

Criteria for assessing Shared Rural Network TNS mast proposals

We understand and support the need to expand 4G digital coverage, improving connectivity for rural communities and businesses, and along the public road network. This requires new infrastructure, but the current approach of the Shared Rural Network of blanket geographical coverage creates problems for Scotland's remote and wild landscapes where development is intrusive, and any benefits are vanishingly small. That needs to be addressed.

This is an expensive programme working to a tight deadline for delivery, with the Total Not-Spot aspect of the programme wholly publicly funded. To make best use of public funding, our opinion is that there is a need to prioritise where masts are actually needed rather than continue with the notional percentage geographical coverage:

To assist with prioritisation of digital connectivity where it is needed, while protecting wild landscapes from intrusive development we will use the following criteria to engage with SRN mast planning applications, based on our mountaineering interests of hillwalking, climbing and snowsports touring:

Green = objection unlikely

Amber = scrutiny and assessment required on the likely significance of potential landscape and visual impact. This may or may not result in an objection, depending on location and existing infrastructure present in each individual case.

Red = objection very likely for landscape and visual impact reasons.

Green:

Proposed mast locations that demonstrate increased connectivity of rural residences and business premises, and public road networks, that are supported by local communities and landowners, and without significant adverse effect on mountaineering interests defined above.

Amber:

Wild Land Areas overlapping with National Parks, National Scenic Areas, or Special Landscape Areas (or equivalent), and where there is demonstrated community or landowner benefit or local support for a mast.

Wild Land Areas with significant mountaineering interest – listed summits and the routes to and from them, from the public road network, and where there is demonstrated community or landowner benefit or local support for a mast.

Areas within 2km of significant mountaineering interest – listed summits and the routes to and from them, from the public road network.

Red:

Wild Land Areas overlapping with National Parks, National Scenic Areas, or Special Landscape Areas (or equivalent), and where there is no demonstrable community or landowner benefit or local support.

Wild Land Areas with significant mountaineering interest – listed summits and the routes to and from them, from the public road network, and where there is no demonstrable community or landowner benefit or local support.

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