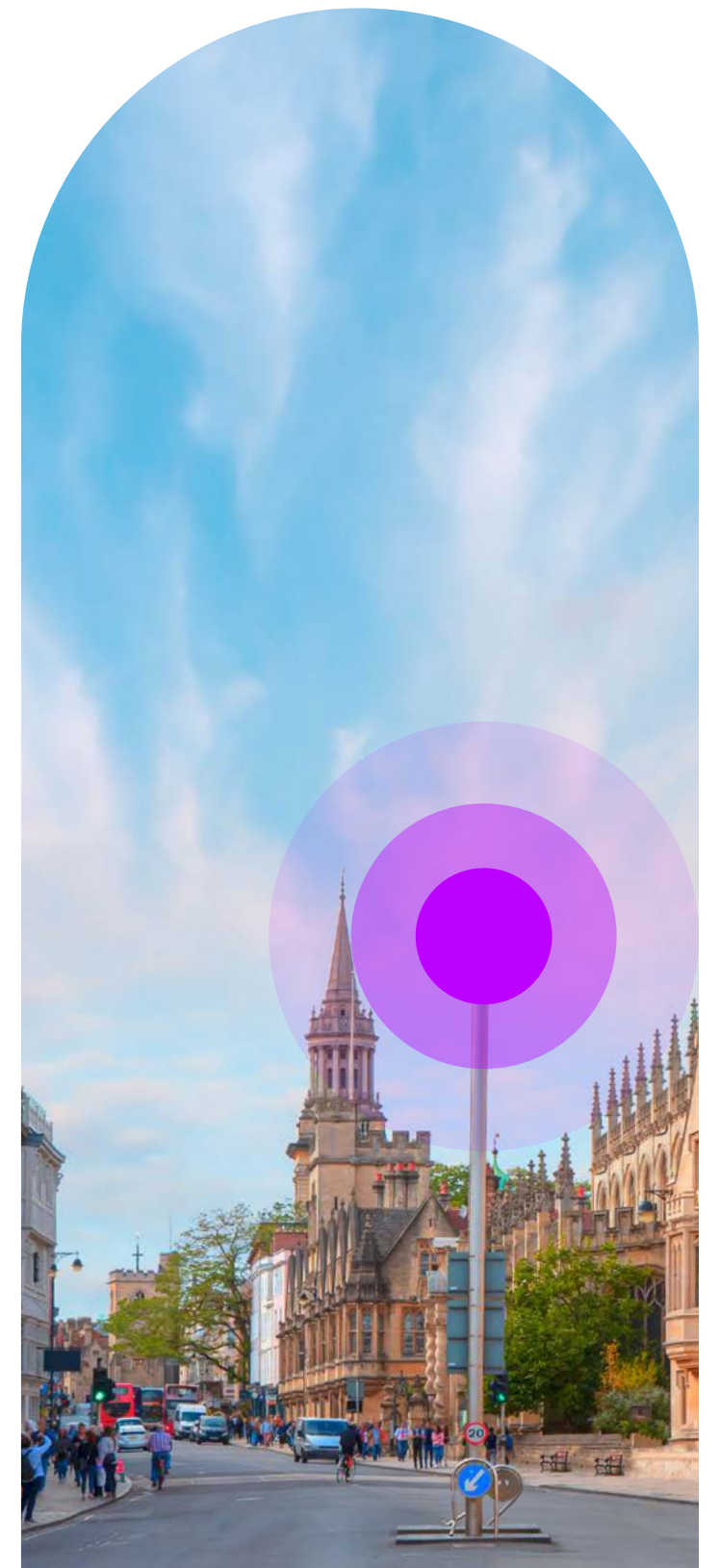


# Accelerating and influencing where connectivity is delivered.

A guide to frameworks, enabled by the [Joint Operator Technical Specification \(JOTS\)](#), which enable Local Authorities to guide the deployment of connectivity in rural and underserved areas.

# IONX

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# Strategic Actions

## What can Local Authorities do to accelerate and influence where connectivity is delivered?

The release of the JOTS Neutral Host Outdoor (NHOD) Specification marks a pivotal moment for UK Local Authorities seeking to close persistent mobile coverage gaps, particularly in underserved rural and urban communities. As mobile connectivity becomes a critical enabler of economic growth, public safety and digital inclusion, the ability to deploy shared infrastructure more efficiently is now a strategic imperative.

This two-part thought leadership series explores both the strategic actions Local Authorities can take to shape where and how connectivity is delivered, and the practical steps they can implement to remove deployment barriers. With Neutral Host models gaining momentum - and trusted partners like IONX already working alongside Local Authorities and MNOs, this is a crucial time to build awareness, align planning and accelerate outcomes.

### Frameworks and Funding

#### Central Government Frameworks and Funding

Understanding how central grants are allocated helps inform local digital infrastructure planning and ensures readiness for future investment rounds. UK Government funding to local authorities supports neutral host and shared network deployment through mechanisms such as [Network Services 3](#) and the [Mobile Voice and Data Services Framework](#).

#### Government, Enterprise and Community Partnerships

By forming collaborative partnerships with enterprises and community stakeholders, Local Authorities can explore co-investment or hybrid financing models that reduce risk and encourage broader buy-in. These partnerships can include infrastructure providers, landowners or even anchor businesses.





**Subsidies & Anchor Tenancy Agreements**

One of the most powerful accelerators is using public services (e.g. transport hubs, emergency services, educational campuses) as anchor tenants to attract infrastructure investment. Anchor tenancy gives providers revenue certainty, improving the commercial case for deployments in challenging areas.



# A PIVOTAL MOMENT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CITIES IN THE UK.

Streamline Policy and Planning



**Open Access Agreements**

Developing local policies that support open access infrastructure ensures that multiple providers can use the same neutral host network, reducing duplication and accelerating rollout. It also fosters competition and lowers overall costs.



**Digital Infrastructure Investments**

Align local plans with national strategies such as DSIT's Local Digital Infrastructure Plans (LDIPs). Embedding digital infrastructure within broader urban planning ensures connectivity is considered from the outset, not as an afterthought.



**Shared Small Cell Principles in Strategic Planning**

Encourage or mandate the inclusion of shared small cell deployment frameworks in local area plans and planning documents. This can fast-track site approvals and provide clarity for MNOs and neutral host operators.





### **Standardised Guidance for Boroughs and Regions**

Produce or adopt consistent planning guidance that educates local planning authorities on small cell requirements - including form factor, siting criteria and deployment workflows, reducing confusion and delays across boroughs.

# Leverage this framework to benefit local economies, public services and digital inclusion.

## Market Engagement and Acceleration



### **Engage with the Neutral Host and MNO Community**

Actively facilitate discussions by hosting workshops, roundtables, or working groups with MNOs, neutral host providers and infrastructure investors. This opens communication channels, aligns expectations and surfaces shared challenges early.



### **Develop Pre-Approved Neutral Host Frameworks**

Create procurement frameworks that include pre-vetted neutral host providers, streamlining the process of bringing trusted partners on board. This helps Local Authorities reduce procurement friction and align with industry standards like JOTS NHOD.



### **Procurement and Framework Agreements**

Set up clear, flexible procurement frameworks that enable faster engagement and allow Local Authorities to respond quickly to infrastructure opportunities. These should support small-scale pilots, as well as long-term infrastructure rollouts.



## Industry Alignment: JOTS Neutral Host Outdoor

The JOTS Neutral Host Outdoor (NHOD) Specification represents a significant advancement in enabling technically compliant, multi-operator mobile coverage via shared infrastructure. Developed by the UK's four national MNOs (EE, Vodafone, Three, and Virgin Media O2), the specification defines the interface, performance and security requirements that neutral host providers must meet to deliver outdoor small cell solutions capable of supporting multiple MNOs from a single physical footprint.

## Industry Standardisation: Service Assurance

Crucially, JOTS NHOD aligns technical requirements across operators, removing the historical need for bespoke deployments and streamlining integration with each operator's core network. This opens the door for new As-A-Service models, where neutral hosts like IONX can integrate the RAN layer with multiple Operators. This ensures the delivery and management of wireless services maintain full compliance with operator SLAs, latency, backhaul and QoS expectations, providing operators with complete assurance in the delivery of their mobile services.

## JOTS Compliance: IONX as a Trusted Partner

As an early adopter and trusted implementation partner, IONX has aligned the development of its service delivery platform with the JOTS NHOD specification. Working collaboratively with Local Authorities, IONX enables the delivery of targeted, future-proof mobile coverage into underserved communities. This collaboration model de-risks investment and simplifies procurement allowing faster deployment of multi-operator small cell infrastructure in areas where traditional macro solutions are either cost-prohibitive or technically constrained.

**Local Authorities are positioned  
as key stakeholders in delivering  
future proof mobile connectivity.**





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