

Berkeley Group welcomes the Government's commitment to improve digital connectivity to new developments. We develop in London and the south of England, ranging from small rural housing developments to major mixed-use urban regeneration projects. Connectivity is important to our customers which is why we made a business commitment to deliver high speed broadband to our developments. We work with operators to install fibre and offer our customers a choice of providers.

### **Question 1**

Berkeley Group works with a range of providers to deliver FTTP and ensure fast connectivity and choice for our customers. We always aim to have two providers or an (Open Network provider) to provide customer choice.

All our new developments are 100% FTTP. We are also working with providers to undertake an extensive programme to retrofit a number of our older developments.

### **Question 2**

The challenge tends to be for smaller developments. All our developments are larger than thirty homes.

### **Question 3**

We support the Government's desire to ensure that all new developments benefit from high speed digital connections. In our experience, the challenge tends to be for very small developments or where it is not viable for operators to undertake the cost of digging up roads or cross railway lines to install fibre.

As there is no plan showing where networks are, and who owns them, it might not be clear where the nearest network is.

We always aim to ensure that customers have a choice of operators to protect them from monopoly situations. We are concerned by the lack of customer protection and would suggest that the Government considers ways of improving this, for example by requiring that ducts are shared and allowing for future operator additions. Alternatively, if the first operator is not prepared to share the duct they could be required to provide additional fibres to allow for future additional operators to enable customer choice.

We would want to avoid a situation which could add complexity to planning or slow development. We would therefore suggest that, rather than developers provide connectivity plans showing that they will provide fibre and are engaging with two operators, developers are required to prepare plans by exception where they are not proposing to provide fibre or a choice to customers through delivering an open network. This would ensure that fibre and customer choice are the norm and would avoid unnecessary work for local authorities and developers.


If installing fibre is not viable for the operator the developer will have to decide whether fibre is important for the sale of the homes and customers. The risk of the cost-sharing proposal is that operators could seek to defray costs that they are covering now.

#### **Question 7**

The size of development is an important consideration but not the only consideration. Costs may be high in areas not currently served where extensive road digging or complex operations such as crossing railway lines may be required.

It may be that the developer is prepared to deliver in such circumstances, where it is not viable for the operator, but would need appropriate approvals to do so.

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