



# Planning for Broadband

A Guide for Developers



Hampshire  
County Council



Hampshire  
Superfast Broadband



## Aim of this guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to highlight the benefits and opportunities for delivering broadband infrastructure on new developments across Hampshire. It also provides some helpful information and guidance on key aspects of the installation and ownership of broadband infrastructure.



## Context

Fast, reliable broadband internet access is essential in order for households to benefit from online services, and for businesses to compete in the UK and globally. It is also critical to the vibrancy of an area, in terms of both economic growth and social inclusion. Enhanced broadband provision also has the potential to reduce the need for road, rail and air travel. Developers are key in determining how projects shape an area; therefore the planning of telecommunications infrastructure in relation to development is vital.

# Benefits and Opportunities

The key benefits in ensuring that planned development is 'future proofed' by providing high speed broadband infrastructure include:

## **Gaining Planning Approval**

- Government supports the increase in broadband and intends for everyone in the UK to have access to broadband speeds of at least 2 megabits per second (Mbps) and 95% of the UK receiving far greater speeds (at least 24Mbps) by 2017. Options are currently being explored to extend the benefits of fast broadband to remaining areas<sup>1</sup>.
- The focus of the National Planning Policy Framework is on sustainable growth and states that 'in preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband' (Paragraph 43)<sup>2</sup>.
- Local Plans are increasingly encouraging high speed broadband connectivity infrastructure to be incorporated in new developments in order to ensure that objectives around social inclusion, economic growth and sustainability are met. This trend is likely to continue as the demand for digital services rises.
- From 2017 EU Legislation specifies that new build and major renovations of buildings will need to be high speed ready, with exemptions only allowed for historic buildings, holiday homes and projects where the cost to do this would be disproportionate.

## **Meeting Customer Demand**

- As the take up of broadband and associated data services has increased, it has become apparent that people will demand a data service with a property as a matter of course, considering it as important as other utilities.
- Superfast speeds are increasingly important to prospective home buyers, and homes without broadband could be worth as much as 20% less than comparable properties with a good connection<sup>3</sup>.
- Given the market demand for broadband, and the fact that costs per unit for larger sites are usually cost neutral, it makes good business sense to ensure that new developments include high speed broadband infrastructure as a matter of course. Some developers are already recognising this and have publicly stated that they will install high speed broadband in all of their developments.
- Not only can developers who provide these services use them as a promotional tool, they will also avoid the negative reputational impacts of customers complaining in the press if their new home is not able to support high speed broadband.
- Estate agents also report that an increasing number of buyers are willing to pull out of a deal if broadband is not available in that area<sup>4</sup>. The property search website rightmove.co.uk has added a broadband speed checker to every one of its listings, alongside details of transport links and schools.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/transforming-uk-broadband>

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>3</sup><http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/mar/02/fast-broadband-vital-to-homebuyers>

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## Reducing costs

- If broadband installation is integrated into the planning of developments as early as possible, it may be possible to mitigate costs of installation through electricity and broadband cables sharing the same infrastructure assets, routes or networks. Potential savings of 16-26% could be achieved where existing infrastructure is used to rollout broadband<sup>5</sup>. From 2017, EU legislation will mean that network operators (e.g. telecoms, power, water) will have an obligation to offer access to their infrastructure if a reasonable request is made.
- On more rural or isolated developments where the cost-per-site for other technologies will be over a few hundred pounds, it may be worthwhile considering the option of installing satellite broadband. The recent roll-out of more powerful equipment and use of higher frequencies now mean that an effective service can be offered at a reasonable subscription and competitive connection cost-per-site. Options include a mix of Satellite Distribution Nodes and individual Direct to Home technologies which can be deployed depending on the layout and geography of the area. The [Superfast Satellite for Communities: the BDUK Pilot Project \(Feb 2015\)](#) report provides further details of these options.



## Funding opportunities:

- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) will have £177m to spend on rural priorities through the Rural Development Programme, including investing in broadband and renewable energy. The LEPs will decide how the funding is spent in their area, more details on applying will be made available in plans to be published by the LEPs in mid-2015.
- BT Openreach are offering free trials for major housing developers that register sites of 100+ homes in 2015<sup>7</sup>.
- For developments where installing high speed broadband is not economically viable (e.g. on smaller sites) funding may be available via a Local Authority using State Aid. This requires confirmation that the broadband infrastructure for the site will not be provided through commercial investment.

<sup>5</sup><https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/London%20Infrastructure%20Plan%202015%20Consultation.pdf>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-development-programme-for-england-network>

<sup>7</sup><http://www.openreach.co.uk/orpg/home/contactus/whoyouare/propertydeveloper/propertydevelopers.do>

## Key issues and links for further information

### **Working with a Network Provider**

Given the sometimes complex nature of installing broadband in new developments, and the lead in times required, it is recommended that developers work with a network provider from the early stages of planning a development.

BT Openreach and Virgin Media are the two main providers in the UK<sup>8</sup> and offer advice if you are planning a new development.

However other providers are also available, for example [GTC](#) and [Hyperoptic](#)



→ [BT Openreach New Site Solutions for Developers and Architects](#)

→ [Virgin Media New Developments \(Civils & Planning\)](#)

### **Adoption and Ownership**

There are also a number of options for future adoption, ownership and management of broadband infrastructure once it is in place, these include:

- Local authority adoption
- Management company ownership
- Lease of infrastructure
- Sale of infrastructure
- Lease or resell of network provision
- Shared ownership



### **The Distribution Network**

Another key issue that should be considered is that service delivery depends on “end-to-end connectivity”, (i.e. a connection from the broadband supplier right through to the device situated within the home) and therefore needs both parts of the distribution system. The Government has produced detailed guidance on the installation of such infrastructure in new domestic developments which can be found in the document PAS 2016:2010 [Next Generation Access for New Build Homes Guide](#).

Detailed information and guidance on all these options can be found in the Government’s [Data Ducting Infrastructure for New Homes Guidance Note](#).

<sup>8</sup><http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/infrastructure/2014/infrastructure-14.pdf>