

## **Direction under section 106(3) of the Communications Act 2003 applying the electronic communications code**

### **Background**

- 1.** The Applicant has applied to Ofcom for a direction applying the Code to the Applicant.
- 2.** The date on which Ofcom received a completed application that meets the statutory requirements with respect to the content of an application for a direction applying the Code and the manner in which such an application is to be made was 12 August 2019.
- 3.** By virtue of regulation 3 of the Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No. 1210), except in cases of expropriation, Ofcom must make its decision within 6 months of receiving the completed application.
- 4.** Prior to giving a decision under section 106(3) of the Act to apply the Code to the Applicant, Ofcom must publish a notification of its proposal to give the direction and consider any representations about that proposal that are made to Ofcom within the period specified in the notification.
- 5.** On 29 November 2019, Ofcom published, in accordance with section 107(6) of the Act, a notification of its proposal to give a direction applying the Code to the Applicant for the reasons set out in the consultation document accompanying that notification. That notification invited representations to Ofcom by no later than 5pm on 30 December 2019.
- 6.** Ofcom received three responses objecting to the proposal. One respondent stated that the Applicant did not appear to have sufficient experience of wireless network deployment to warrant the grant of Code powers, and they also objected to the grant of Code powers to small providers more generally. The respondent also queried why the Applicant would need Code powers given it could already deploy its wireless network using permitted developments, and argued that providers should be required to use the planning process. The other respondents were concerned about the potential health and environmental issues arising from weak electromagnetic fields that might be generated by communications equipment deployed by the Applicant (and other persons to whom Ofcom applies the Code).
- 7.** Having considered all the objections raised, Ofcom has concluded that it would be inappropriate to withdraw its proposal on these grounds. Ofcom is satisfied that the Applicant has experience of deploying wireless access networks and that the further expansion of such networks would be facilitated by applying the Code to the Applicant. Moreover, the Applicant also seeks Code powers to facilitate the expansion of its fibre access network which will benefit the communities in the rural areas where the networks are deployed. In Ofcom's view, the other objections raised issues concerning Government policy relating to the rollout of advanced communications networks and the technology they employ. In particular, Government policy underpinning the statutory framework which establishes the Code and the rights available to Code operators, and the Government's assessment of the safety of non-ionising radiation. Ofcom has no power to alter these policies or the statutory framework that sets out the Code. It is therefore unable to include consideration of the issues raised by the respondents as part of its assessment of the application.

9. For the reasons set out in the explanatory statement accompanying Ofcom’s consultation, Ofcom has had regard, in particular, to each of the matters set out in section 107(4) of the Act.

Furthermore, Ofcom has considered and acted in accordance with its general duties in section 3 of the Act and the six Community requirements in section 4 of the Act.

### **Decision**

10. Ofcom hereby directs, in accordance with section 106 of the Act, as follows—

- (a) the Code shall apply to the Applicant for the purposes of the provision by the Applicant of an electronic communications network; and
- (b) that application of the Code shall have effect throughout the United Kingdom.

11. This Direction shall take effect on the day it is published.

### **Interpretation**

12. In this Direction—

- (a) “**Act**” means the Communications Act 2003;
- (b) “**Applicant**” means Lonsdale Network Services Ltd, whose registered company number is 08107724;
- (c) “**Code**” means the electronic communications code set out in Schedule 3A to the Communications Act 2003;
- (d) “**Ofcom**” means the Office of Communications.

13. For the purpose of interpreting this Direction—

- (a) headings and titles shall be disregarded;
- (b) the Interpretation Act 1978 shall apply as if this Notification were an Act of Parliament.

**Signed**



**Brian Potterill**

**Competition Policy Director**

A person duly authorised in accordance with paragraph 18 of the Schedule to the Office of Communications Act 2002

27 January 2020