

A joint statement on the sunsetting of 2G and 3G networks and public ambition for Open RAN rollout as part of the Telecoms Supply Chain Diversification Strategy

The Government is today announcing, together with UK mobile network operators, a joint ambition for 35% of the UK's mobile network traffic to be carried over open and interoperable Radio Access Network (RAN) architectures by 2030.

Open network architectures will play a key role in enhancing the security and resilience of the networks that we rely on – now more than ever – to keep in touch and do business. Following recent decisions the Government has made around the use of high-risk vendors and the introduction of the Telecommunications Security Act, it is right that the Government now sets out its ambitions to build a more competitive, innovative, and diverse supply base for telecoms.

We recognise that mobile operators are currently taking forward plans to introduce and expand their 5G networks – while also undertaking work to extend coverage to the most rural parts of the UK. Therefore this ambition is not a mandate and instead realising it will require partnership and collaboration between government, mobile operators and the wider telecoms industry.

We understand that in order to reach this ambition, there is more to be done to develop the performance, economics, and security of new RAN solutions so that they become competitive and viable for scale deployments. Therefore, joint activity will include – investment in the research and development, deployment, and adoption of open network technologies, creating the right market environment to foster and encourage innovation, and international partnerships that bring together learning from across the global supply chain.

We welcome the forward steps taken by operators and suppliers to position the UK as a leader in the development of open and interoperable RAN technology – and the government has committed £250m of investment to support and accelerate this programme of work.

This ambition demonstrates the Government's commitment to delivering its Diversification Strategy and building lasting and sustainable supply for the infrastructure that underpins our entire digital economy. Sunsetting 2G and 3G networks

Finally, following a Diversification Taskforce's recommendation, the

Government has worked closely with industry to establish a date by which all public 2G and 3G networks in the UK will have been switched off.

This next step in the UK's technological revolution will free up spectrum for 5G and beyond, creating exciting possibilities for our everyday lives and business. The move is also a key step in wider Government measures on introducing new vendors to the UK mobile networks, contributing to nationwide security and resilience.

Establishing this date is necessary to provide much needed clarity as to the likely commercial longevity of these technologies and will enable users to confidently plan for their future. Transitioning away from these technologies will improve network efficiency.

The mobile network operators have confirmed that they do not intend to offer 2G and 3G mobile networks past 2033 at the latest. We welcome that some individual operators will switch off their networks, particularly their 3G networks, earlier than this date, and will announce their own plans about when and how they intend to do this.

The Government welcomes the responsible switch off of these networks, and will continue to work with network operators to ensure a smooth transition that meets the needs of business users and consumers, including vulnerable groups.