

SFT OUTCOMES

2023

Filling in the digital 'notspots'

PRIMARY OUTCOME

05

PROGRAMME AND PROJECT
PROCUREMENT AND DELIVERY
IS EFFECTIVE

SECONDARY

02

03

08

OUR CORPORATE PRIORITIES



NET
ZERO



SUSTAINABLE
PLACES



INCLUSIVE
GROWTH

For the majority of people living in Scotland, having access to the internet and being able to make a phone call are similar to having essential utilities such as fresh running water and a power supply.

But across Scotland's more rural areas, the opposite can be the case, where having a mobile signal is regarded more as a luxury.

The Scottish Government's Scottish 4G Infill (S4GI) programme is a £28.75m initiative to deliver 4G infrastructure and services to 55 mobile "notspots" in rural and island parts of Scotland and is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

As well as supporting Scottish Government with the development of the S4GI programme, our Digital Connectivity team provides technical and financial assurance in the management of their contract with WHP Telecoms Ltd by finding solutions to overcome challenges, and ensure value for money by reutilising existing or planned infrastructure.

During 2022/23, six additional masts were installed and 20 more activated, bringing the total number of masts built to 54 with 48 fully operational, at the end of the period.

When the masts become operational, the programme is making a significant difference to the lives of many thousands living in remote communities, who have been able to improve the way they work, connect with friends and family, access public services, purchase goods and services and download films and music.

The success of the S4GI programme has set an example of government-delivered mobile connectivity, and the learning of its delivery will pave the way for future interventions like the UK Government's Shared Rural Network.

Partnership working

Mobile network providers Virgin Media O2 and Vodafone have collectively expanded their 4G networks to two rural Scottish communities, Traquair (Peeblesshire) and Balmacara (Ross-shire), as part of a collaboration between the Scottish Government's Scottish S4GI and UK Government's Shared Rural Network.

Upgrade works have been completed at a mobile site in Traquair and a new mast has been built at Balmacara – both of which now host Virgin Media O2 and Vodafone 4G network equipment. The new equipment means residents, businesses and visitors in the area are now benefiting from better mobile coverage as well as greater choice of provider.

Rob Tanner, a farrier and online table tennis coach near Bogton, said: *"Being able to post videos and carry out coaching sessions without any problems is fantastic. I can now download a TV programme in seconds instead of hours, which is amazing."*

Stakeholders

Scottish Government
WHP Telecoms Ltd
FarrPoint
Home Office

