[Ex-BT boss leads task force to attract new vendors to UK telecoms](#)

Ex-BT CEO and former trade minister Lord Ian Livingston is to chair a new task force to drive forward ongoing work to diversify the UK's telecoms supply chain and reduce reliance on high-risk vendors.

Later this year the government will publish its Telecoms Diversification Strategy to address a market failure where mobile companies are limited to using just three major suppliers in their telecoms networks. This restricts choice and poses a risk for the security and resilience of the UK's future digital networks.

The forthcoming strategy will set out the key areas for boosting competition and innovation in the UK market by building an open, sustainable and diverse telecoms supply chain.

The global market for communications network equipment is currently dominated by three vendors – Huawei, Ericsson and Nokia. The government wants to bring more players into the market to make networks more secure and deliver higher quality products and services.

The Telecoms Diversification Task Force will provide independent expert advice to the government as it works towards diversifying the network so that telecoms companies do not have to use high-risk vendors like Huawei or rely on individual vendors to supply equipment in their networks.

This follows the government's commitment, informed by advice from the National Cyber Security Centre, to ban the use of new Huawei 5G equipment from the end of this year, and remove all existing Huawei kit from 5G networks by 2027. The forthcoming Telecoms Security Bill will turn these commitments into law after being introduced this autumn.

The task force, which includes senior representatives of Vodafone and Openreach alongside industry and academic experts, will support the development and implementation of the strategy. The full membership includes:

- Lord Ian Livingston of Parkhead (chair)
- Rosalind Singleton, Chair of UK5G Advisory Board
- Clive Selley, CEO, Openreach
- Scott Petty, CTO, Vodafone UK
- David Rogers, CEO, Copper Horse
- Professor Rahim Tafazolli, Head of Institute of Communication Systems, University of Surrey
- Professor Dimitra Simeonidou, Professor of High Performance Networks, University of Bristol
- Dr Scott Steedman, Director of Standards, British Standards Institute

Dr Ian Levy, Technical Director of NCSC and Simon Saunders, Director of

Emerging Technology at Ofcom will also be available to the task force to provide technical advice.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

"To deliver the revolutionary benefits of 5G networks for people and businesses, we need to be confident in their security and resilience. A more diverse supply chain is essential to reducing our dependence on individual suppliers and improving telecoms security – as well as a great economic opportunity for the UK.

"Under Lord Livingston's leadership, this task force will use industry expertise to turbo charge the delivery of our Diversification Strategy. Together we will push ahead with bold ideas to break through the barriers stopping suppliers from entering the UK and put us at the forefront of innovative new mobile technologies."

Lord Livingston, Chair of the Diversification Task Force said:

"The UK is already a leading nation in the adoption and use of digital communications.

"It is vital that we position ourselves for the next generation of technology, particularly 5G, by having a wide choice of secure, innovative and high quality suppliers.

"I look forward to chairing this team of experts from industry and academia who can provide advice to government as to how it can best achieve these aims"

Through the Diversification Strategy, the task force will look at creating targeted measures to attract new vendors alongside the current pool of incumbent, non-high risk suppliers. The government is talking to a range of vendors – large and small – about how it can support them to enter the market and accelerate diversification.

The task force will also look at ways to develop the capability of the UK's vibrant and innovative telecoms sector. It will explore how to incentivise research and development in the sector, including accelerating the development of open and interoperable equipment which can be used by multiple vendors, such as OpenRAN.

The government is working closely with its international allies to develop solutions that will result in lasting change in the global telecoms market, and secure the UK's position as a world leader in 5G networks.

Alongside the Diversification Strategy, the Telecoms Security Bill will give new powers to the government to control the presence of high risk equipment vendors, and to Ofcom to drive up security standards. The Bill will enshrine in law one of the strongest regimes for telecoms security in the world.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Lord Ian Livingston of Parkhead (Chair)

Lord Ian Livingston serves as Non-Executive Chairman of Dixons Carphone plc. He joined the Board as Deputy Chairman and Non-Executive Director in 2015. He was previously Minister of State for Trade and Investment from 2013 to 2015 and Chief Executive Officer at BT Group plc from 2008 to 2013. Prior to that he was Chief Executive Officer, BT Retail and group Chief Financial Officer of BT. He is a chartered accountant and previously held the position of chief financial officer of Dixons Group plc between 1996 and 2002, having served in a number of roles over more than a decade with the company.

Rosalind Singleton

Rosalind Singleton is Chair of the UK5G Advisory Board. UK5G is the national innovation network dedicated to the promotion of research, collaboration and the commercial application of 5G in the UK. She is a telecoms exec with over 30 years of experience in the sector and a Board chair, advisor and angel investor. She joined UK Broadband in 2013 and was Managing Director from 2017 to 2019. She has previously held senior roles at BT Openreach, Cable and Wireless, Vodafone, various VNOs, and other international operators from start-ups to incumbents. She also sits on Ofcom's Spectrum Advisory Board.

Clive Selley

Clive Selley is CEO of Openreach, the UK's largest digital infrastructure company, and previously served as chief information officer for BT Group and as the chief executive of its technology division. He is one of Europe's leading telecoms and digital infrastructure experts. He has more than 30 years' experience in the sector, including senior roles across the BT Group in engineering, technology innovation and implementation, and network operations. He has a deep understanding of the complexity and challenges of building and managing telecoms infrastructure, and a proven track record of constantly improving customer service performance.

Scott Petty

As Chief Technology Officer Scott is responsible for defining and implementing Vodafone's Technology strategy and driving forward key initiatives, including the use of artificial intelligence, 5G and full fibre broadband, all of which will power the new digital economy. Prior to this, he worked in a range of senior roles at Vodafone Group, having joined the business in 2009 as Business Products and Services Director. In 2012, Scott was appointed Group Technology Enterprise Director, and in this role he led product development across connectivity, IoT and converged communications.

David Rogers

David Rogers is CEO of a mobile and IoT security consultancy – Copper Horse.

He also chairs the GSMA Fraud and Security Group and sits on the Executive Board of the IoT Security Foundation. He has expertise in mobile communications, the Internet of Things and connected autonomous vehicle security. He lectured in Mobile Systems Security at the University of Oxford from 2012-2019 and served as a Visiting Professor in Cyber Security and Digital Forensics at York St John University.

Professor Rahim Tafazolli

Rahim Tafazolli is Regius Professor of Electronic Engineering, Professor of Mobile and Satellite Communications, Founder and Director of 5GIC and ICS (Institute for Communication System) at the University of Surrey.. He has over 30 years of experience in digital communications research and teaching. He has authored and co-authored more than 1000 research publications and is regularly invited to deliver keynote talks and distinguished lectures to international conferences and workshops. He was advisor to Mayor of London (Boris Johnson) on London 2050 Infrastructure.

Professor Dimitra Simeonidou

Dimitra Simeonidou is a Professor at the University of Bristol, the Co-Director of the Bristol Digital Futures Institute and the Director of Smart Internet Lab. Her research is focusing in the fields of high performance networks, programmable networks, wireless-optical convergence, 5G/B5G and smart city infrastructures. She is also working with Social Sciences and Humanities on topics of digital innovation for inclusive and prosperous societies. She has been the Technical Architect and the CTO of the smart city project "Bristol Is Open". She is currently leading the Bristol City/Region 5G urban pilots. She is the author and co-author of over 600 publications, numerous patents and several contributions to standards. She is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering (FREng), a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical & Electronic Engineers (FIEEE), and a Royal Society Wolfson Scholar.

Dr Scott Steedman

Scott Steedman joined the British Standards Institution in 2012 where he is the Director of Standards. He was a Non-Executive Board Member of the Port of London Authority from 2009 to 2015 and served as Vice-President (Policy) for the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) from 2013 to 2017. He is currently Vice-President (Policy) of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Simon Saunders (technical advisor)

Simon Saunders is Director of Emerging and Online Technology at Ofcom. He joined the telecoms watchdog from Google, where he was Head of Connectivity Partnerships for Europe, Middle East and Africa working with mobile operators globally on improving wireless connectivity through advanced technology. He is a specialist in communication technology, with a technical and commercial background, having worked in industry, including at Motorola and Philips, in academia at the University of Surrey and Trinity College Dublin, and as an

advisor on communication systems for business users, operators and technology vendors. He is also a Visiting Professor at King's College London.

Dr Ian Levy (technical advisor)

Ian became Technical Director of the National Cyber Security Centre in October 2016, prior to which he was Technical Director of Cyber Security and Resilience at GCHQ. He leads on developing defences to manage cyber threats. This involves fostering technical innovation to find solutions that can protect the UK from large scale cyber attacks, and day-to-day malicious cyber activity.