

North Yorkshire Council

Thirsk and Malton Area Committee

26 September 2025

Briefing note on connectivity in the Committee area

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Members requested an update on the latest developments.
- 1.2 To inform Members and the public of progress since the subject was considered at the meeting of the committee held on 29 November 2024.

2.0 DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

The Committee has received regular updates on digital connectivity across North Yorkshire. This was last brought to the Committee at the meeting held on 29 November 2024.

Brigitte Giles, Director of Transformation, provided the following information.

There is a government backed programme that is currently delivering improved mobile coverage in rural areas. The Shared Rural Network (SRN) is a project developed by the UK's four mobile network operators (MNOs), with support from the Government. The programme aims to make 4G mobile broadband available to 95% of the UK, improving 4G coverage in the areas that need it most and addressing the digital divide.

The Shared Rural Network is a deal with EE, O2, Three and Vodafone, investing in a network of new and existing phone masts, overseen by a jointly owned company called Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited. The project is in two phases; the MNOs are to improve coverage in areas called partial not spots (PNS) whilst the Government will use the new mast built for the Emergency Services Network (ESN) to provide mobile coverage from all the operators.

The SRN/ESN programme is to deliver improved coverage across the area, with nine new masts being built in the North Yorkshire Moors area alone. These new masts will initially provide EE coverage only; however, it is anticipated that within a year of the masts being complete, all operators will be providing coverage from the masts.

The first of these fully operational masts went live in September 2024 in Pockley. Currently the masts are at various stages of construction with six masts providing EE only coverage and a further two to be built, the mast in Farndale being the last, which is expected to be live by the end of 2025. The new mast locations are: -

Address ref	Site Address
EAS0073h	Land off Hancow Road, Rosedale Abbey
EAS0074j	Land off Cockmoor Road, Troutsdale
EAS0075c	Farndale
EAS0076i	Land east of Dalby Forest Drive, Dalby Forest
EAS0077v	Newgate Bank, Northfield Lane, Pockley, YO62 7TF
EAS0521a	Hall Farm, Westerdale
EAS0522j	Land west of South House Farm, Daleside Road, Bransdale
EAS1020g	Fryup
EAS1021	Land northwest of Birch Hall, Langdale End, Scarborough

Once this programme is complete in 2027, it is estimated that we will have 85% coverage by all 4 operators and 94% overall coverage in North Yorkshire.

In addition to this we are seeing the MNOs introduce 5G as they upgrade their current infrastructure. This is mainly in the urban areas where the benefits can be seen, as they use 5G to increase the capacity.

3.0 TRANSITION FROM ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL LANDLINES

Members had also requested a note on the retirement of analogue phone lines.

Details of the [UK transition from analogue to digital landlines](#) are available on the GOV.UK website. [Ofcom has also produced guidance on how to prepare](#).

For most consumers and businesses, the change will be straightforward. It is expected that most customers will have made the switch by the end of January 2027.

Communication providers in the UK have taken steps to advise and support people through the transition including:

- **Direct communication with customers**
Providers have contacted customers directly before their migration takes place. This includes letters, emails, and phone calls to explain the changes and what actions (if any) are needed
- **Public awareness campaigns**
Providers have launched public campaigns, including partnerships with charities like Age UK, RNIB, and Dementia UK, to raise awareness and provide support to vulnerable groups.
- **Support for vulnerable customers**
Providers are offering engineer visits to homes of vulnerable customers, especially those using telecare devices or pendant alarms. Free battery backup units or hybrid phones (which switch to mobile networks during power cuts) are available to those who need them. Providers have committed to only switching telecare users when their equipment is confirmed to be compatible.
- **Technical guidance and equipment compatibility**
Customers are being advised to check whether devices connected to their landlines (e.g., alarms, fax machines) are compatible with digital services. Providers and equipment manufacturers are offering guidance on upgrades or adaptors.
- **Customers without broadband**
For customers without broadband, providers will offer a dedicated landline service that doesn't require internet access or new equipment, ensuring continuity of service until at least 2030.
- **Emergency preparedness**
Ofcom requires providers to ensure customers can still contact emergency services during power outages. Solutions like battery backups or mobile network fallbacks are being offered free to at-risk users.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 That the update be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

GOV.UK - [UK transition from analogue to digital landlines - GOV.UK](#)

Ofcom - [Moving landline phones to digital technology: what you need to know - Ofcom](#)

Which - [Five things you need to know about the landline switchover - and how to help your loved ones - Which?](#)

Age UK - [How to prepare for the switch to digital landlines](#)

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