

Connected London Forum

Minutes from Thursday 9 July 2020

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 was for providers to share their lessons learnt from the COVID-19 lockdown and updates on their plans for London's economic and social recovery.

Agenda

1. Resiliency of networks during lockdown and preparation for potential future lockdowns.
2. Impact of COVID-19 on industry
3. London's recovery post COVID-19
4. Digital inclusion
5. Update on sub regional digital champions funded by Strategic Investment Fund (SIF)
6. Introduction to London First's Gigabit Connectivity Forum
7. Collaborative Street works – Infrastructure team

Attendees

BT
INCA
G.Networks
Hyperoptic
Luminet
MBNL
Mobile UK
Openreach
Three UK
Virgin Media
Vodafone
GLA

1. Resiliency of networks during lockdown and preparation for potential future lock downs

- 1.1. The Mayor and GLA are thankful to connectivity providers for their efforts through the lockdown. CDO has provided supportive communications for providers to share with their workforce and is happy to assist further.
- 1.2. Providers discussed increased demand on their networks.
- 1.3. Attendees discussed examples of practices seen during lock down including around planning and access.
- 1.4. Providers thanked GLA for support with challenges that have been raised with site access issues and sharing guidance to borough colleagues.
- 1.5. GLA to review and discuss a 'gold standard' approach for boroughs to adopt through planned workshops including lessons learnt.
- 1.6. Providers to share a checklist of requests to enable 'gold standard' conversation with boroughs.

2. Impact of COVID-19 on industry

- 2.1. Providers discussed a rise on verbal and physical assaults to staff, and telecoms infrastructure has been damaged as a result of false information.
- 2.2. Operators raised a request for government and local authorities to continue to inform the public through raising awareness of 5G.
- 2.3. GLA offered to collect wording from operators for use in communications from boroughs to residents.

3. London's recovery post COVID-19

- 3.1. CDO talked attendees through the current approach to COVID-19 transition and recovery. Firstly discussing the London Transition Board, to support London return to normal using lessons learnt from use cases. Second the London Recovery Board, established in partnership with London Councils, to help shape London's future using a missions-based approach.
- 3.2. CDO talked through the missions approach and discussed with attendees upcoming consultation where feedback on all missions and evidence would be welcomed.

4. Digital Inclusion

- 4.1. CDO discussed current thinking around digital inclusion, informed by the experience during COVID-19 lock down. CDO discussed ideas around a minimum digital entitlement including issues regarding connections, devices, and skills.

- 4.2. Operators discussed how requests for support had been significant and asked that London consider a joined-up approach with other cities to identifying and supporting groups.
- 4.3. In relation to devices, operators are keen for manufacturers to be part of the conversation as costs for devices are reduced when sourced directly.
- 4.4. In relation to skills CDO discussed that from September 2020, all adults over 19-year will be able to access digital skills resources as part of the Basic Digital Skills Entitlement (BDSE). The BDSE will be delivered through the existing AEB and is aimed at upskilling adults with little to no experience of using tech devices and the internet to gain entry and Level 1 digital skills.
- 4.5. CDO is keen to work with industry to leverage data to better understand who needs it the most.

5. Update on sub regional digital champions funded by Strategic Investment Fund (SIF)

- 5.1. GLA gave an updated on progress towards the sub-regional roles for digital connectivity, funding through the Mayor's Strategic Investment Fund.
- 5.2. GLA discussed sharing the Job Descriptions for the roles with sub-regional partnership consent, and asked for help in promoting the role to potential candidates.

6. Introduction to London First's Gigabit Connectivity Forum

- 6.1. GLA gave an introduction to the Gigabit Connectivity Network, which was established by London First following recommendations in the ['Enhancing Digital Connectivity'](#).
- 6.2. The GLA encouraged participation in the group which brings together operators and public sector, and offered to provide introductions for any attendees not already aware.

7. Collaborative Streetworks – Infrastructure team

- 7.1. The GLA's Infrastructure team provided an update on their Collaborative Streetworks team, which seeks to join streetworks projects where two or more works promoters 'dig once', reducing business costs and disruptions to London's street as well as the carbon footprint.
- 7.2. GLA offered to introduce any interested providers to the team.

Close.