



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

Julia Lopez MP
Minister of State
Department for Science, Innovation & Technology
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13 April 2023

Local Authority Planning Authorities

INT2023/04308/DC

Dear all,

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology has recently seen an increase in complaints about the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure. In particular, Parliamentarians and their constituents have expressed concerns about the number of new poles being erected in areas where there are existing poles in place.

As I am sure you are aware, operators must comply with a number of statutory obligations when installing their networks. These obligations include requirements to share apparatus where practicable; to use underground, rather than overground, lines where reasonably practicable, with certain exceptions; and when installing apparatus, to minimise the visual impact on the surrounding area as far as reasonably practicable. They must also notify you, the local planning authority (LPA), in writing at least 28 days in advance of their intention to deploy infrastructure (subject to exceptions). You may then set out conditions with which you wish the operator to comply.

As the independent regulator for telecommunications operators, Ofcom is able to take enforcement action if it has reasonable grounds to believe that operators are failing to comply with their statutory duties and obligations when deploying apparatus. This can best happen if Ofcom is kept informed and receives evidence of non-compliance.

I am therefore writing to encourage you to let Ofcom know and provide them with evidence of any instances where operators are not adhering to their statutory obligations so that appropriate investigations can be made and action taken. This will help ensure that the legal framework operates effectively and that deployment happens in a way that takes into account not only the benefits of consumer connectivity, but also the impact of installations on communities across the UK.



We believe that communities benefit enormously from the deployment of high quality digital infrastructure, with all the economic and social benefits it brings. However, we want to make sure that that deployment happens in accordance with Codes of Practice and existing regulations so that the impact on communities and the environment is taken into account and that broad support is maintained for the rollout of this critical infrastructure. We do not want to see poor operator practice undermine a programme that will ultimately be of huge value to the people we represent.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Lopez MP
Minister of State