

New Build Developments: Delivering gigabit-capable connections

Response to consultation document

Consultation question 1.

Do you have any further evidence on the state of New Build Development connectivity in the UK?

Discussions we have had suggest that developers are happy to install neutral-host ducting that would be adopted by the local authority for shared, non-exclusive access by operators.

Consultation question 2.

Do you have any information or evidence to suggest that the costs developers would incur under the proposed policy would prevent homes being built?

No.

Consultation question 3.

We propose that developers would be obliged to provide a simple connectivity plan for their developments to LAs. This plan would demonstrate that developers had consulted with at least two network providers to provide gigabit-capable networks and inform LAs when a site is connected. Do you have any comments on this proposal for a connectivity plan?

We advocate that, where developers are offered the chance to install neutral host ducting that is made available non-exclusively to operators, for example through a cooperative neutral host mechanism such as TDIC, they should adopt this in preference to exclusive arrangements. This is similar to the French concept of ‘*mutualisation vertical*’.

Consultation question 4.

(a) Do you agree with the assumption that deploying the necessary infrastructure to deliver gigabit-capable networks is best achieved when the site is being built?

Yes

(b) What technical specifications should the physical infrastructure (ducts etc) have?

We have worked successfully with the older DCLG specification but needing to adapt to circumstances.

- (c) *Do you agree that developers should deploy, and pay for, the necessary infrastructure from the in-building connections to the boundary edge of the development?*

Yes, providing that is then neutral-host ducting. Otherwise operators should cover their own costs.

Consultation question 5.

- (a) *Do you agree that developers should have to engage with at least two network operators who can provide gigabit-capable connections to the development?*

Yes.

- (b) *What further measures could we consider to promote the availability of networks from multiple providers at an early stage to minimise costs and disruption?*

We think that developers should give preference to a neutral host provider where this is available. This could be local authority adoption of ducting and/or working with a neutral host cooperative like TDIC.

Consultation question 6.

Taking £3,000 as a suggested aggregated cost cap per premise, do you agree with the the proposed how should costs be divided between developer and operator?

These costs seem very high given that the duct is being installed at construction time. We think operators requiring exclusive access to ducts should pay 100% of the cost.

Consultation question 7.

What information and evidence can you provide to help refine the 'in scope sites' policy design choice - aggregated cost cap or number of premises?

Engagement of operators including through a neutral-host arrangement is dependent on costs, so cost aggregation may be a better measure.

Consultation question 8.

- (a) *Do you agree that developers should have the overall responsibility to ensure Gigabit connectivity for their developments (allowing for the fact that developers can oblige operators to connect using the 'duty to connect' provision).*

No. We think the responsibility should be for infrastructure provision - ie fibre - not any type of service specification.

- (b) *How would this policy affect small housebuilders?*

We believe small house builders can benefit from arrangements to help them ensure that open access fibre infrastructure is installed, so that the property value is enhanced.

Consultation question 9.

Do you have any comments on the proposed legislative approach? Do you have an alternative solution that would deliver gigabit-capable connections to NBDs?

We believe the key is to encourage collaborative approaches. The focus should be on open access arrangements using a neutral-host model to maximise competition. We think the benefits to developers of this approach should be promoted and explained. We question the value of intervention to create exclusive, monopoly arrangements.