

SFT CORPORATE PRIORITIES



# SFT Outcomes

## Demonstrating progress with impact

PRIMARY OUTCOME

05



**PROGRAMME AND PROJECT PROCUREMENT AND DELIVERY IS EFFECTIVE**

SECONDARY OUTCOMES

01

## 4G infill programme keeping people connected

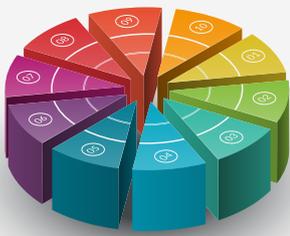


Since March 2020, when the world went into lockdown, we have all relied more heavily on digital connectivity where it has provided a lifeline for many families, teachers and school children and businesses alike.

Similar to having access to hot and cold running water, electricity and gas, being able to connect to the internet and being able to receive a mobile phone signal is viewed today as a much-needed utility.

But across many parts of rural Scotland there has never been a mobile signal. Scottish Government and SFT have been working together to develop the Scottish 4G Infill (S4GI) programme to deliver 4G infrastructure and services to around 50-60 “not-spots” in Scotland.

The SFT-managed programme is backed by £17.5m of Scottish Government funding and £11.25m from the European Regional Development Fund and is being delivered by WHP Telecoms.



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The rural village of Little Mill in the Highlands is the latest location to benefit from 4G, with more sites across the Highlands and Islands, Aberdeenshire, Morayshire, Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders set to be connected by the end of 2021.

Strathconon, approximately 25 miles west of Inverness is one site that has recently been switched on, providing vital connectivity to ambulance, police, fire and mountain rescue emergency services, as well as the local community. For resident John Turner, who also lets a holiday cottage in Strathconon, 4G has transformed both his home and working life.

John commented: "Improved mobile connectivity has made such a difference to myself, my wife and the local community. Thanks to the S4GI programme we can now connect to faster reliable speeds, which is crucial during the current pandemic. Like many people living in Strathconon and the surrounding area, I work from home and now I'm able to take part in online meetings without experiencing time lags and colleagues talking over each other due to the poor connection.

"Strathconon is a beautiful spot to live in, however staying in a remote area of Scotland can be especially challenging in the winter. Improved mobile coverage will be really useful in emergencies, when travelling or for tourists visiting the local area."

By the summer of 2023, the S4GI programme is anticipated to deliver up to 55 masts, including those deployed via collaboration with the Emergency Service Network roll-out team. In Strathconon, 69 homes and businesses are now receiving mobile coverage from this network.

