



Background

From January - March 2018, the CLA undertook research to establish how many planning applications were being submitted in rural areas, in order to establish if the mobile phone operators were adequately providing coverage to the countryside.

The CLA posed the below question to 156 urban local authorities and 138 rural local authorities (all of England's local authorities minus London Boroughs).

- 1) *How many planning applications were received for telecommunication masts and or related equipment during the period of:*
 - a) *1st January 2015 – 31st December 2015*
 - b) *1st January 2016 – 31st December 2016*
 - c) *1st January 2017 – 31st December 2017*
- 2) *How many of these applications were?*
 - a) *approved*
 - b) *completed*
- 3) *Where it is possible to access your most up to date telecommunications register.*

Response Rate

England - Urban local authorities - 119/156 – 76.3%
England - Rural Local authorities – 99/138 – 71.7%
Wales RLA – 7/9 – 77%
Wales ULA – 11/13 – 84%

Average amount of planning applications per year

Urban Local authorities – **2015** - 7 **2016** - 5 **2017** - 3
Rural local authorities - **2015** - 5 **2016** - 4 **2017** - 4
Wales RLA – **2015** - 11 **2016** - 9 **2017** – 8 *Note Welsh LA's are larger than English ones.
Wales ULA – **2015** - 4 **2016** - 4 **2017** – 9

Average of number of masts that received planning applications in that three-year period –

Urban Local authorities – 13 – 86% of planning applications for masts successful
Rural local authorities - 11 – 84.5% of planning applications for masts successful
Wales RLA – 26 – 92% of planning applications for masts successful
Wales ULA – 10.5 - 61% of planning applications for masts successful

Areas that have approved 0 planning applications in 2015 – 2017 period

Area	4G Coverage (Connected Nations)	Planning applications put in
Rutland	3.42%	0
Selby	41.38%	0
Tunbridge Wells	30.44%	0

Areas that have approved 1 planning application in 2015 – 2017 period

Area	4G Coverage (Connected Nations)	Planning applications put in
Lewes	44.57%	2
North Somerset	48.19%	2
South Derbyshire	42.06%	1

Areas that have approved 2 planning applications in 2015 – 2017 period

Area	4G Coverage (Connected Nations)	Planning applications put in
Isles of Scilly	N/A	2
Ribble Valley	6.37%	2
South Bucks	63.9%	2
Torridge	20.76%	2
Boston	34.89%	2
Chiltern	47.98%	2

Areas that have approved 3 planning applications in 2015 – 2017 period

Area	4G Coverage (Connected Nations)	Planning applications put in
East Hampshire	43.56%	4
Maldon	8.63%	3
Bolsover	33.93%	3
Purbeck	40.27%	3
Swale	50.37%	3
Teignbridge	36.12%	5
Craven	44.24%	3
Daventry	43.48%	3
East Staffordshire	60.35%	3
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	23.46%	3
Malvern Hills	26.76%	11

For comparison, here is a list of the top 10 Worst Local Authority Areas of Indoor 4G Coverage (the coverage level is taken from the Ofcom's Connected Nations 2017, the approved mast applications number information is from our FOI request)

Area	4G Indoor Coverage	Approved Applications for Masts
Rutland	3.42%	0
Ribble Valley	6.37%	2

Maldon	8.63%	3
South Norfolk	10.64%	4
Breckland	11.22%	5
Melton	13.76%	12
Copeland	14.13%	n/a
North Norfolk	14.18%	12
North Dorset	14.24%	n/a
Mid Devon	14.25%	5