

Network Rail race to future-proof fleet with 5G technology from McLaren

November 15, 2022



When you hear the name 'McLaren', you would be forgiven for immediately thinking of the glamour of Formula One. Lando Norris and Daniel Ricciardo haring round circuits across the globe in cars designed for speed, agility and power.

However, McLaren has another side – not quite so public, but arguably, just as speedy. Overseen by McLaren Applied, their Fleet Connect software delivers seamless high-speed WiFi connections and operator uplinks, providing a consistent connectivity in any moving vehicle.

The technology will now be used to provide the 5G onboard connectivity solution for Network Rail infrastructure monitoring trains. The contract will see the company's patented F1-derived Fleet Connect software installed on its first-of-its-kind Active Antenna hardware, supported by a five-year service contract.

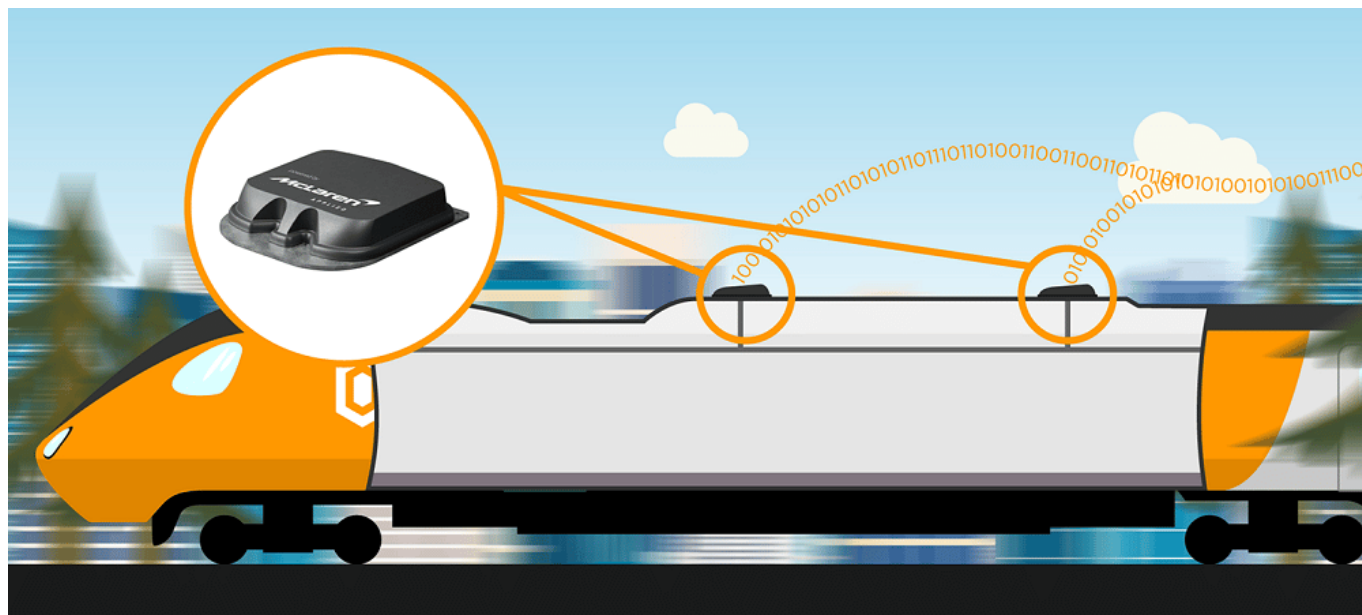


Image credit: McLaren Applied

Samir Maha, chief operating officer at McLaren Applied said: “The innovative solution proposed by McLaren Applied to secure this contract is the perfect illustration of how our work at the cutting-edge of motorsport can directly translate into game-changing solutions for transport.

“By uniting our Formula 1-derived Fleet Connect software and Active Antenna hardware, we have created a turn-key product that is much greater than the sum of its parts. We look forward to working with Network Rail to deliver fast, reliable connectivity for its hard-working fleet across Great Britain.”

The first implementation of Active Antenna technology in the UK will see on-train connectivity infrastructure simplified. Utilising industry-leading Huber+Suhner componentry with an edge compute module, modem and eSIM capability embedded within the antenna, all RF cables and routers are replaced with a single ethernet connection.

The combination of Fleet Connect software and Active Antenna hardware means trains will remain continuously connected as they travel the length and breadth of the country through various network providers, formats and strengths.

Jason Saxon, director asset information, Network Rail said: “Gathering accurate data, in a timely manner across the whole network, is extremely important for the safe and smooth operation of the railway.

“Having a system that enables us to transmit critical asset condition data from our infrastructure monitoring fleet will enable us to continue to put passengers and freight first with a safe and reliable railway that they can rely on.”