) Act 2010; and -the Road Acts.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment supported by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Action Status:

Incomplete and ongoing

Progress Made in 2018:

TII has repeatedly raised concerns regarding the inadvertent layer of bureaucracy created by the Communications Regulation (Premium Rate Services and Electronic Communications Infrastructure) Act 2010. Inter alia, the provisions of the Act require that TII must consult with the local authority (for up to 21 days) before granting a licence.

One possible option identified to address this matter is to amend the Act of 2010 Act.

The question is raised as to whether this also requires corresponding amendments to the Roads Act, with all parties cognisant of the need to avoid any further unintended consequences. To this end, D/CCAE has impressed the need for D/TTAS to provide guidance as to which aspects of the Roads Act may be affected, with D/TTAS in agreement that they would do so.

D/TTAS has received an options paper from TII, in which TII indicate their own preferences. D/TTAS will revert to D/CCAE on foot of same.

Action 28

ComReg will engage a suitable third party to produce a publication that sets out a five year forecast of data traffic that is reviewed, updated at regular intervals and made available on ComReg's website. Examples of forecast items include:

1. Mobile data volumes/speeds

2. Fixed broadband connections/speeds.

Responsible Bodies:

Commission for Communications Regulation supported by telecommunications operators

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

ComReg has undertaken a five-year forecast of mobile data traffic in Ireland. This forecast will help enable better network planning by operators and assist stakeholders to keep pace with consumer demand for services.

A number of demand and supply side factors affect mobile data traffic. Demand side factors include: population growth; the use of different mobile applications by consumers and businesses, such as video streaming and audio, web browsing, social networking and gaming; and the growth in M2M (Machine to Machine) traffic. Supply side factors include the evolution of mobile devices used by consumers, the degree of Wi-Fi offload and the impact of iterative developments of mobile technology (from 3G to 4G, and in the longer term to 5G).

The final report projects that the demand for mobile data in Ireland is to forecast to grow at an average of 32% per year up to 2022, though the rate of growth will slow during the forecast period. Total annual mobile data traffic will increase from 268 million GB/year in 2017 to 1,059 million GB/year in 2022,

The final report is available on ComReg's website.[6]

Action 29

ComReg will introduce a scheme allowing the use of accredited mobile phone repeaters to help address the issue of indoor coverage, particularly in rural areas.

Responsible Bodies:

Commission for Communications Regulation

Action Status:

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[6] https://www.comreg.ie/publication/mobile-data-traffic-forecast-in-ireland/

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:
The issue of indoor coverage is one that has taken on a new importance in recent years due to the use of more energy efficient building materials and the changing habits and usage patterns of consumers. ComReg undertook to introduce a new scheme to allow the use of repeaters in order to improve indoor coverage. Following a consultation, a final decision was published by ComReg on 27 June[7] and which exempts certain types of repeaters. A list of suppliers is available on ComReg's website.[8]

Action 30
ComReg to finalise testing to determine the sensitivity of mobile phone handsets on the market, and make data publicly available.
Responsible Bodies:
Commission for Communications Regulation
Action Status:
Completed
Progress Made in 2018:
ComReg identified in its current Radio Spectrum Management Strategy Statement (ComReg 16/50) that poor antenna performance in handsets is likely one of the issues that has a significant effect on users' experience. ComReg took the decision to test the performance of handsets currently on the market to better inform consumers of the effect handset performance can have on their experience. In total this phase of testing took c. 2,000 hours to complete and resulted in the publication of the Mobile Handset Performance (Voice) report (ComReg 18/05), which is available online.[9]

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[7] https://www.comreg.ie/publication/mobile-phone-repeaters-response-to-consultation-and-final-decision/

[8] https://www.comreg.ie/media/2018/11/Supplier_Installer_List2018.pdf

[9] https://www.comreg.ie/publication-download/mobile-handset-performance-voice

Action 31

ComReg to publish on its consumer website a composite national coverage map, outlining telecoms operator coverage information.

Responsible Bodies:

Commission for Communications Regulation

Action Status:

Completed

Progress Made in 2018:

The availability of a composite national mobile coverage map is a significant milestone for the Taskforce. For the first time, mobile users can access coverage data from all operators in a single place. This will allow consumers to make more informed purchasing decisions and further supports the handset testing work completed by ComReg in 2018.

ComReg appointed an IT consultancy company following a tender process to deliver the mobile coverage map. Updated data was provided by Mobile Network Operators in late October and early November 2018. A test version of the Map was released to mobile operators with 4G data in December 2018.

In Q4 2018, ComReg released a coverage map with all 2G, 3G and 4G data to mobile operators and comments were provided in January 2019. ComReg is now working to go live with the map before the end of February 2019.

Action 32

Initiate a focused review of the statutory Planning Guidelines (1996 and 2012 update), and amend as required, to reflect changes in telecommunications sector.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Action Status:

Not delivered – carried forward to 2019

Update: Carried forward to 2022-2025 Work Programme.

Progress Made in 2018:

The telecommunications sector is constantly evolving, with new technologies emerging. This impacts the planning sector as new technologies have the potential to impact the environment in which they are located in different ways to previous generations of technologies. D/HPLG will engage with D/CCAE, as well as other stakeholders to initiate a focused review of the existing planning guidelines in early 2019 to ensure that any changes that are necessary are considered and brought forward, as appropriate.

While this action is delayed and will now be delivered in 2019, D/HPLG had agreed with Telecommunications Industry Ireland, via D/CCAE, that they would prepare a document outlining their observations and suggested amendments on the current guidelines. Consultants were engaged by Telecommunications Industry Ireland to carry out this exercise, with the final report currently being prepared. It is expected that the final report will be communicated to D/HPLG in Q1 2019.

Action 33

Each telco to produce a quarterly report to the Taskforce Implementation Group on network enhancements, new services and future plans and the benefits to consumers of their products and services.

Responsible Bodies:

Ibec

Action Status:

In progress for delivery – carried forward to 2019

Update: ongoing

Progress Made in 2018:

Telecommunication companies provide a quarterly update to the Taskforce on new services and network enhancements. Discussions are ongoing with industry to provide a greater level of detail on a county-by-county basis in 2019.

Action 34

Each local authority should have a Local Digital Strategy, encompassing a digital readiness assessment, in place to support the evolving needs of the digital society and to ensure that the full benefits of the enhanced telecoms infrastructure delivered by the NBP rollout are felt by businesses and communities across the country.

Responsible Bodies:

Department of Rural and Community Development supported by the County and City Management Association.

Action Status:

Ongoing. Strategy published and updated every 3 years.

Progress Made in 2018:

Digital Readiness Assessments issued to each local authority in Q1, which were followed up with a series of workshops in June around the themes contained the local digital strategy framework. A guidance document was subsequently produced and circulated for local authorities. The Department has also identified and circulated substantial reference material to local authorities. The Department will continue to work with local authorities as they finalise and publish local digital strategies over the coming months.

Appendix III

Progress on 2017 Actions

Strategic Planning

Action 1: Hold an annual forum for all stakeholders to discuss issues impacting on the rollout of telecoms infrastructure.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment/ Department of Rural and Community Development

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The inaugural National Stakeholder Forum was held in Athlone on 6 October 2017. It brought together key stakeholders to engage in an open dialogue on issues impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure. It also afforded an opportunity for stakeholders to highlight any barriers being experienced in the implementation of actions identified by the Taskforce, and to suggest new recommendations for the Taskforce Implementation Group to adopt in order to accelerate the provision of improved services to consumers. The Report of the Forum was published on the websites of D/CCAE and D/RCD[10] on 27 November 2017.

Action 2: Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will work to bring forward the necessary legislation to ensure that all new builds are broadband enabled, including mandating that ducting is in place to facilitate connection to high-speed networks.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government / Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Action Complete: No – carried forward.

Progress Made in 2017:

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[10] The National Stakeholder Forum report is available at:
https://www.D/CCAE.gov.ie/documents/taskforce%20forum%20report.pdf
http://D/RCD.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/Taskforce-Forum-Report.pdf

This action was significantly progressed in 2017. The necessary legislative amendments have been identified between the two Departments. The amendments are at an advanced stage of drafting and are expected to be brought forward for public consultation commencing in Q2 2018.

2018 Action: This action has been carried forward to the 2018 Work Programme (2018 Action 25).

Action 3: Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will fund all local authorities to assign an officer with responsibility for broadband to act as the single point of contact for engagement with operators to assist with accelerated rollout of the National Broadband Plan and create awareness of/stimulate demand for broadband services.

Responsible Bodies: Local authorities/Department of Rural and Community Development

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

By the end of 2017, all local authorities have assigned a Broadband Officer with co-funding provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development. The industry response to the assignment of a Broadband Officer as the dedicated point of contact for engagement with telecommunications operatives in their own local authority has been strongly welcomed throughout the year and echoed at the National Stakeholder Forum.

The introduction of the Broadband Officers has been a hugely positive step but it is recognised that there is a need to ensure consistency across local authority areas and there have been calls for the development of structures to support the Broadband Officers. In light of the fact that the role has expanded significantly since its introduction 12 months ago, the Implementation Group recognise that there is a requirement to review and assess the definition, scope and requisite support resources of the role in order to ensure consistency across local authority areas.

2018 Action: A review of the role of these Officers is proposed in the 2018 Work Programme (2018 Action 21).

Action 4: Run a public awareness campaign on all aspects of the National Broadband Plan and the work of the Taskforce.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment / Department of Rural and Community Development

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

A Communications Strategy was developed and adopted in 2017, which aligned the communications activities of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce, the National Broadband Plan (NBP) Project and the National Digital Strategy. The purpose of the combined strategy was to identify the types and frequency of message and to facilitate the identification of opportunities for coordinated messages across all three areas.

Much work has already been done already in relation to raising awareness and communicating messages. The development of the strategy has primarily resulted in aligning the thinking around co-ordinated and joint messaging, as appropriate.

While this action is complete, raising awareness and communicating the key messages will continue to be a key element of the work of the Implementation Group as a matter of course, in the context of progressing the Implementation Plan for the NBP Communications Strategy.

Action 5: In line with the Programme for Government commitment, the Government will ensure that appropriate funding is made available to support the timely rollout of the NBP.

Responsible Bodies: Government

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

Funding the rollout of the NBP is an ongoing matter for Government. It is not an issue that will be progressed through the Implementation Group and, as such, the action is being closed.

The Government's National Broadband Plan (NBP) aims to ensure high-speed broadband access (minimum 30 megabits per second) to all premises in Ireland, regardless of location. The NBP has been a catalyst in encouraging investment by the telecoms sector

so that today 7 out of 10 premises in Ireland have access to high-speed broadband and this is set to increase to close to 8 out of 10 by the end of 2018 and to 9 out of 10 by the end of 2020. The NBP is being achieved through a combination of commercial investment and a State led Intervention in those areas where commercial investors acting alone will not provide this essential service. The State Intervention is the subject of an ongoing procurement process.

On 29 September 2015 the Government agreed on and published its 6 year Capital Plan, *Building on Recovery*, which included an allocation of €275m for the State led Intervention under the NBP. This provides the initial stimulus required to deliver the Government's intervention. Funding of €75m has also been committed through the European Regional Development Fund.

Further funding will be required over the lifetime of the proposed 25 year contract to build, maintain and operate the broadband network in the State Intervention Area. In this regard, the Programme for a Partnership Government (PfG) notes that Government will provide additional Exchequer capital, if needed, to deliver on the commitment to bring next generation broadband to every house and business in the country.

Action 6: Establish an Implementation Group led by officials of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in order to ensure that the actions identified by the Taskforce are implemented and reported on to Government.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment / Department of Rural and Community Development

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The Implementation Group was established in March 2017, to drive and monitor implementation of the Taskforce actions with membership comprising all key stakeholders responsible for delivery. The Implementation Group comprises senior officials from the following organisations:

- Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

- Department of Rural and Community Development

- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland

- County and City Management Association

- Local Government Management Agency

- Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland

- Commission for Communications Regulation (which sits on the Group as both the owner of several actions and as an observer in its capacity as the independent Regulator of the telecommunications sector).

Bilateral meetings are held with action holders and industry representatives on a quarterly basis. Whilst the action is considered complete, the Implementation Group will continue to meet quarterly, and this is reflected in the 2018 Work Programme.

Planning and Licensing

Action 7: Review the statutory planning guidelines (Telecommunications and Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines (1996) – updated October 2012), in conjunction with telecoms industry representatives and other relevant stakeholders.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Action Complete: No – carried forward.

Progress Made in 2017:

The review of the planning guidelines due in 2017 was not completed due to the priority delivery of the revised exempted development regulations by D/HPLG (Action 9). It is intended to commence this action in 2018 and provide necessary updates, as required. In the interim, D/CCAE has initiated early discussions with industry, via TIF, and sought its members' observations on the guidelines which will feed into the subsequent review of the Guidelines in 2018.

2018 Action: The 2018 Work Programme proposes to initiate a focused review of the 1996 statutory Planning Guidelines in Q4 2018. (2018 Action 32).

Action 8: All remaining local authorities to be fully compliant with the Development Contributions Guidelines for planning authorities, issued by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in January 2013.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government / local authorities

Action Complete: Substantially complete

Progress Made in 2017:

The application of waivers of Development Contributions for telecoms infrastructure is vital for the roll-out of improved services. At the end of 2017, 29 of the 31 local authorities are now effectively in compliance with the 2013 guidelines, which exempt broadband infrastructure (masts and antennae) from development contributions. Of the remaining two schemes, one draft scheme is currently out for public consultation and the second will commence consultation on a draft scheme in February 2018. D/HPLG will continue to engage with relevant Councils and monitor the reviews of schemes in this context, recognising the role of the elected members in this matter.

On a related note, there was unanimous agreement from participants at the National Stakeholder Forum that waivers should include mobile as well as broadband infrastructure and that the guidelines could be clearer, as well as reviewed and updated where necessary to deal with this issue.

2018 Action: The 2018 Work Programme includes an action to review and update the planning guidelines for Development Contribution Schemes to clarify the scope of the waiver (2018 Action 3).

Action 9: Revised Exempted Development Regulations will immediately be brought forward to the Oireachtas.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The purpose of this action was to amend existing exemptions to reflect advancements in new technology and to facilitate increased capacity on existing structures. While other

priority legislative commitments in D/HPLG delayed the finalisation of the proposed regulatory amendments, by year-end 2017, substantial progress had been made and, as discussed at the National Stakeholder Forum, it was prioritised by the Department for completion as soon as possible. As required under the Planning and Development Act 2000, draft exempted development regulations must be presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government for consideration and require subsequent approval by both Houses of the Oireachtas, prior to being signed by the Minister and brought into force. Draft regulations were presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee and laid before both Houses on 13 December 2017 and presented for approval to the Oireachtas in January 2018. The Minister signed the regulations on 8 February 2018, to bring them into operation with effect from that date.

Action 10: Telecoms operators will engage with Transport Infrastructure Ireland and local authorities in order to ensure that the Green Book is actively used to identify specific access sites. The Green Book will be reviewed, if necessary, in light of the experience gained from this engagement.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport/Transport Infrastructure Ireland/local authorities/telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

Throughout 2017 there was strong engagement between Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Telecoms Industry Federation (TIF) working through the process of identification of suitable sites for the accommodation of telecoms mast infrastructure on the motorway network, based on the guidelines set out in the Green Book. TIF members have identified an initial 14 sites along the network. Two priority sites are currently being progressed with the relevant local authorities. This will be an ongoing process. Continuing engagement between TII and TIF will be required, to assist both parties in the identification and development of suitable sites, in line with the guidance provided in the Green Book. Arising from the lessons learnt from the process, updates will be made to the Green Book – however this will follow from the process of continuing engagement rather than as an end in itself.

Both parties found the exercise very useful in order to fully understand each other's requirements. In the medium to longer term, establishing an interface between industry and TII will provide a platform for engagement on such issues as the rollout of 5G – particularly in relation to the anticipated deployment of connected and automated vehicles.

2018 Action: Once the sites that have been selected for development have been through the planning process, D/TTAS and TII will look at the need to update the Green Book to take into account the lessons learned through the engagement (2018 Action 1).

Action 11: Ensure that broadband and mobile phone infrastructure providers have access to new on-line facilities for planning applications as part of the new e-planning arrangements.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government/local authorities/Local Government Management Agency

Action Complete: Ongoing

Progress Made in 2017:

Development of the ePlanning system is ongoing and running to schedule. Pilots are due to commence in Q1 2018. The new ePlanning system will facilitate applications in relation to broadband and mobile phone infrastructure as part of the nationwide roll-out of e-planning and online access to planning services. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016, currently progressing through the Oireachtas, will provide the underpinning legislation for e-Planning, which will see the introduction of online planning applications, appeals and associated payment of fees. An efficient online ePlanning application system will result in greater efficiencies for local authorities and telecoms operators through time savings and reduced costs.

2018 Action: As the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 is expected to complete its passage in the Oireachtas by end Q2 2018 with the rollout of ePlanning expected in late 2018, this action has been carried forward to the 2018 Work Programme (2018 Action 16).

Action 12: The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government to explore the potential of introducing smart, innovative and cost-effective solutions-based problem solving approach in respect of planning.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

This action arose out of the Taskforce's view that there was scope to consider more innovative approaches to planning which reflect the pace of economic, social and technological change while at the same time respecting the environment and needs of the wider communities. The action was conceptual in nature. However, work under other actions has focused on introducing more innovative approaches to planning and to a large extent capture the spirit of what was intended by the Taskforce under this action.

Some relevant examples include the development of the e-Planning system as a key driver to delivering a more responsive, innovative and cost effective planning system. The new initiatives encompassed in the revision of the Exempted Development Regulations centring on the inclusion of small cell antennae, demonstrate the move to incorporating smarter ways of dealing with planning issues.

2018 Action: Another planning issue raised at the National Stakeholder Forum was permissions for the removal of obsolete telecommunications related street furniture and the provision of clarification by D/HPLG on the matter to local authorities, as required. This was seen as an effective way to resolve issues arising for operators and local authorities. This has been included as an action in the 2018 Work Programme (2018 Action 2) and demonstrates the commitment on all sides, especially D/HPLG, to continue to explore more innovative and cost effective ways of resolving planning problems.

Action 13: The Northern and Southern Broadband Regional Action Groups will review and address barriers [within their remit] identified by Stakeholders as impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure in partnership with the local government sector.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Rural and Community Development/local authorities

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The Regional Action Groups (RAGs), made up of Broadband Officers from the local authorities, meet on a bi-monthly basis. During 2017, the Northern Group convened in Carrick-on-Shannon for four meetings, while four meetings of the Southern Group were held in Kilkenny. In addition, an end of year combined meeting was held at the end of November.

The RAGs were recognised at the National Stakeholder Forum as being beneficial for raising awareness of issues and for the Broadband Officers to communicate about, and problem solve, specific matters as they emerge.

Six sub-groups were also established to progress work items that have been identified as aiding the rollout of the National Broadband Plan, including: Scenario Planning, Engagement with Telecommunication Companies, Environmental Issues, Local Digital Strategies, Co-Development, and Strategic Community Access Hubs Procurement. The subgroups report on progress to the Northern and Southern Regional Action Groups.

The local authority sector reaffirms its commitment to supporting and facilitating broadband infrastructure rollout and Broadband Officers are being kept up to date with proposals being put together to tackle issues as they arise. The Regional Action Groups will continue to meet during 2018 to discuss issues related to the rollout of telecoms infrastructure.

Access to Infrastructure

Action 14: Non-commercial State bodies will ensure that no impediments are placed in the way of reasonable access to State-owned property.

Responsible Bodies: Non-commercial State bodies

Action Complete: Closed

Progress Made in 2017:

The Telecommunications industry indicated to the Taskforce that there were a number of impediments, including existing cost structures, to accessing State-owned property for the installation of telecoms infrastructure. A number of specific examples were supplied to support this position.

In light of these examples, and the discussions on the issue in 2017, a new action was highlighted to the Taskforce Implementation Group on the requirement for the development of

a standardised policy, lease and costing arrangement for using State assets for the deployment of telecoms infrastructure.

2018 Action: Ensuring fair access to State assets is vital for the roll-out of telecoms infrastructure. The Implementation Group has identified, for the 2018 Work Programme, an action to explore the potential benefits of developing a central policy on accessing such assets (2018 Action 18).

Action 15: Non–commercial State bodies to consider nominating a single point of contact to engage with telecommunications operators.

Responsible Bodies: Non-commercial State bodies

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The Taskforce recognised that the majority of non-commercial public sector bodies have no formal framework or expertise for engaging with telecommunications operators seeking access to, and use of, State-owned property. Each Secretary General of relevant Government Departments was written to, seeking contact points in non-commercial State bodies to act as co-ordinators in relation to this action. Follow up bilateral engagement with each non-commercial State body was subsequently undertaken in order to ensure that reasonable access is facilitated to State-owned property for installation of telecoms infrastructure.

2018 Action: This piece of work was part of the wider discussions during 2017 on accessing State-owned property for the installation of telecoms infrastructure, and as previously mentioned, will continue to be a focus during 2018. (2018 Action 18).

Action 16: Non-commercial State bodies and local authorities will publish maps of available ducts, where possible.

Responsible Bodies: Transport Infrastructure Ireland / local authorities / non-commercial State bodies

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The sharing of information is wider than this action originally envisaged. Information is required from telecoms operators to local authorities in relation to updated location specific information on coverage and network improvements. In tandem with this, operators require access to detailed infrastructure maps (e.g. of available lighting poles, ducts, etc.) which the local authorities hold.

The Work Programme for 2018 includes an action to explore the feasibility of developing a database for the sharing of information on infrastructure between operators and local authorities.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland has already made available mapping of motorway duct locations to the Telecoms Industry. The mapping has been updated to reflect the installation of additional ducting on the gap sections on the M7 and M8 Dublin Cork route and on the N25 Little Island to Middleton.

Publication of updated mapping will take place in Q1 2018, and will be updated as installations are completed.

2018 Action: The Work Programme for 2018 includes an action to explore the feasibility of developing a database for the sharing of information on infrastructure between operators and local authorities (2018 Action 20).

Action 17: Telecommunications operators should identify, in consultation with local communities where appropriate, optimal locations/areas in which they require additional infrastructure to improve coverage prior to engaging with local authorities and non-commercial State bodies.

Industry will then engage with the single point of contact to scope and manage any issues and risks associated with site selection.

Responsible Bodies: Local authorities / local communities / Non-commercial State bodies / telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The aim of this action was to achieve a greater consensus around site selection for telecoms infrastructure and therefore improve mobile phone coverage. Throughout the year, operators

have been actively engaging on both a formal and informal basis with Broadband officers in all the local authorities, and have reported that they are acting as a valuable liaison between industry and the local community. Operators have provided the Broadband Officers with nominated points of contact in their organisations in order to streamline engagement. Telecommunications operators will continue to engage with local authorities through the Regional Action Groups (RAGs) and via the Broadband Officers. A subgroup of the RAGs is also focusing on developing a protocol to guide the engagement with industry.

2018 Action: In addition, D/RCD and D/CCAE worked with a pilot group of local authorities to identify the issues associated with mapping local blackspots. The pilot exercise has since been completed, with all local authorities now being asked to map local blackspots and identify infrastructure that could potentially be used to provide additional coverage on an economic basis. This exercise will be included in the 2018 Work Programme and it is planned to have dedicated GIS resources in place to support this (2018 Action 12).

Action 18: The dedicated agency established for the management of the NBP contract(s) and the management of all of the State's commercial communications contracts to be the nominated single entity tasked with the provision of advice and assistance to non-commercial public sector bodies, as appropriate, in their engagement with telecommunications operators seeking access to and use of such State-owned property in the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and services.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Action Complete: Closed

Progress Made in 2017:

This recommendation is being considered as part of the ongoing preparation of proposals in relation to the management of the State's commercial communications contracts including the National Broadband Plan Contract(s).

Action 19: The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will explore whether take up of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) can be improved including a review of the pricing and other arrangements relating to connections to the MANs.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Action Complete: Closed

Progress Made in 2017:

The Taskforce recognised the strategic importance of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) in providing wholesale fibre infrastructure in regional towns and cities and noted that Service Providers believed that more could be done to incentivise the use of the MANs to provide greater availability of connectivity in the regions. This action to review the pricing and other arrangements relating to access to the Metropolitan Area Networks was undertaken in 2017. The review took longer than expected because of the complexity of the MANs and their unique position as a wholesale open access fibre network in 94 regional towns and cities.

D/CCAE will shortly be commencing its discussions with enet, which manages and operates the MANs on behalf of the State, on potential recommendations arising from the review. It is hoped that the outcome of this process will facilitate improved access to the MANs for retail service providers.

Action 20: The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will review the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Purple Book) on an ongoing basis and, building on existing arrangements, will establish an appropriate stakeholder forum to provide for a clear and transparent engagement process for formal dialogue between the relevant stakeholders in relation to road openings.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

Following extensive consultation (including with utilities/telecos) over a three-year period, the latest version of the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Purple Book) was published in April 2017. This document provides guidance and specifications for excavation and road opening works on public roads, material on the legal background and requirements as well as procedures for the use of the MapRoad Licensing System (national centralised road opening licensing system). Training to support implementation is being rolled out, including to telecos. The Purple Book will be reviewed on an on-going basis.

During the consultation process for the revised Purple Book, the need for a user forum to discuss day-to-day implementation issues arose. This was subsequently echoed by the

Taskforce and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport established the Stakeholder (User) Forum in November 2017. This Forum, which comprises representatives of utilities, telcos, local authorities and TII, will seek to address operational issues relating to the Purple Book, the MapRoad Road Licensing System and the Green Book (Guidance on the Potential Location of Overground Telecommunications Infrastructure on Public Roads) together with any subsequent associated guidelines. Should it be required, the Forum can raise issues for consideration by the Monitoring Committee (Action 21 refers) which has also been put in place.

2018 Action: The 2018 Work Programme also contains an action to undertake ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Purple Book, including the structures currently in place (2018 Action 8).

Action 21: The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will strengthen the existing multi-sector group to steer and oversee/monitor the progress of the road opening licensing system and stakeholder forum and to examine solutions to barriers identified by Stakeholders as impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and utility works (including a nationally agreed pricing framework).

Responsible Bodies: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

A Monitoring Committee, which includes senior officials from D/TTAS, D/CCAE, D/RCD and D/HPLG together with TII and the CCMA, was established by D/TTAS on 5 April 2017 and met a number of times in 2017. While it was established in the context of the Mobile Phone & Broadband Taskforce Report, it has a wider remit in relation to road openings. Among other things, the Committee's remit is to examine related barriers identified by stakeholders as impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and utility works and, where appropriate, make recommendations for prioritised, cost effective measures to address these.

While the action for 2017 is complete, the structures put in place by virtue of this action will continue in existence in 2018, and any relevant issues brought to the attention of the Implementation Group for discussion.

Action 22: The MapRoad Roadworks Licensing (MRL) System will be utilised by all local authorities and road opening licencing applicants as the single national centralised road opening licensing system.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport / local authorities / telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Ongoing

Progress Made in 2017:

The merit in having the MRL system used by all local authorities and operators as a means of moving towards a more standardised approach was recognised by the Taskforce. By the end of 2017, the MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System (MRL) was being used by 27 local authorities. The Road Management Office continues to engage with the remaining 4 major urban local authorities towards migrating those local authorities to the MRL System. Three of those authorities are in the process of managing some road opening licence applications through the MRL System with a view to migrating fully to it. The one remaining local authority is engaging with the Road Management Office towards identifying how it can progress its migration to the system.

2018 Action: This action has been carried into the 2018 work programme for completion (2018 Action 26).

Action 23: A training and communications programme will be developed and rolled out to local authorities and telecommunications operators to support the implementation of the Purple Book.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport/local authorities

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The idea behind this action was to ensure that each local authority and telco operators follow a consistent approach in the application of the Purple Book.

Six regional seminars for approximately 300 local authority staff were rolled out in May/June 2017. One further seminar/workshop for local authority staff was held on 27 October 2017. This was followed by a seminar/workshop for telecommunication companies in November

2017 which included material on the Green Book. It is also intended to provide a briefing session for Local Authority Broadband Officers relating to both the Purple Book and Green Book.

Action 24: Transport Infrastructure Ireland will bring forward revised charges in relation to duct access and report on the cost of access to the Taskforce Working Group within six months and annually thereafter.

Responsible Bodies: Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The Board of TII approved revised charges for access to ducting, including duct rental charge; administration charge and installation supervision charges have also been amended. The changes result in a reduction in cost to telecoms operators accessing the ducts, most particularly in upfront charges.

As required by legislation, in relation to the duct rental charge, TII wrote to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport seeking the approval of the Minister, who must consult with the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment before responding. The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport subsequently wrote to the other two Ministers in December 2017 seeking their views in the matter.

2018 Action: The finalisation of this process is included in the 2018 Work Programme (2018 Action 17).

Action 25: Transport Infrastructure Ireland will work towards aligning the reinstatement requirements in the TII standards with those in the revised Purple Book where appropriate. TII will report to the Taskforce Working Group on progress at six monthly intervals until the task has been completed.

Responsible Bodies: Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Action Complete: Substantially complete

Progress Made in 2017:

The review of reinstatement requirements set out in TII's standards has been completed. Given the broader scope of TII standards, which for example cover aspects not covered in the Purple Book such as excavations at and adjacent to bridges, full alignment of the standards is not feasible. In so far as possible, alignment of the TTI standards with the Purple Book has been achieved. Final consultations with interested parties will be held ahead of the publication as part of the end of March 2018 update of TII standards.

Action 26: Transport Infrastructure Ireland will work to complete the duct installation on 95km of roadway on the M7/M8 corridor between Dublin and Cork.

Responsible Bodies: Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Action Complete: Substantially complete

Progress Made in 2017:

Works have been completed on the installation of ducting on the M7 & M8 totalling approximately 90km on the route. A short section of the Kildare Town By-pass remains to be completed due to complications arising from the presence of a tanking membrane beneath the motorway, which will necessitate ducting being installed along the fence line. These works will be completed in Q1 2018. The works in question will result in the creation of end to end duct connectivity between the cities of Cork and Limerick and the M7 at Naas.

Works have also commenced on the installation of ducting on the N40 South Ring Road in Cork. The intention is that these works will result in continuous ducting on the Cork South Ring Road, which will then connect via new ducting to be installed as part of the major Dunkettle Interchange upgrade works with the ducting installed on the M8 and N25.

In 2018 TII will continue the installation of ducting on the N40. In addition TII will undertake limited additional ducting works on the M6 and M9 so as to eliminate existing short un-ducted sections.

2018 Action: The Implementation Group recognises the ongoing valuable work being undertaken by the TII in this regard, and gives formal recognition to the fact that the TII will complete this action and continue to investigate any opportunity for further deployment of ducting in 2018 (2018 Action 6).

Action 27: Review the legislation governing Transport Infrastructure Ireland's and the road authorities' statutory roles and functions in so far as they relate to telecommunications operators accessing the assets under their control or the TII fully exploiting such assets: the Communication Regulation (Premium Rate Services and Electronic Communications Infrastructure) Act 2010; and the Road Acts.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment/ Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Action Complete: No – carried forward into 2018.

Progress Made in 2017:

There has been active engagement between the Departments and TII with a view to progressing this action. Reviews are being conducted, pending legal advice, on identifying the amendments to be made to both Acts.

2018 Action: This body of work will continue into 2018 (2018 Action 27).

Consumer Issues

Action 28: ComReg will carry out regular testing to determine the sensitivity of mobile phone handsets on the market. The results will be updated at regular intervals. Industry should consider making this information available at point of sale.

Responsible Bodies: ComReg

Action Complete: No – carried forward into 2018.

Progress Made in 2017:

Discussion at the National Stakeholder Forum noted that the quality of broadband and mobile phone services vary considerably according to location and type of connection. The importance of ensuring that consumers are fully aware of the factors that potentially may impact on service quality in their area was also highlighted. It was also felt that equipping consumers with the right information was an important means of ensuring that they maximised the quality of the services that they are paying for. The breakout session on consumer issues at the Forum discussed ways to equip consumers with the right information to help them choose the right device and/or provider to ensure they receive the services for which they are paying, as well as ensuring consumers are aware of their rights.

ComReg is committed to implementing a number of projects which are designed to improve the service experience of mobile phone users. The Regulator expects to publish over the coming weeks, the results of tests on the voice call performance of mobile handsets currently on the market in Ireland. These results will improve the ability of consumers to make informed decisions when choosing a mobile device.

2018 Action: Finalising this work is carried over to the 2018 Work Programme (2018 Action 30).

Action 29: A composite national coverage map will be generated from comprehensive data, including data provided by operators and made available by ComReg on its consumer website.

Responsible Bodies: ComReg

Action Complete: Ongoing (due for delivery in Q4 2018)

Progress Made in 2017:

ComReg is in the process of developing a "coverage map" to help mobile phone users understand the quality and extent of coverage across Ireland. This map will show coverage across 2G, 3G and 4G platforms for all networks.

2018 Action: This work will continue into 2018. (2018 Action 31).

Action 30: In line with provisions in respect of contracts and transparency under the existing Universal Services Regulations, a breakdown of contract costs including monthly handset and services costs will be made available to consumers.

Responsible Bodies: ComReg/telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The Regulator updated its public Annual Action Plan with a related action in Q1 2017 to "Engage with telecommunications operators regarding awareness of end-user contract costs". In this respect, ComReg has now collected relevant information from mobile phone service providers and has issued a request to industry to publish a set of frequently asked

consumer questions (FAQs). These FAQs will greatly improve consumers' information when purchasing handsets. ComReg provides links to these FAQs on its own website:

ComReg's new price comparison tool is now live. The tool offers increased functionality to consumers including the ability to view packages by total cost or average monthly cost; handset costs are also listed and there is a mobile phone application (App) to calculate usage on an Android smartphone and/or the facility to upload a bill allowing consumers make more informed decisions.

Action 31: Both Service Providers and ComReg will make their complaints procedures readily available to consumers on all issues relating to mobile phone and broadband services.

Responsible Bodies: ComReg/telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

In June 2017, ComReg published its Decision on new minimum requirements for Service Providers' Codes of Practice for complaint handling. Service Providers had to implement these by 1 January 2018, and the new measures will greatly assist consumers (including businesses) if they need to complain to their service provider.

ComReg has completed its online campaign to create awareness of the new obligations on service providers from January 2018. The Regulator has also presented to the Broadband Officers in local authorities on these new obligations as well as on ComReg's complaints handling service.

Action 32: The Advertising Standards Authority should undertake a review of advertising of telecommunications services. Individual operators should review their own advertising to ensure they are not creating a false or misleading impression.

Responsible Bodies: Advertising Standards Authority/telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASAI) has completed its Review of Advertising by Telecommunications Services. In relation to the actions that the ASAI are in position to undertake, the Authority considers that further guidance on advertising for telecommunications services should be developed. The ASAI will examine how best to progress this action during 2018.

2018 Action: As a follow up exercise to the completion of the review of advertising of telecoms services, the Advertising Standards Authority will develop guidelines for telecommunications operators on advertising of telecommunications services during 2018. (2018 Action 24).

Action 33: ComReg will engage with a suitable third party to produce a publication that sets out a five year forecast of data traffic that is reviewed, updated at regular intervals and made available on ComReg's website. Examples of forecast items include: 1. Mobile data volumes/ speeds and 2. Fixed broadband connections/speeds.

Responsible Bodies: ComReg/telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Ongoing

Progress Made in 2017:

ComReg has commenced work on this action. On a quarterly basis, comprehensive data is provided to ComReg by operators on a range of fixed and mobile data traffic usage, including: data from mobile operators on total traffic for 3G and 4G subscriptions; data from fixed operators on traffic type by technology including ADSL, Fibre to the Cabinet, Fibre to the home/premises (FTTH), fixed wireless access, cable and satellite. Comprehensive historical data is also available that will provide a solid platform for the development of future data trend predictions.

Telco operators have indicated that they are ready to engage with ComReg on this matter. The Rural Internet Service Providers association has also indicated that it will co-ordinate responses from its membership to ensure that there is accurate representation of its customers and communities.

2018 Action: Work will continue on producing a publication that sets out a five-year forecast of data traffic with a view to publishing the forecast in line with the headline action. This action has been included in the 2018 work programme (2018 Action 28).

Action 34: Adequate funding will be made available to support the commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government to accelerate the rollout of infrastructure including funding to local authorities to assign officers with responsibility for broadband.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Rural and Community Development

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

D/RCD has provided financial support (€35,000 p.a.) to all 31 local authorities to co-fund the assignment of a Broadband Officer in their area in 2017 and 2018. The role of the Broadband Officer is to act as the dedicated local point of contact with responsibility for promoting telecommunications infrastructure development and to act as the liaison with telecoms operators on coverage and rollout issues. D/RCD continues to engage with local authorities through the Regional Action Groups and on a bilateral basis. D/RCD is also supporting all local authorities on the development of a local digital strategy for their locality.

Action 35: Mobile network operators will be more proactive in social inclusiveness and in meeting the specific needs of more vulnerable groups.

Responsible Bodies: Telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

A lot of work was done by operators in this area throughout 2017. Examples of activities that were undertaken over the last quarter include:

Responsible Connectivity: Virgin Media has developed a range of information toolkits for customers including: Parental Controls: a service that restricts access to websites that contain age inappropriate content while connected to your home broadband; Online safety toolkits: designed to target specific age groups and are compiled by world experts – for example, Play and Learn: Being Online: for children aged 4-8 years and available in 16 languages; Family eSafety Kit: for children aged 6-12 years and available in 18 languages; The Web We Want: for young people aged 13-16 years. Partnership with the

National Parent's Council: designed to support parents worried about Internet safety through training programmes online.

Vodafone is continuing its community outreach programme including national smartphone clinics for the elderly. This is just one element of their community engagement and broader Corporate Responsibility agenda.

Eir is active on an ongoing basis with a range of vulnerable groups. These include: The National Council of the Blind Ireland to provide tech training classes for children and young people with sight loss; Age Action to run volunteer led technology training programmes for older people; Sponsorship of the open eir Silver Surfer awards highlighting the benefits internet access brings to the lives of older people; Camara Ireland to train teachers throughout Leinster DEIS schools to ensure they are equipped to use technology to teach children.

Mobile network operators will continue to participate in social initiatives and programmes to meet the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

Action 36: Local digital strategies will be developed in each Local Authority Area to ensure that the benefits of infrastructure development under the NBP are fully realised from an economic and social perspective.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Rural and Community Development/Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment/local authorities

Action Complete: No – carried forward into 2018.

Progress Made in 2017:

D/RCD, supported by D/CCAE, has engaged external consultants to work with all 31 local authorities to provide support for the development of a local digital strategy for their area. The consultants are commencing engagement with individual local authorities to gather specific information to inform the preparation of digital readiness assessments for each local authority.

The development of local digital strategies will ensure that local authorities are primed to take advantage of high-speed broadband coverage over the coming years.

2018 Action: Work on this project will continue into next year and this action has been included in the 2018 work programme (2018 Action 34).

Network Improvement

Action 37: ComReg will develop a licensing scheme allowing the use of mobile phone repeaters to help address the issue of indoor coverage, particularly in rural areas.

Responsible Bodies: ComReg

Action Complete: No – carried forward into 2018

Progress Made in 2017:

Indoor coverage is regularly raised as an issue impacting many rural households. However, there is a relative dearth of research and solutions. As a result, ComReg has taken the decision to conduct extensive research into commonly used building materials for domestic dwellings. It is strongly suspected that the levels of insulation currently used in houses is a significant impediment to indoor coverage as heat and radio signals are part of the same electromagnetic spectrum (keeping heat in by default keeps radio signals out).

ComReg has identified two potential solutions: native Wi-Fi calling and the use of high standard repeaters. Native Wi-Fi calling is for the Mobile Network Operators to implement (some operators have already introduced this service to their customers and others are currently looking at it). To facilitate the use of repeaters by the general public, ComReg is conducting background research on the feasibility of the introduction of mobile phone repeaters that are beyond network control. ComReg [published a consultation document](#) on 8 December 2017.

2018 Action: A final decision is expected in Q2 2018. This work will continue into 2018 (2018 Action 29).

Action 38: Wireless and fixed network operators will report quarterly to the Taskforce Implementation Group on activities undertaken to optimise the performance of their networks.

Responsible Bodies: Telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The establishment of regular information sharing mechanisms to improve the flow of information from telecoms operators to local authorities in relation to updated location specific information on coverage and network improvements is crucial to bringing about tangible results in identifying solutions to issues impacting on mobile phone and broadband services. A mechanism to provide regular updates from operators to assist the work of the Broadband Officers is being prepared by D/RCD and D/CCAE. While this action is complete, operators will continue to provide updates to the Taskforce Implementation Group on activities undertaken to optimise the performance of their networks.

Action 39: All operators will introduce Wi-Fi calling, Voice over Long Term Evolution (VoLTE) and other network feature and functionality enhancements at the earliest juncture and report on progress to the Taskforce Implementation Group.

Responsible Bodies: Telecommunications operators

Action Complete: Ongoing

Progress Made in 2017:

The following updates have been provided by telecommunication operators:

Wi-Fi calling and VoLTE are on their technology roadmap and will be introduced to the market.

Virgin Media launched Project Lightning last year, which is a digital infrastructure investment programme that will extend the reach of their cable footprint from 49% today to 60% of all Irish homes by 2020. To date the network has been extended to reach Ballina, Drogheda, Dundalk, Ennis, Enniscorthy, Gorey, Greystones, Kildare and Tullamore, Wexford, Castlebar, Arklow. Free Wi-Fi has been installed in a number of these towns so the local community get to experience lightning speeds for free.

Eir launched Wi-Fi calling in early 2017 and since its launch, eir have extended its range of supported products. There has been positive feedback from customers and eir have plans to continue to extend its device capability range over the coming months.

2018 Action: Telecoms operators will continue to report to the Taskforce Implementation Group on an ongoing basis in relation to network features and functionality enhancements

(2018 Action 33). Additionally, mobile operators who have not yet done so will introduce Wi-Fi calling to enable mobile users to make calls over 4G (2018 Action 13).

Action 40: A review will be undertaken to address the issue of blackspots to include recommendations on initiatives to address the issue, taking account of the various innovative options available.

Responsible Bodies: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Action Complete: Yes

Progress Made in 2017:

The review to identify recommendations to address blackspots was completed. The recommendations identified included:

Expediting a number of existing taskforce initiatives and actions, for example, extending the exemptions to planning regulations, implementing a consistent local authority and NRA infrastructure pricing framework etc.

Further development of the project assisting local authorities and operators to jointly identify sites to address critical blackspot locations (Action 17)

Initiation of a focus group to identify specific categories of locations where high quality mobile coverage should be available, to inform future policy development and initiatives.

2018 Action: Concluding the work of the focus group to identify specific categories of locations where high-quality mobile coverage should be available, to inform future policy development and initiatives, is included in the 2018 Work Programme (2018 Action 15).

Appendix IV

Glossary

ASAI
Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland

The independent self-regulatory body set up and financed by the advertising industry and committed, in the public interest, to promoting the highest standards of marketing communications, that is, advertising, promotional marketing and direct marketing.

www.asai.ie

BBOs
Broadband Officers (BBOs) are local authority staff tasked with acting as a single local point of contact for telecommunications matters. BBOs engage with telecoms operators and the public on connectivity issues and liaise with colleagues from relevant business units, elected representatives and other local stakeholders. The role is co-funded by D/RCD and supported by D/CCAE, ComReg and other state bodies.

CCMA
County and City Management Association

The "representative voice" of the local government management network. Its members are Chief Executives of the County and City Councils and the Assistant Chief Executives of Dublin City Council.

www.lgma.ie/en/ccma

ComReg
Commission for Communications Regulation

The statutory body responsible for the regulation of the electronic communications sector (telecommunications, radio communications, broadcasting transmission and premium rate services) and the postal sector.

www.comreg.ie

D/CCAE
Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
www.D/CCAE.gov.ie

D/HPLG   **Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government**

www.housing.gov.ie

DIP   **Digital Innovation Programme**

The Digital Innovation Programme was launched in 2018 by the Department of Rural and Community Development with the aim of supporting digital development in Local Authority areas for the benefit of communities.

D/RCD   **Department of Rural and Community Development**

www.D/RCD.gov.ie

D/TTAS   **Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport**

www.D/TTAS.ie

ESB Networks   **Electricity Supply Board**

www.esbnetworks.ie

GIS   **Geographic Information System**

System designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyse, manage, and present spatial or geographic data.

Green Book   **Guidance on the Potential Location of Overground Telecommunications Infrastructure on Public Roads** is designed to address the engineering appropriateness of siting telecommunications equipment on the roads network. The Green Book can be found on the D/TTAS website at: www.D/TTAS.ie

Ibec   **Ibec** is Ireland's largest lobby group representing Irish business both domestically and internationally. Ibec and its trade associations lobby government, policy makers and other key stakeholders nationally and internationally to shape business conditions and drive economic growth.

www.ibec.ie

JULA   **Joint Utilities Local Authority Users Forum**

LAs   **Local Authorities**

LGMA   **Local Government Management Agency**

A state agency of D/HPLG established to provide a range of services to the Local Government Sector in support of co-ordinated and cost-effective delivery of Local Government services and policy.

www.lgma.ie

LTI   **Long Term Impact**

LUTS Committee   **Land Use and Transportation Committee**

MRL   **MapRoad Roadworks Licensing** is the new national system for the management and processing of roadworks licence applications.

NBP   **National Broadband Plan**

A Government-wide initiative to deliver high-speed broadband services to all businesses and households in Ireland. The NBP defines high-speed broadband as a minimum speed of 30Mbps download and 6Mbps upload. This is being achieved through a combination of commercial investment by the telecommunications sector and a State Intervention in those areas where commercial providers acting alone will not provide this essential service. For more information, visit www.broadband.gov.ie

OPW   **Office of Public Works**

www.opw.ie

Purple Book   **The Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads** set out a summary of the legal framework relating to powers of road authorities, various statutory bodies and private individuals in opening or forming openings in public roads in Ireland. The document prescribes standards in respect of the work of forming openings, backfilling and the reinstatement of road surfaces and the associated materials to be used on all roads other than National Roads. Furthermore, the document prescribes procedures and requirements in relation to the use of MRL and

its use for all road openings in public roads other than those carried out by a road authority. The Purple Book can be found on the D/TTAS website at: www.D/TTAS.ie

RMO   **Road Management Office**

A local authority shared service to develop and provide supports to roads authorities in the development of best practice and supporting ICT tools for road pavement management and road licensing.

www.rmo.ie

TAG   **Telecommunication Action Group**

Monthly meetings organised by D/RCD attended by all Broadband Officers providing an opportunity for networking and the dissemination of information.

Telcos   **Telecommunications Operators**

TII   **Transport Infrastructure Ireland**

TII's primary function is to provide an integrated approach to the future development and operation of the national roads network and light rail infrastructure throughout Ireland.

www.tii.ie

TII (Ibec)   **Telecommunications Industry Ireland**

The Ibec representative body for leading industry and associated interest groups in the field of electronic communications. TII (Ibec) (formerly known as TIF) represents companies involved in fixed, mobile, wireless, fixed wireless, satellite and cable-based service provisions, outsourcing and internet service provision.

www.ibectii.ie