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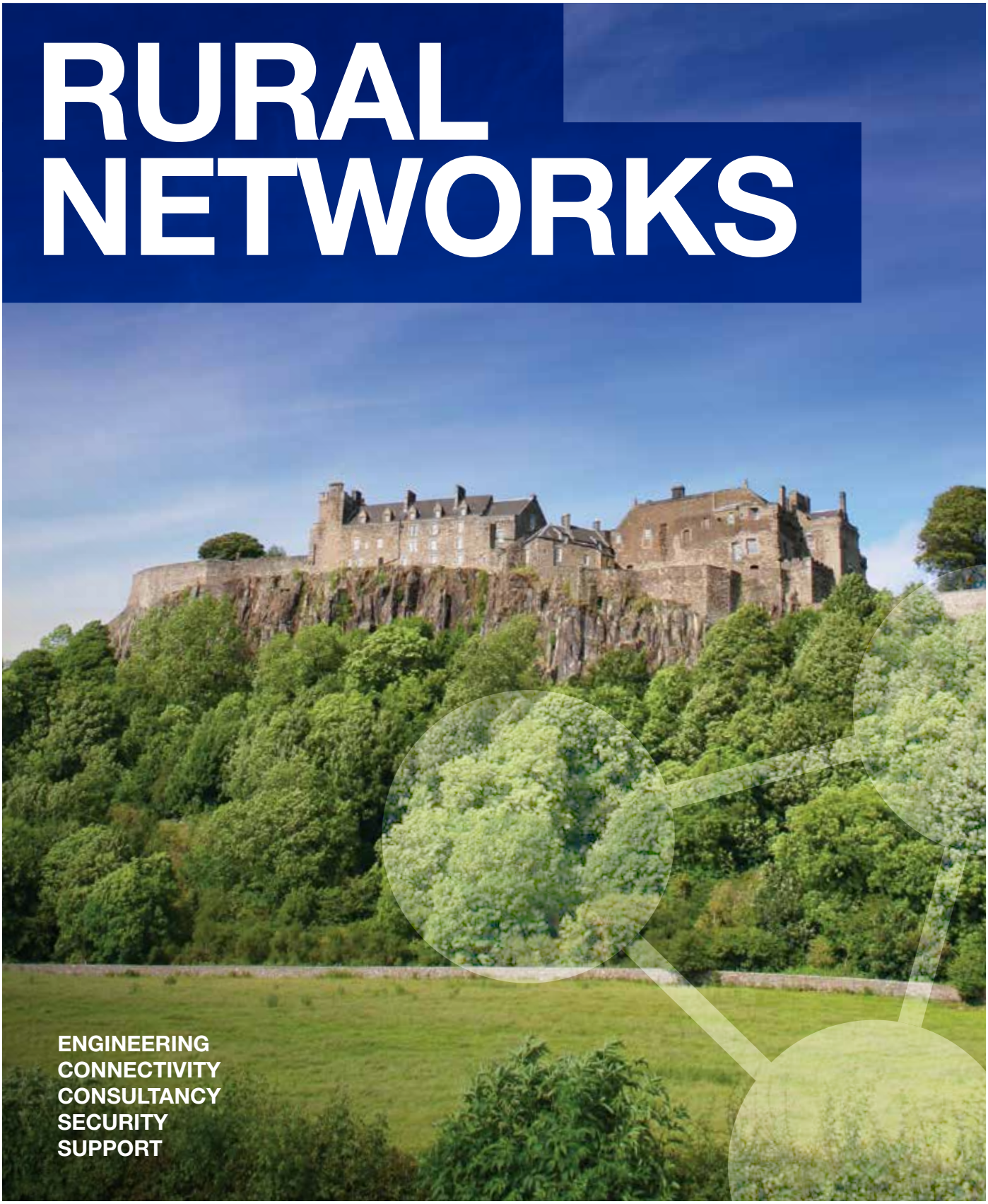
RURAL NETWORKS



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STIRLING COUNCIL RURAL SCHOOLS AND OFFICES NETWORK

Stirling Council in central Scotland covers an 817 square mile area and a population of some 90,000 people, 70% of whom live in the city of Stirling and 30% of whom reside in a sparsely populated rural area extending northwards into the Highlands.

Equal service in terms of parity between urban and rural schools

30%

Reduced costs through the network costing less than an equivalent fixed-line solution

THE CHALLENGE

Stirling Council's diverse geographical area was mirrored by a striking 'digital divide' between varying levels of available telecoms infrastructure, with the city of Stirling and its locality well-served, but the more rural areas almost devoid of effective services such as high-capacity broadband. The effects of the divide were being most strongly felt by rural schools and libraries, for whom an increase in web-based resources and services such as video conferencing meant that higher-capacity broadband connectivity was sorely needed.

TNP'S SOLUTION

TNP's solution was to install a county-wide high-capacity network based on carrier-class microwave communications equipment, in the shape of a network connecting 24 satellite offices and outlying schools. This meant that some of the county's remotest schools could be connected using a mix of licensed and unlicensed microwave bands, replacing low-capacity and unreliable ADSL lines. Crucially, the network is owned by Stirling Council, with the core network using third-party repeater sites and customer premises equipment being sited on Council buildings.

A key element of the project was TNP's ability to implement the solution to a tight deadline during school holidays, at the same time the Council's headquarters and data centre was being relocated to a listed building. Under a stringent service level agreement, TNP's solution offers on site maintenance, remote and telephone-based support; third-party relay site access; manufacturer liaison; and spares handling. TNP continues to work with Stirling Council in extending the network to further remote sites.

THE BENEFITS

The benefits enjoyed by Stirling Council through this project include:

- Increased bandwidth to rural schools, allowing access to cloud-based education resources, video conferencing and IP telephony
- Equal service in terms of parity between urban and rural schools
- Better security through network ownership and control, reducing the burden of security and compliance.

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