



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Lisa Bridge
Clerk
Arkengarthdale Parish Council
High Greenas Farm
Green Lane
Hurst Richmond DL11 7NL

Our Ref: ZA14715

20 May 2022

Dear Mrs Bridge,

Further to our correspondence of earlier this year I have now received more up-to-date information from the Home Office, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, EE and Mobile Access North Yorkshire about the issues relating to mobile phone and broadband coverage you have raised with me.

I apologise for the delay in getting a substantive response to you.

Firstly, EE and the Home Office, which are jointly providing the mast programme of which the one at Seal Houses is part, have confirmed that once the Seal Houses Farmhouse mast is activated a commercial 4G mobile phone and broadband service will be offered by EE.

The latest date I have for the mast 'going live' – being activated – is Q4 of this year. EE have confirmed that the commercial service will be offered as soon as possible on activation.

Eight other masts built under this programme in Swaledale and Wensleydale will be activated in stages between Q4 2022 and Q1 of 2024. It is EE's policy that commercial services will be offered from these masts.

I appreciate the frustration many will feel about the delay to the service being available. The Home Office has told me this is due to the need to follow Government procurement processes fully in awarding the contract for connecting all the new masts to the network. It is striving to deliver the programme as quickly as possible.

Separately, I have also been informed that an application for an additional mast on Melbecks Moor is pending. This mast will be built under the Government's Shared Rural Network (SRN) programme and should enable Vodafone, Telefonica UK (02) and Hutchison 3G (Three) to provide a service to Upper Swaledale and parts of Arkengarthdale. I am also informed that the Seal Houses mast is also being considered for commercial connectivity under the SRN programme.

This will ensure a greater degree of consumer choice for mobile phone and broadband customers in the area.

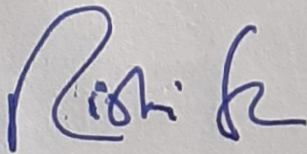
The Home Office is now providing me with quarterly updates on the progress of the mast programme. I will share the latest information with the council as and when I receive it.

In relation to the 5G trial, Mobile Access North Yorkshire has said that funding for the trial has been extended until 30 June this year to enable the project to go ahead. However, as the council is aware, the search for a suitable mast site continues and I am grateful that the council has provided practical assistance in this search.

Finally, I have asked Superfast North Yorkshire for a response to your email of April 22 about the roll-out of fibre broadband services.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me. I will keep the council informed of further developments on all these matters.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rishi Sunak', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rishi Sunak
Member of Parliament
Richmond (Yorks)