

## **Connected London Forum**

### **Minutes from Monday 25 November 2019**

#### **Overview**

Chaired by Theo Blackwell, London's Chief Digital Officer and supported by the Connected London team, the Connected London Forum convenes twice a year with industry leaders, both fixed line and mobile providers, to hear about plans for London's digital connectivity and views on how local government and industry can work together to achieve ubiquitous gigabit-capable digital connectivity and prepare London for the rollout of 5G. The focus of this session will be for the team and London Plan Officers to inform industry of SI6 digital connectivity policy from the London Plan and receive feedback for the proposed planning application process and proposed notification process.

#### **Agenda**

1. Connected London programme update.
2. London Plan update.
3. London Plan workshop.
4. The Mayor's Good Works Standard and the Mayor's Digital Talent Programme.

#### **Attendees**

Community Fibre  
Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Limited (CTIL)  
Hyperoptic  
Internet Services Providers' Association (ISPA UK)  
Luminet  
Mobile UK  
Openreach  
Virgin Media  
Vodafone  
BT  
Wiredscore  
Wireless Infrastructure Group  
GLA

## **1. Connected London programme update.**

### **1.1. The Mayor's £10m full fibre boost for boroughs.**

1.2. On 24 October the Mayor announced whilst launching Vodafone's HQ in Southwark a new funding programme for boroughs. Secured from the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) part of the Business Rates Pool and will be used to upgrade public buildings and assets for a full fibre connection.

1.3. SIF funding fills funding gap in London for boroughs who were not in receipt of other grant funding, such as Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) or Strategic Investment Pot (SIP). These boroughs include:

- Bromley
- Croydon
- Hackney
- Islington
- Kingston
- Lewisham
- Merton
- Richmond
- Sutton
- Wandsworth

### **1.4. Regional positions to assist with delivery.**

1.5. An additional £1m resources will go into developing sub regional digital connectivity roles. These roles will help provide much needed resource and help to upskill boroughs through sharing knowledge and best practices. The aim is to have the posts established quickly and conversations are underway with London Councils and the subregions. The Connected London team will share the job descriptions with providers for feedback and input.

### **1.6. Standardised Mobile Agreement.**

1.7. The agreement was published on 27 September 2019 by the Mayor through a press release. Developed in partnership with BSI, industry, boroughs and lawyers through a steering group. The greenfield and rooftop templates are free to download on Connected London pages. Ofcom will also be hosting on their ECC guidance page. There has been good feedback from many boroughs and cities including West Midlands, Manchester, and Glasgow citing the templates offer a good starting point for negotiations. It has been noted that landlords whom have unique complexities may find using the templates as challenging, these lessons help better inform policy makers and will be reviewed in due course.

## 2. London Plan

- 2.1. The draft London Plan includes a new digital connectivity policy, with full fibre (or equivalent) and mobile connectivity required for all development proposals. The policy also encourages boroughs to support the delivery of full fibre or equivalent digital infrastructure through local development plans.
- 2.2. The GLA are drafting guidance to sit alongside the policy which will be made available nearer the time of implementation of the London Plan. The purpose of this forum is to bring together providers and their representative bodies to discuss how this guidance can best support implementation of policy SI6.
- 2.3. The main purpose of the policy is to ensure new developments are designed to enable full fibre digital connectivity and consider their impacts on mobile coverage. For full draft policy as of July 2019, **see appendix 1**.
- 2.4. This forum has been convened to discuss how the below issues can be resolved:
  - Avoid new buildings and developments being designed and built without consideration of digital connectivity requirements.
    - Buildings and surrounding infrastructure designed in a way to facilitate full fibre connections on occupancy and facilitate future network. maintenance/replacement/upgrade.
    - Building and/or occupants impact on mobile coverage considered and/or mitigated.
  - Avoid new or surrounding buildings being left without coverage of fixed or mobile connectivity. Avoid 'missed opportunities' where a provider would have connected a development if they were aware of it.

## 3. London Plan workshop.

- 3.1. Attendees were split into two working groups. One group considered what information developers should be required to consider as part of planning applications. The other group considered how digital connectivity providers should receive notifications about an upcoming development. **See appendix 2** for a complete list of questions for consideration during the workshops. Below is a summary of answers to the leading questions, the summary found below is not the literal view from any one provider.
- 3.2. **Planning application process.**
- 3.3. The provision of internet services at new build developments are usually managed through existing relationships between developers and providers. It has been noted that developers often do not approach

providers early in the build process, this can result in costly and difficult retrofit options to service the development. It was suggested that the policy is primarily about behavioural change, encouraging developers to engage in early dialogue with providers to get advice on how to design and service the development.

#### 3.4. **Fixed line providers.**

- Suggestion that developers provide multiple letters of intent from providers as part of the pre-application or application process. These letters should demonstrate that the site can be serviced, with the developer also providing evidence that connectivity has been considered early in the design process. If developers share with providers the postcode and approximate number of dwellings, providers can then indicate if they will be able to service the development. This also helps with pre-planning for works for providers.
- Also suggested that requirements are placed in planning conditions, including:
  - Sufficient ducting space and number of access points
  - Space on rooftops for equipment
  - Power supply
  - Mitigation of impacts to mobile connectivity/replacement of any lost equipment
  - Access to plant
- Clarity needed on who will pick up certain costs associated with full fibre deployment. eg ducting and space required for plant material.

#### 3.5. **Mobile operators.**

- Developers should engage with mobile representative bodies at planning application stage to seek advice on the extent to which the proposed development will have on existing connectivity.
- Developers should consider the impact of construction works on mobile connectivity, e.g. cranes.
- Developers should consider internal mobile coverage to new builds.
- Anything above 4 storeys generally has an impact on existing coverage.
- Developers need to consider if a building can support 5G or other mobile services, including space on the roof for plant equipment.
- Clarity is sought on developer responsibility if existing equipment is being lost i.e. on a building earmarked for demolition. What is the requirement for the developer to replace any lost capacity?

#### 3.6. **Other considerations.**

- Requirement of the developer to provide electricity supply to support connectivity
- Important that 'sufficient ducting space' allows for multiple providers access
- Access post-completion/occupancy is also an important factor

- DCMS should review regulations and policy for new builds.
- 3.7. **Notification process.**
- 3.8. Both fixed line providers and mobile operators need to be informed of relevant information at the right time to ensure that the process provides a fair platform for competition in order for providers and operators to intervene as early as possible to ensure that services can be delivered.
- Number of units and size/height of development is key information. Consensus was a minimum of 10 units or 1000m<sup>2</sup> or 30 metres in height
  - It was suggested arrangements for existing equipment needs to be addressed and considered at the earliest possible stage to ensure a continuation of services.
- 3.9. **Other considerations.**
- For mobile there are two bodies that can be consulted, so it is simpler to notify and provide evidence prior to application process.
  - For fixed providers this is more complex and so it may be more appropriate to explore using a platform using information from [London Development Database](#) (LDD) to look at a notification system for providers when applications are submitted.

#### **4. The Mayor's Good Works Standard and the Mayor's Digital Talent Programme.**

- 4.1. The Mayor's [Good Work Standard](#) (GWS) is part of the Mayor's commitment to making London the best place to live, work and do business, and sets the benchmark for best employment standards for London businesses. Launched in July 2019, there are now 47 organisations within private and public sector full accredited, and a range of other businesses in the process of becoming accredited.
- 4.2. The GWS accreditation is awarded based on four key pillars: fair pay and conditions, workplace wellbeing, diversity and recruitment, and skills and progression.
- 4.3. Employers are asked to demonstrate a number of requirements across all four of these in order to receive either "achievement" or "excellence" level. The process is relatively straight forward, starting with a foundation self-assessment online, after which the GWS team can assist with progress to full accreditation. Living wage accreditation is a key requirement of the accreditation.
- 4.4. The GWS Team are available to support employers interested in accredited and can undertake an anonymous foundation assessment online before getting in touch to progress onto a fuller assessment. Interested businesses are encouraged to get in touch.
- 4.5. The team would be happy to support any attendees who would like to seek accreditation, please email [fairness@london.gov.uk](mailto:fairness@london.gov.uk)

4.6. **Digital Talent programme.**

- 4.7. The Mayor's £7million funded [Digital Talent Programme](#) aims to increase the volume and quality of training in digital technology by funding industry-approved courses for young people, ensuring that they have the skills that employers are looking for. It includes a focus on attracting more young women and Londoners from a range of backgrounds to work in the sector.
- 4.8. The programme provides the following:
- Opportunities for 16-24 year olds to gain digital skills, careers advice, and support to set up their own business in the technology sector
  - Support for employers and educators to improve digital careers guidance for young people, and facilitate partnerships between higher education institutions and SMEs
  - Research, resources and case studies to demystify the tech sector.
- 4.9. The team would be happy to discuss the programme with you further, please email [digitaltalent@london.gov.uk](mailto:digitaltalent@london.gov.uk).

## Appendix 1 - Full text of policy S16 in the draft London Plan.

### Policy S16 Digital connectivity infrastructure

Draft London Plan – consolidated changes version – July 2019.

- A To ensure London’s global competitiveness now and in the future, development proposals should:
1. ensure that sufficient ducting space for full fibre connectivity infrastructure is provided to all end users within new developments, unless an affordable alternative 1GB/s-capable connection is made available to all end users
  2. meet expected demand for mobile connectivity generated by the development
  3. take appropriate measures to avoid reducing mobile connectivity in surrounding areas; where that is not possible, any potential reduction would require mitigation
  4. support the effective use of rooftops and the public realm (such as street furniture and bins) to accommodate well-designed and suitably located mobile digital infrastructure.
- B Development Plans should support the delivery of full-fibre or equivalent digital infrastructure, with particular focus on areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.

9.6.1 The **provision of digital infrastructure** is as important for the proper functioning of development as energy, water and waste management services and should be treated with the same importance. London should be a world-leading tech hub with world-class digital connectivity that can anticipate growing capacity needs and serve hard to reach areas. Fast, reliable digital connectivity is essential in today’s economy and especially for digital technology and creative companies. It supports every aspect of how people work and take part in modern society, helps smart innovation and facilitates regeneration.

9.6.2 **London’s capability** in this area is currently limited by a range of issues, including the availability of fibre and the speeds delivered. The industry regulator Ofcom publishes the data on digital connectivity coverage on which Figure 9.5 is based, but there are some limitations to the practicality of the data that is collected. Further work will be done to

accurately identify locations in the capital where current connectivity provisions are not suitable for the needs of the area.

9.6.3 **Better digital connectivity** with a focus on capability, affordability, security, resilience and the provision of appropriate electrical power supply should be promoted across the capital. The specific requirements of business clusters, such as a symmetrical-capable service with the same upload and download speeds, should also be met.

9.6.4 Given the fast pace at which digital technology is changing, a flexible approach to development is needed that supports **innovation and choice**. Part R1 of the Building Regulations 2010 requires buildings to be equipped with at least 30 MB/s ready in-building physical infrastructure, however new developments using full fibre to the property or other higher-grade infrastructure can achieve connectivity speeds of 1GB/s. Developers should engage early with a range of network operators, to ensure that development proposals are designed to be capable of providing this level of connectivity to all end users. Mechanisms should also be put in place to enable further future infrastructure upgrades. Innovation is driving reductions in the size of infrastructure, with marginal additional unit costs, but greater digital connectivity is needed in more locations.

9.6.4A Development proposals should also demonstrate that mobile connectivity will be available throughout the development and should not have detrimental impacts on the digital connectivity of neighbouring buildings. Early consultation with network operators will help to identify any adverse impact on mobile or wireless connectivity and appropriate measures to avoid/mitigate them.

9.6.4B Access for network operators to rooftops of new developments should be supported where an improvement to the mobile connectivity of the area can be identified. Where possible, other opportunities to secure mobile connectivity improvements should also be sought through new developments, including for example the creative use of the public realm.

9.6.5 For some types of development (such as commercial) specific requirements regarding **communications access and security** may apply. Data centres, in particular, depend on reliable connectivity and electricity infrastructure. Warehouse-based data centres have emerged as a driver of industrial demand in London over recent years and this will need to be taken into account when assessing demand for industrial land (see Policy E4 Land for industry, logistics and services to support London's economic function, Policy E5 Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL), Policy E6 Locally Significant Industrial Sites and Policy E7 Industrial Intensification, co-location and substitution).



9.6.6 The Mayor will work with network operators, developers, councils and Government to develop guidance and share good practice to **increase awareness and capability** amongst boroughs and developers of the effective provision of digital connectivity and to support the delivery of policy requirements. The Mayor will also help to identify spatial gaps in connectivity and overcome barriers to delivery to address this form of digital exclusion, in particular through his Connected London work. Boroughs should encourage the delivery of high-quality / world-class digital infrastructure as part of their Development Plans.

9.6.7 Digital connectivity supports **smart technologies** in terms of the collection, analysis and sharing of data on the performance of the built and natural environment, including for example, resource including water and energy consumption, waste, air quality, noise and congestion. Development should be fitted with smart infrastructure, such as sensors, to enable better collection and monitoring of such data. As digital connectivity and the capability of these sensors improves, and their cost falls, more and better data will become available to improve monitoring of planning agreements and impact assessments, for example related to urban design. Further guidance will be developed to make London a smarter city.

## **Appendix 2 - Advance workshop information provided to the attendees.**

### **LONDON PLAN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROVIDER WORKSHOP SESSION**

#### **Issues for consideration in workshop groups**

##### Group 1: Planning Application process

- A. When would you expect to have a conversation with a developer regarding design of buildings?
- B. If developers provided a form or statement that considered the following questions, would this be optimal?
  - Number of entry ducts proposed
  - Size of entry ducts proposed
  - Proposed spacing between points of entry
  - Size and location of IT risers for multi-storey buildings
  - Size and location of proposed telco rooms, including security considerations
  - Written confirmation from multiple providers that they can provide services to the building
  - Development of a standard way-leave template
  - Wirescore or equivalent certification
  - Plans for an in-building cellular network
  - Ability of existing cellular network to accommodate expected local population increase
  - Impact of building on existing cellular network
  - Proposed locations of mobile digital infrastructure
- C. Can you assign a Required, Optional, Not necessary to each of these questions?
- D. Are there any other issues that should be considered?
- E. This information would be available as part of planning applications. Would this be sufficient?

##### Group 2: Notification process

- F. When should notifications be issued?
- G. Should they be evidenced as part of planning application?
- H. Who should receive these notifications?
- I. Are notifications required in all cases?
- J. Should this be limited to a size or type of development?