Appendix C: Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity Reinvestment - Summary of High-Level Risks

Operational risks and issues have been identified and are and will continue to be managed through the appropriate RAID risk analysis and operational management.

The high-level risks associated with the ambition to reach 90% Gigabit Capable coverage within Worcestershire during 2027 have been identified as:

Risk	Mitigation
Failed Project Gigabit procurement / Supplier not delivering	Significant market engagement has been undertaken by the Council's team and have not just relied upon BDUK's engagement. The Council are only scoring 'Social Value' elements of the ITT response. BDUK are expected to undertake due diligence on the preferred suppliers proposed solution. The Council will work with the preferred supplier to support deployment in the county.
Commercial operators not completing / delaying their existing plans	Both financial and operational concerns do exist due to number of suppliers in more built-up areas, these are being monitored and discussed. Whilst we cannot control investment decisions of commercial operators or their financers, we can make Worcestershire and easy
Committing reinvestment too early / too late	The strategy being adopted to fully commit reinvestment funding, whilst delegating authority for detailed commitments later is expected to minimise risk and maximise value for money for any future specific reinvestment.
Increased gigabit broadband deployment means road closures / traffic management / new infrastructure deployed e.g., poles	The Council's Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity team and Highways are already working closely with the commercial operators and their agents to minimise impact on Worcestershire's Highways. Support of Local Members is requested to recognise road closures and traffic management are required in the short term for long term benefits to be recognised and that new infrastructure needs to be installed to achieve our 90% Gigabit Capable ambition and prepare for retirement of copper networks.
Lack of direct control on Project Gigabit	BDUK are contracting directly with the preferred supplier, this reduces the ability of the Council to manage local priorities with the supplier. Concerns also exist that BDUK may adjust their approach with suppliers to address either hitting the national target of 85% by 2025 or prioritising delivery in other areas over Worcestershire to meet their political need. The Council are maintaining dialogue and relationships with BDUK to minimise these risks recognising political escalations may be required in future.
Subsidy Control / BDUK funding restrictions impacting on hard-to-reach areas	BDUK have algorithms and strategies in place to increase commercial coverage, whilst this is sensible it is important to balance this against 'cost of delay', managing stakeholders expectations and remaining pragmatic. The Council team will continue to work with communities and BDUK on sensitive areas to find solutions that minimise potential 'Subsidy control' issues.
Not using 'Underspend' on broadband improvements	Either BDUK request unallocated 'Underspend' be returned, there is no mechanism/authorisation for the Council to use 'Underspend' on improving broadband would mean a recalculation in the 'Project Investment Ratio' that would mean a greater amount of 'Gainshare' (already received and to be received) would need to be returned to BDUK, it is therefore important until all Underspend is allocated an appropriate amount of Gainshare is retained as a 'risk pot'

The high-level risks associated with the Mobile Implementation Plan have been identified as:

Risk	Mitigation
MNOs / Ofcom not engaging to address local issues	All MNOs met with us following our assessments in 2017. MNOs face increasing challenges themselves; it is important Worcestershire continues our approach of working to support MNOs, not simply challenging for improvements. Undertaking the 'understanding coverage' phase only increases our ability to hold meaningful conversations with both MNOs and regulators.
Data collected becomes dated too quickly	Through market engagement we are exploring options with suppliers to inform our procurement strategy e.g., call-offs, crowdsourced data etc.
High levels of planning applications for masts get refused / suitable sites not available	Whilst MNOs and The Council seek to improve the mobile connectivity in the county, it is still not unusual for planning applications for new masts to be refused. The Council and Local Enterprise Partnership have arranged sessions with District Planning teams and the mobile industry to improve the quality of applications and for Planners to understand more about the process of locating and designing new mast sites.
Growing population / demand for data outstrips capacity	MNOs will design for the future but have investments to make across the UK and both capital and operational costs need to be considered against projected demand. The Council have included 'asks' within recent revisions of Local Development Plans for Developers to engage with MNOs. Part of our Mobile Infrastructure Plan includes dialogue with industry for what more can be done.
Worcestershire unable to leverage local assets / position as an attractive place to invest	The Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity team are working with the national Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator and local Streetlighting team to understand the potential for Council assets to be used to support mobile infrastructure deployment.
Benchmarking current coverage / engagement with MNO suggest significant further investments required	Progressing with the market engagement and 'understanding phase' only better informs the Council. Further work is required to understand other alternatives and appetite within Worcestershire for other approaches to infrastructure investment. Noting any substantial investment beyond what can be supported by 'reinvestment funding' will need to return to Cabinet to progress.
3G and 2G Switch offs commence / issues occur without adequate 4G & 5G coverage in place	Without 'understanding' the current position more fully we will not understand the size of this risk in Worcestershire. Whilst Ofcom and MNOs suggest they will not switch-off networks without adequate cover in place, locally we believe the 'quality of experience' of users is not what Ofcom and MNO coverage modelling believe it to be. Nor does the local team believe the 'Shared Rural Network' plan gives adequate confidence that 'not spots' in the county are recognised.