

New Build Developments: Delivering gigabit-capable connections

Hertfordshire County Council Broadband Team Consultation Response

Consultation question 1.

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

HCC can confirm that the picture presented of poor provision of super and ultrafast services at New Build Developments has been an ongoing issue at a number of sites in Hertfordshire, causing great distress to house buyers who, understandably, thought their new modern home would routinely come with a fast internet connection.

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?

It seems to be possible on a smaller development (1 or 2 houses) and insistence upon fibre to the premise could have some impact upon the commercial viability of a project, however on a larger scale development the cost of connectivity is easily shared out between a number of premises and should not impact the delivery of a commercially viable development.

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 fully support this proposal.

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?

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

(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?

(a) Absolutely. There is a clear opportunity to inexpensively install fibre and ducting before the development is completed.

(b) This should be confirmed with the telecom industry.

(c) Yes.

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?

(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?

- (a) It seems that so long as the Developer is committed to rolling out superfast broadband then it should be a private business decision over how many providers to consult. The key should be to ensure that the developer is required to ensure a connection is available.
- (b) No suggestions at this stage.

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?

Yes

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?

Aggregated cost cap appears to be the best option and gives some consideration to smaller developers.

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).

(b) How would this policy affect small housebuilders?

- (a) Yes, for all larger developments.
- (b) Consideration should be given to smaller developers as it is important not to discourage smaller developers. Possibilities could include ensuring that a smaller development has at least the EU standard superfast speed of 30 mbps.

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?

A legislative approach is welcome and the only clear way to consistently guarantee that purchasers of new build premises are able to access modern, future proof connections.