



Cabinet Office



Department  
for Culture  
Media & Sport

# Digital Infrastructure Toolkit

## Ministerial Foreword

This Government is committed to ensuring all nations and regions of the UK have extensive and reliable mobile connectivity. This is essential to enable everyone to benefit from the opportunities available from a vibrant digital economy. The ability of industry to roll-out infrastructure more easily is critical to ensure that growing demand from business and domestic consumers is met in terms of coverage and capacity. In 2016 the Gross Value Added from the digital sector was £116.5 billion, which equates to 6.7% of the UK economy, so the benefits for individuals and the UK as a whole are substantial.

We are determined to ensure that Government Departments play their part by encouraging the siting of mobile infrastructure on buildings or within the grounds of properties that form part of the Government estate. We are equally determined that industry takes up the opportunities to make greater use of the Government estate in supporting coverage across the UK.

Recent reforms to the Electronic Communications Code are intended to support faster and cheaper deployment. This Toolkit is intended to help achieve that by providing a clear and transparent process for industry and Government to explore site-specific opportunities; and a standard template agreement. We see this as a live document which will be reviewed to keep pace with market developments and to take on board good practice.

As a whole, this Toolkit reflects the wider Government view that we need to support, facilitate and drive connectivity. In bringing this forward, we hope to see industry and Government making far greater use of the Government estate to provide the coverage we all want to see across the UK.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Oliver Dowden".

**Oliver Dowden CBE MP**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margot James".

**Margot James MP**

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# Introduction

The efficient roll-out of digital communications infrastructure is critical to ensuring that the growing demand for digital services from business and consumers can be met, enabling everyone to participate in and benefit from the digital economy.

Although there have been significant improvements in coverage in recent years, the Government wants to go even further - extending mobile coverage to 95% of the UK by 2022. The Government also wants to ensure that infrastructure required for 5G is in place so that the UK can benefit from a timely and efficient rollout of next generation mobile connectivity. To support this, we have committed to opening up the Government's estate to host communications infrastructure, with an ambition that the Government estate becomes the landlord of choice for industry.

To help deliver this commitment, the Office of Government Property (OGP) and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) have developed this Digital Infrastructure Toolkit. This includes:

- guidance on agreements to host communications infrastructure on government property, supported by a standard agreement template;
- guidance on agreeing Financial Terms; and
- advice on the processes for landlords and communications operators to follow when considering siting digital communications infrastructure on government property.

The Toolkit has been prepared to help Government departments:

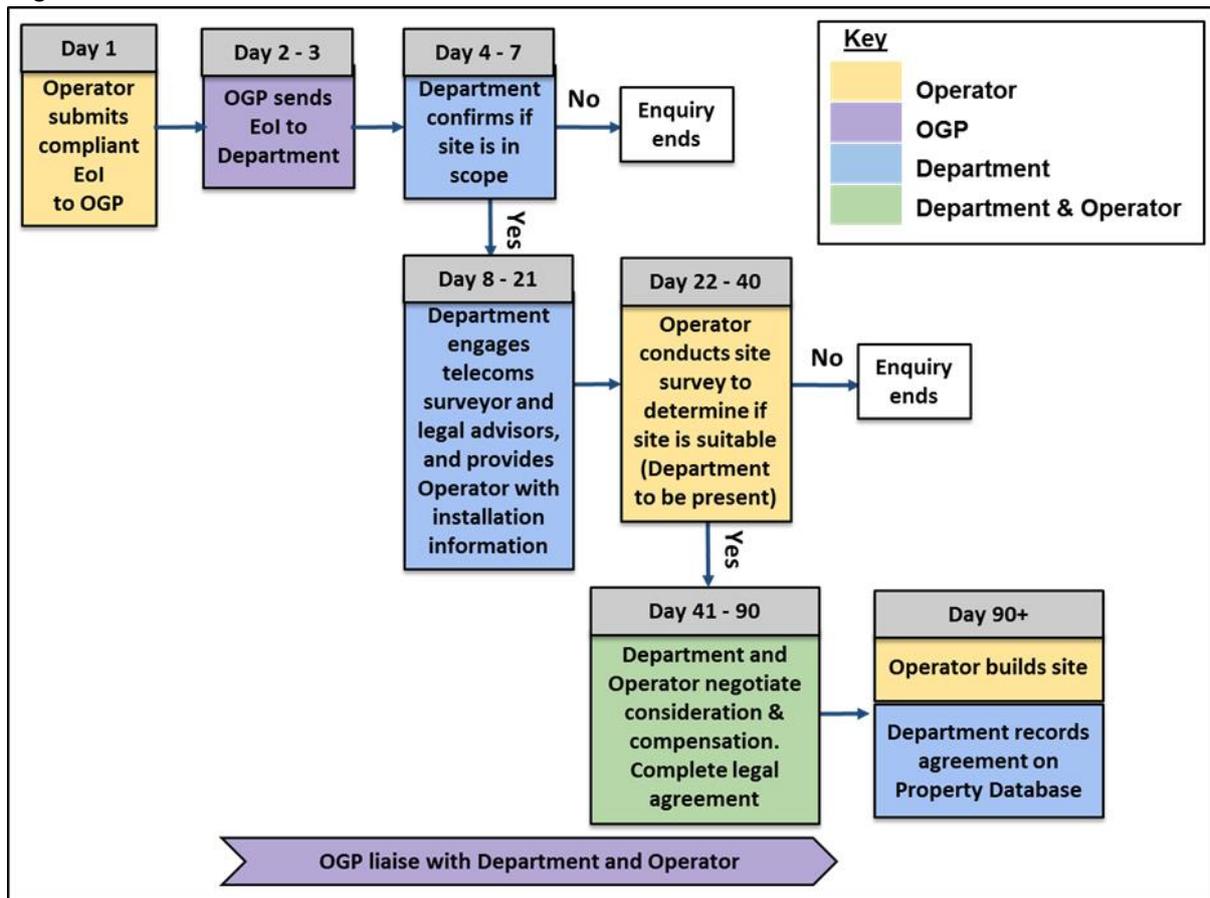
- understand the importance that Government attaches to supporting the rollout of digital infrastructure using its own sites; and
- provide guidance on negotiating agreements, and the factors that need to be considered when agreeing terms.

Rights to maintain digital communications infrastructure on private land are regulated by the Electronic Communications Code (referred to throughout this document as 'the Code'). Reforms to the Code were introduced through the Digital Economy Act 2017, and came into force on 28 December 2017. The reformed Code is intended to support investment in infrastructure, which will help ensure UK consumers have the digital communications coverage and connectivity they need.

We will keep this toolkit under review and monitor our progress. It will be updated as necessary to ensure that we can deliver our ambition.

# Process

Figure 1: Process and indicative timeline



NB: Timelines are indicative and will be reviewed on a regular basis. 90 working days is the target for completion of all agreements, however it is likely that some agreements can be completed within a shorter timescale.

## Operator Interested in Siting Infrastructure on Government Land

If an operator is interested in deploying digital infrastructure on central government property, the Office of Government Property (OGP) should be their first point of contact. This applies whether the operator already has a specific site identified or is seeking potential sites in a particular geographical area. This will ensure consistent easy access. It will also enable OGP to oversee all enquiries and agreements in order to establish if or where changes to the process are required. In overseeing the agreement process, OGP may also be able to advise whether sharing of digital infrastructure is an option on individual sites. This could prove a more economical option for operators, as well as minimising build-related disruption for departments.

Operators should send their enquiry to the OGP at [OGP\\_telecoms@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:OGP_telecoms@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

If departments are approached directly, they should also redirect the query to OGP who can provide support throughout the process.

The scope of the toolkit covers all non-specialised central Government buildings. Moving forwards , OGP will work to share best practice with Local Authorities and other arms length bodies within Government to aid deployment of digital infrastructure on other Government and public sector property.

### **Operator submits Expression of Interest (EOI) in Government Land**

The operator will need to submit a completed Expression of Interest to OGP - see [Annex 1](#). OGP will check the Eoi and send it to the landowning department. The department will confirm if the site is in or out of scope for hosting telecommunications infrastructure. If a site is in scope<sup>1</sup>, OGP will notify the operator that the enquiry will be taken forward. If a site is out of scope, the department will need to provide reasons for OGP to share with the operator.

### **Department Engaging Advisers**

Once a department has accepted a compliant Expression of Interest, it should appoint:

- I. Telecommunications Surveyor; and
- II. Legal Adviser

Departments can access Estates and Professional Services Framework RM3816 to appoint pre-approved telecommunications surveyors. In instructing advisers, departments should look to achieve the Government's objective of increasing infrastructure and improving national telecoms coverage whilst reducing costs for operators. All compensation and consideration must be in line with the principles of the reformed Code.

The Code enables site providers to reclaim all their 'reasonable' costs. Departments will be expected to mitigate costs to their best ability to maximise the potential for recovery should the matter proceed to a hearing at Tribunal.

### **Installation Information**

Operators will require certain information in order to make an informed decision as to whether a particular site is appropriate for their purposes. Departments should provide operators with the following installation information (see Figure 1, Day 8 - 21):

- Details of site location and dimension (including any available floor plans or blueprints)
- Confirmation that the site meets regulations and is viable for telecoms use (i.e. no restrictive covenants or mortgage arrangements which *may* restrict deployment of telecoms infrastructure)
- Confirmation that there are no known impending redevelopment works which may impact deployment of telecoms infrastructure
- Confirmation there are no security or other operational restrictions on the site
- Asbestos report on site, if applicable

<sup>1</sup> A site is within scope if there are no restrictions to deployment of telecoms infrastructure and if it is a non-specialised central Government property. As indicated above, if departments / OGP consider a site is out of scope, the reasons for this will be shared with the Operator and can be discussed.

## Site Survey

On receipt of this information, the operator will contact the department to arrange access to undertake a [Site Survey](#). This will determine if the site meets their requirements. The department should be present during the Survey to assess whether the proposed installation would unduly impact the department's property and if any mitigation is needed. The Survey should consider:

- Whether the structure on which the aerials are mounted is capable of taking the weight/loading;
- Agreeing the cable or fibre entry points and cable routing; and
- Location of cabins/cabinets.

Following the Survey, the operator and department should confirm to OGP whether the site is suitable for requirements and the proposed installation can be managed without undue impact on the property.

Following a positive outcome from the Survey, the operator will prepare a set of design drawings for the department to approve, enabling the operator to proceed with a planning application.

## Agreeing Financial Terms

The Electronic Communications Code provides for two forms of remuneration: Consideration and Compensation. Further advice on this is provided at [Annex 3](#).

Generally, departments and their appointed advisers should approach negotiations in line with the Government's clear objective of increasing infrastructure and improving mobile coverage across the UK and ensuring that the Government estate plays its part in delivering this ambition. Agreements should be reached on a case by case basis, taking into account all relevant factors and evidence available.

## Legal Completion

An agreement to host infrastructure must be in writing to:

- Record the agreed terms (a standard template Agreement is at [Annex 2](#));
- Ensure the interests of all parties are protected for the duration of the Agreement; and
- Help avoid disputes.

## Process monitoring and Key Performance Indicators

The indicative timetable in Figure 1 is to reach legal completion within 90 working days. Whilst this will not always be possible, all parties are expected to make all reasonable efforts to meet these timelines.

**It is recommended that all correspondence between departments and operators are responded to within a maximum of 5 days in order to progress negotiations.**

OGP will:

- Support the department and operator - do all they can to ensure successful agreements are reached and aid operators and departments to overcome issues regarding site access or other similar challenges;

- Monitor individual transactions and share best practice; and
- Report on telecommunications activity across the Government estate.