

2 August 2021

Dear Chair,

### **Priorities for Mobile Connectivity for Wales**

I am writing to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee.

Mobile connectivity has never been more important and arguably more so as Wales looks to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Equally, investment in mobile infrastructure is moving forward at pace. The industry is jointly funding the £1 billion Shared Rural Network with £532 million, and 5G deployment is being extended across the UK and Wales with over 180 towns and cities now covered.

As you settle into your new role I would like to request the opportunity to brief you on current programmes and initiatives, and in particular to raise with you some of the issues and concerns that face the mobile industry in Wales.

While I have been encouraged by the Welsh Government's creation of a new barrier busting taskforce, I would like to raise with you the subject of planning and Wales' relative position compared with other nations of the UK. While Wales did pass legislation to update its permitted development rights regime in 2019, since that time Scotland has further updated its planning policy and England has recently closed a technical consultation to update its own. The changes in both nations have been driven primarily to facilitate shared infrastructure and to incentivise the use of existing sites where possible. These changes will help to make deploying mobile networks easier, to consolidate the number of sites needs and to take into account changes in technology such as 5G.

The industry is therefore very keen to ensure that legislation in Wales is also advanced and that this will have the support of your Committee, so that they it have a real impact on network deployment.

We look forward to working with you in realising the full potential of mobile connectivity.

Yours sincerely,



Hamish MacLeod  
Director