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INFRALINK CASE STUDY

Perth & Kinross Council Small Cell Open Access Agreement





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Perth & Kinross Council signed an Open Access Agreement for small cells with connectivity infrastructure-as-a-service provider Freshwave in record time enabling the deployment of telecoms infrastructure on council lampposts.

Reaching an agreement for access to council assets would typically take several months, however the Infralink Exchange project and the UKG supported Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator that SFT and Tay Cities local authorities were participating in added focus to allow agreement within just 4 weeks.

"We're very pleased to be working with Perth & Kinross Council and the other Tay Cities local authorities to put these agreements in place. There are over 140,000 assets available in the area and a growing interest from mobile network operators in deploying small cell technology to enhance their networks in many areas of the country. Having open access agreements in place allows Councils to move quickly in partnership with the MNOs when the operators identify demand, so residents, visitors and businesses can enjoy the benefits of connectivity."

Nick Wiggins, Head of Partnerships at Freshwave

"Our buildings, streetlights and other street furniture we can make available now to telecoms companies to extend and densify existing mobile networks, but you need to have a legal way to do this that satisfies the telecoms companies and our own operational needs for these assets. This is what the Open Access Agreement gives us and any local authority can now do this using the templates that are available in the Infralink website."

Graham Pinfield, Team leader at Perth & Kinross Council

By signing this non-exclusive agreement and demonstrating a clear willingness to sign similar agreements with other interested parties the council has taken positive action to ensure that 5G deployment can be accelerated in the area for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

Background

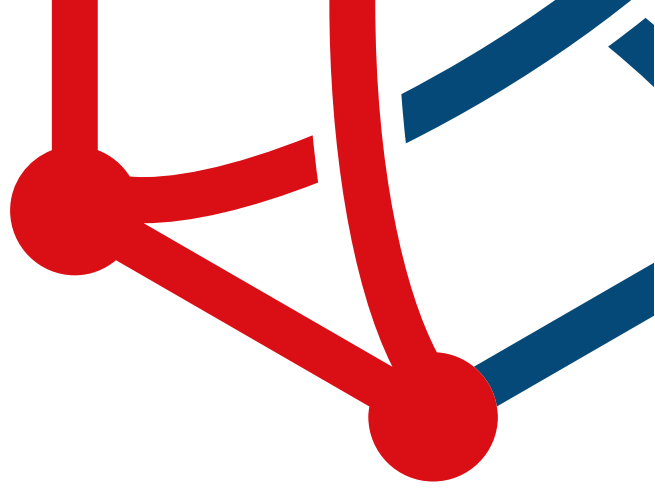
Agreeing on where digital infrastructure should and can be accommodated is a complicated process requiring collaboration between public bodies, mobile network operators and the community. It relies on the use of land, buildings and street furniture to host 4G and 5G macro infrastructure and 4G and 5G small cells.

As part of the Infralink Exchange DCIA pilot, Perth & Kinross Council together with the other Tay Cities regional councils (Fife, Dundee City and Angus Councils), is now offering telecoms providers access to over 140,000 council assets such as land, buildings, streetlights and CCTV via the Sitenna platform, which maps the location of council-owned assets suitable for mobile network equipment. This method provides a direct route into the right contact within the council to negotiate an agreement for use.

Perth & Kinross Council developed a new Telecommunications Policy Statement providing a clear indication of commitment to



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support deployment of telecommunications equipment to enhance digital connectivity. The previous policy restricted installation of telecommunications masts on Perth & Kinross Council properties.

The new Telecommunications Policy Statement, agreed in November 2022, is broader than the previous policy and includes updates on the Electronic Communications Code (ECC) and the requirements to support new mobile network installations, putting in place a Single Point of Contact for the mobile industry to engage with and commits to using the Infralink tools to speed up the installation process.

Alongside this, Perth & Kinross Council have also taken steps to streamline internal processes to ensure that deployment requests for mobile infrastructure can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Increasing Scotland's connectivity is a crucial economic driver towards post-pandemic recovery and to further attracting inward investment. In its 2019 5G: strategy for Scotland, Scottish Government estimated that by enhancing 5G capability, Scotland has the potential to add £17bn to its GDP by 2035, create 160,000 new jobs and increase productivity by £1,600 per worker. That strategy document also highlights that 5G could play a part in creating 3,100 new businesses and see export volumes grow by £3.3bn.

In response, The Scottish Futures Trust have developed a range of balanced, transparent tools via their Infralink programme to support councils across Scotland and help councils and telecoms providers start off on a positive footing and accelerate the negotiation process.

In addition, a Playbook has been created which draws on the work of the Infralink-Exchange DCIA Pilot and provides a 'how-to' guide allowing public sector bodies to begin a project that improves mobile connectivity through commercial and GIS based transformation. This best practice guide including case studies, templates and points to note, is a key output from the Scotland 5G Centre and DCMS investment in the Infralink programme.

By transforming the approach to engaging with MNOs and taking a proactive stance on mobile connectivity, local authorities can see improvements in their region for job opportunities, the reduction in digital exclusion and more sustainable growth.

Infralink Support

To find out more about Infralink please go to

infralink.scottishfuturestrust.org.uk

or get in touch with Sarah Eynon, Programme Director at Scottish Futures Trust sarah.eynon@scottishfuturestrust.org.uk

