

**Written evidence submitted by Tony Marshall, Chairman,
Intelligent Telecommunications Ltd**

I am Chairman of Intelligent Telecommunications Ltd (ITL), a company based in Willenhall, West Midlands that designs, installs and maintains telecom networks. The Government has set a target for the UK to be completely 5G and fullfibre connected by 2025. The country's need for this 'Critical National Infrastructure', which will cost around £30bn, has never been better demonstrated than during this current pandemic.

Given this demand ITL received an investment from myself and 5 other businessmen in June 2019. At that time ITL was a loss-making Tier 2 supplier with an annual turnover of £3.5m. Following the investment, ITL has employed a talented and experienced management team which has been successful in winning £27m of Tier 1 contracts from the network operators Virgin Media and Cityfibre. Nine months into the current financial year its annualised turnover is 3.5 times that of the year ended June 2019. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has had a very significant impact on both margin and turnover growth.

When the Government first announced the details for CBILS, ITL was hugely encouraged and relieved that it met all the criteria and made an application to Lloyds Bank (not a bank with which I have any relationship). **The application was rejected due to the British Business Bank's (BBB) 'strict criteria' that viability to service and repay the loan should be based on historical accounts, preferably over 3 years. In ITL's case this is obviously not the correct metric to assess the business and if the same criteria were to be routinely applied, many of the country's fastest growing SMEs would be denied loans.**

ITL has excellent revenue visibility, turned profitable in February and March 2020 and can clearly demonstrate its ability to service and repay a CBIL loan. I have not seen detailed anywhere the BBB's strict reliance on historical accounts and I have been unsuccessful in contacting anybody at the BBB who can clarify and justify this financially naive requirement. The Government is the only body that can guide the country through the economic crisis of this pandemic. It has entrusted the BBB and in turn the high street banks to implement one part of their strategy. There are currently large question marks over whether they deserve that trust.

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