

MVNO Options

Here is a selection of options for each smaller Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO) who offer monthly rolling plans without any hard credit checks (where the network looks at your credit worthiness) or those annoying inflation related price rises. Unless marked otherwise all plans have unlimited minutes and texts.

There is no commitment on any of these plans except ASDA mobile who offer both no commitment and 12- or 24-month plans depending on your needs (plans with a 24 month commitment are often slightly cheaper). TalkMobile require a month's commitment. GiffGaff also offer increased data on their 18 month commitment plans. I have deliberately excluded deals which have more than one months commitment.

With the no commitment plans you are free to leave at any point. If you are choosing a network where you have no experience of coverage, it is worth buying one of the no commitment plans (can be set to not auto renew) and testing it in many different locations to ensure the coverage meets your needs. Vodafone and O₂ often share mobile mast sites and EE and Three share theirs as well.

Cell mapper is a very useful tool (doesn't get updated as often) to show 4G coverage and mast locations. I have updated some of the data using a 5G capable Android device which supports Cell mapper app for all networks. EE 5G does not show in Sheringham on there as it has not been fully enabled yet. I will update Cell mapper once it has been fully enabled.

Personally, I am currently using a VOXI SIM (Vodafone) with 75GB for £10 student deal as my main line. I also have 1p mobile as a secondary line for testing out EE especially if 5G is not a million miles away from being rolled out on their network in this area.

Please see table on the next page for a selection of plans and relevant notes, I encourage everyone to consider the full market when choosing their next mobile deal, but these are the ones I would recommend. Please follow this [link](#) to a Google Sheets with all the main operators and MVNOs linked in one place showing their specs if you would like to see further options than the recommendations given.

Feature	GiffGaff	Smarty	Voxi	1PMobile	TalkMobile ⁸	ASDA Mobile ⁸
Wi-Fi Calling	Yes ¹	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4G Calling	Yes ¹	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Visual Voicemail (iPhone feature)	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
5G Available in Sheringham	Partial	No	No	Yes	No	No
Typical Speeds in Sheringham ⁸	5-110mbps ⁷	2-80mbps	5-150mbps ⁷	20-200mbps	5-150mbps ⁷	5-150mbps ^{7&9}
eSIM	Yes	No	Yes ²	No	No	No
3G Switched Off	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cheapest Plan and No. of GB	£6 for 2GB	£5 for 5GB	£10 for 20GB	£6 for 2GB	£4.95 for 5GB via MSE	£5 for 3GB
Tenner Bundle (No of GB)	20GB	40GB	20GB ³	25GB	80GB	15GB
Tenner Bundle Student (No of GB)	60GB	70GB	70GB ³	35GB	N/A	50GB
Social Tariff	N/A	U ltd. £12 ⁴	U ltd. £10 ⁵	N/A	N/A	N/A
EU Roaming (No of GB)	5GB	12GB	None	14GB	5GB	5GB
Uses which network	O ₂	Three	Vodafone	EE	Vodafone	Vodafone
4G/5G Coverage Tested	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1 Details of recommended mobile plans - OFFERS MAY CHANGE

¹Wi-Fi and 4G Calling rollout is complete, dial *100# and if it reports an error your SIM supports the service, see GiffGaff website for device compatibility info.

²Voxi only supply physical SIM cards, you can only convert to an eSIM on an iPhone with iOS 17.4 and above

³Voxi offer on their £10 plan unlimited social media access, higher tiers offer free music and video streaming, see their website for info.

⁴Requires a means tested benefit like Universal Credit, valid while you are eligible for the benefit

⁵Requires any benefit from the DWP (excluding state pension), lasts for 6 months or while you are eligible (whichever is shortest)

⁶EE network tested with 1p Mobile SIM, O₂ network tested with GiffGaff SIM, Voxi for Vodafone testing and Smarty for Three testing.

⁷O₂ (Who support Vodafone's equipment in the East of the UK) are aware of capacity issues on the Sheringham Fire Station Cell Site and hopefully this will soon be resolved. GiffGaff users are a lower priority of accessing the network compared to O₂ and Tesco Mobile Pay Monthly Customers, others have no lesser priority to the main network they are piggybacking off.

⁸TalkMobile and ASDA Mobile perform a soft credit check to check your identity before providing a SIM, these do not show to other companies and do not affect your credit worthiness but will show up on credit reports.

⁹Speeds on unlimited ASDA Mobile plans are capped at 150mbps (more than enough for most people on mobile data).

ALL OFFERS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND ARE CORRECT AS OF THE 12th OF OCTOBER 2024. IT IS WORTH CHECKING MONEY SAVING EXPERT FOR "HIDDEN OFFERS" AS I HAVE EXPERIENCE OF TALKMOBILE SHOWING BETTER OFFERS ONLY EXCLUSIVELY ON THE MSE WEBSITE.

A few words on coverage

Performance varies significantly depending on number of users on the network and proximity to cell sites. For O₂ and Vodafone there are three sites serving Sheringham, one is Located on Woodland Rise, one on the roof of the Fire Station (enclosed within false roof), and one at Sheringham High School. EE has two sites one at Woodland Rise and a white Monopole near the roundabout (you cannot miss it). Three only have one site on Woodland Rise for the whole town (despite there being signage suggesting they use the EE Monopole). Three have major issues with capacity, Vodafone seems to slow down significantly when the town centre is busy and O₂ is sometimes unusable for data. EE have similar issues as well but not as noticeable.

If you need coverage in the area near to the High School or Upper Sheringham Vodafone and O₂ are your only options, otherwise there is coverage everywhere. My current recommendation is any Vodafone based MVNO for coverage everywhere and any EE based MVNO if you need faster data speeds in places where there is strong coverage. The Better Internet Dashboard have further information about which MVNO piggybacks of which main network and shows coverage for all operators.

The next page features instructions on how to successfully switch your mobile deal to a new provider and importantly keep your number.

Moving Your Number

1. My main advice is to buy a SIM from either 1P Mobile, VOXI, GiffGaff or Smarty to test the coverage for as long as you feel is necessary before committing to move your number over. I did this for a couple of weeks with multiple networks to decide which network was best.
2. Contact your existing network for a Porting Authorisation Code (PAC), the network is obliged to tell you this and any fees for leaving if you are still in your minimum contract terms. Find out from your existing network the procedure for obtaining this code.
3. Pass this code onto your new network within 30 days of requesting it
4. The number will move the next working day to your new network providing you pass it to them by the time they specify for next working day transfer
5. Keep using your old SIM plan until it stops working (there will be short periods of disruption) during the process.
6. Once the old SIM plan stops working (No Service will appear on your device), switch the device off and swap the SIM cards.
7. Make sure to update the “my number” section on iOS to your existing number in Phone Settings as this is crucial to getting iMessage and FaceTime activated with your number. You may need to update similar settings to get Rich Communication Services (RCS) working once the number has transferred, speak to your phone manufacturer if unsure. If this activation for any of these services does not work first time, leave it 3-5 days then try again (I had this issue when I moved networks with iMessage and FaceTime).
8. You are now on your new network; you can safely dispose of any Sim Cards from the old network. Enjoy the savings (we saved £24 across the four lines we had by switching providers).

On the next pages I have added screenshots of 4G coverage in Sheringham from Cell Mapper, Areas in bright green have the strongest signal and red areas have a weak signal, areas with no data either have no coverage or have not been mapped. Most roads have data mapped on Cell Mapper (except Greenlands Way and surrounding roads). Greenlands way area has best coverage on either the Vodafone or O₂ networks due to an additional cell site at the High School (as mapped on Cellmapper).

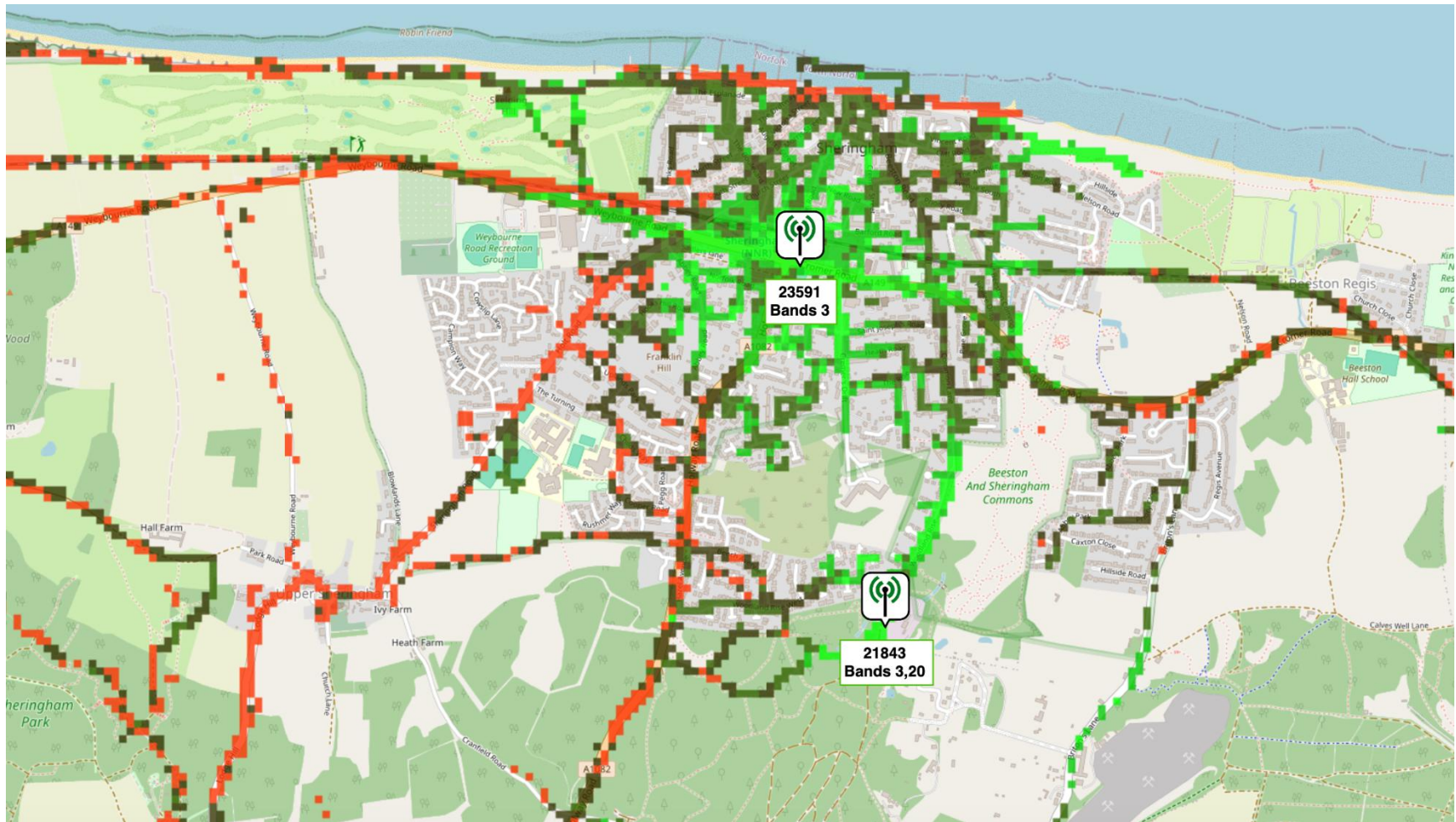


Figure 1 CellMapper Screenshot of EE 4G Coverage in Sheringham (screenshot taken 16th October 2024)

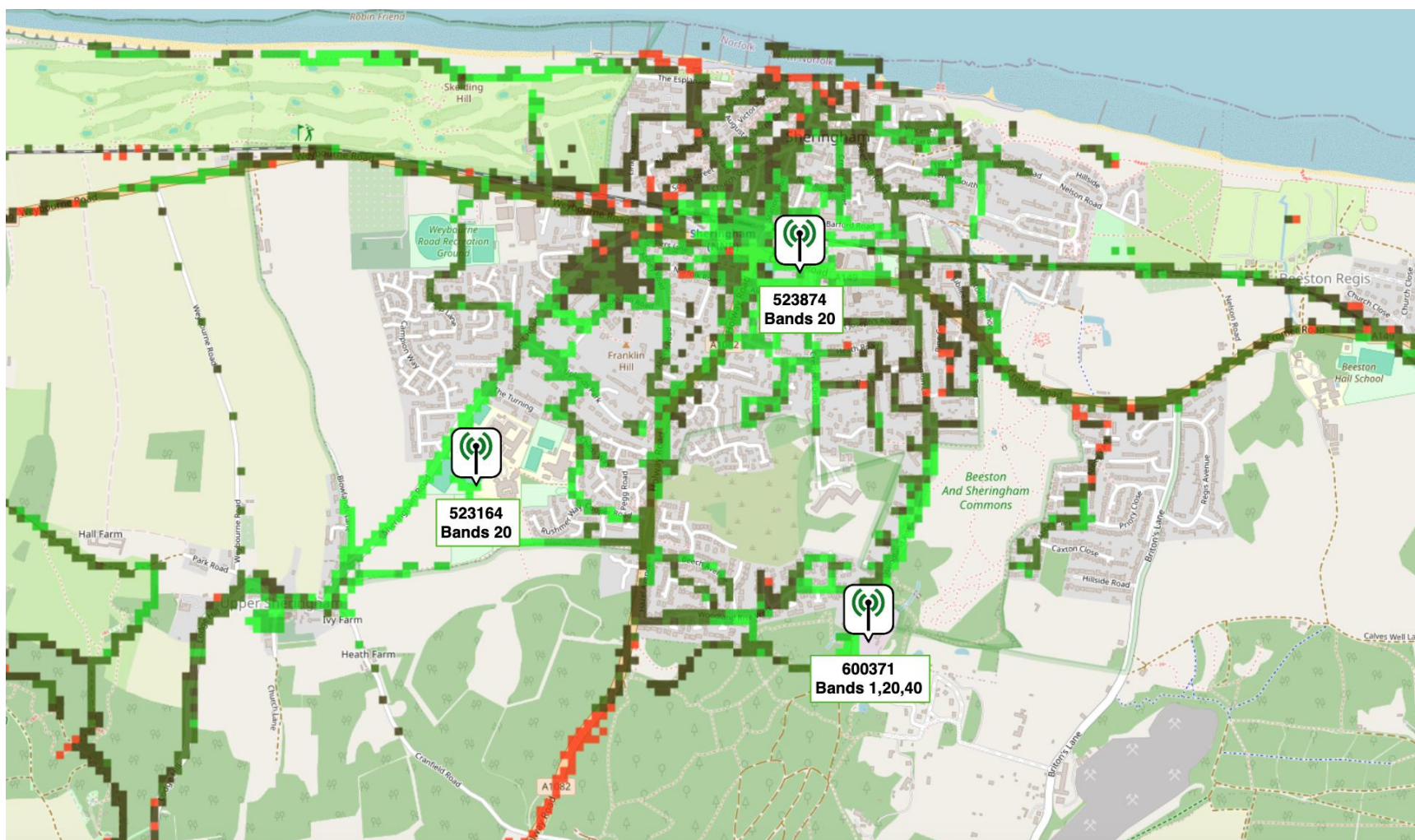


Figure 2 Cell Mapper Screenshot showing O2 4G Coverage in Sheringham (screenshot taken 16th October 2024)



Figure 3 Cell Mapper screenshot showing Vodafone UK 4G coverage in Sheringham (screenshot taken 16th October 2024)

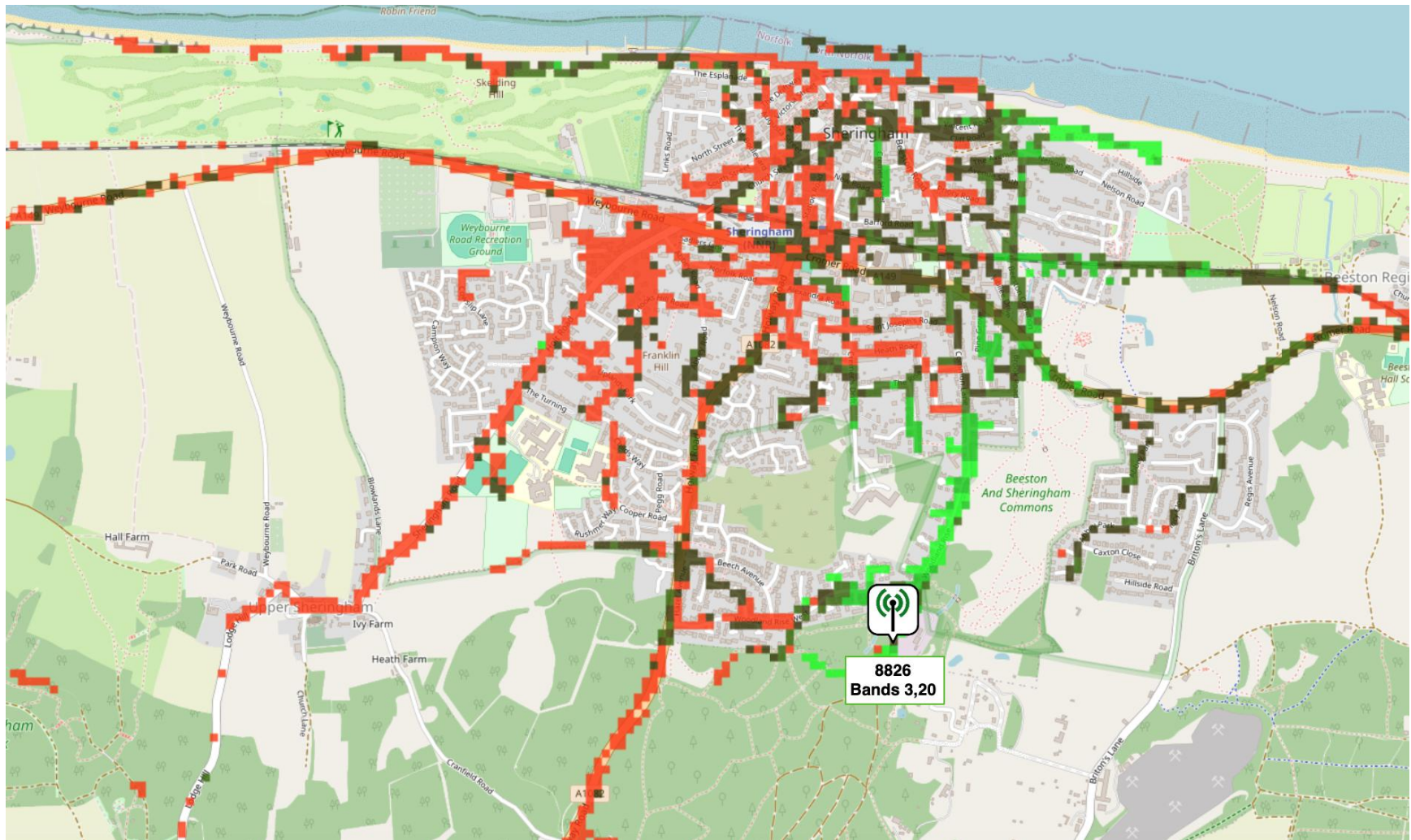


Figure 4 Cell Mapper Screenshot for 3 Coverage in Sheringham (screenshot taken 16th October 2024)