MAYOR OF LONDONLONDONASSEMBLY

Broadband connectivity in London

Key information

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Introduction

On **11 March**, the **Economy, Culture and Skills Committee** will meet to assess broadband connectivity in London.

Meeting aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

- Assess to what extent poor broadband connectivity is a challenge for individuals and businesses in London
- Understand the main causes of poor broadband connectivity in London
- Understand which demographic groups, types of businesses and geographical areas are most likely to be affected by poor broadband connectivity
- Assess the impact of poor broadband connectivity on London's households, businesses and wider economy
- Understand what action national and local government and the Mayor can take to ensure all of London's households and businesses can access fast and reliable broadband internet

Key issues

- The Government refers to the current standard for a fast broadband connection as "gigabit-capable" broadband, which means download speeds of at least one gigabit (1,000 megabits) per second (mbps). The previous government's target was for gigabit-capable broadband to be available to 85 per cent of premises by 2025, and to be available nation-wide (i.e. 99 per cent of premises) by 2030. According to Ofcom data, as of 2024, 86.4 per cent of premises in London have gigabit-capable broadband.
- Private investment by broadband infrastructure companies is particularly low in south and east London, with 224,000 premises unable to obtain gigabit-capable broadband and 29,000 premises in 'not spots' (i.e. receiving less than 30 mbps). Areas with a higher proportion of flats/multi-dwelling units (MDUs) are also less likely to have good broadband connectivity.
- Deployment of fibre-optic cable infrastructure in London is more costly compared to other parts of the country, and is considered to be more challenging due to the prevalence of older infrastructure which needs upgrading. This is compounded by fragmentation of responsibilities between and within councils, posing a barrier to investment.
- To deliver broadband to premises, providers also need the owner's permission to carry out works, referred to as a "wayleave agreement". Broadband providers have said that in the case of MDUs, owners can often be difficult to identify, unresponsive or reluctant to grant access. Openreach has reported there are over 800,000 flats in the UK where its fibre network is present in the street outside the building, but they cannot gain access to the property.
- Slow broadband has a significant impact on London's small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs): according to a 2024 analysis, SMEs in London are missing out on £28 billion in annual revenue due to slow and unreliable broadband.

Key questions

- To what extent does poor broadband connectivity remain an issue in London?
- What are the main drivers of poor broadband connectivity in London?
- What groups of people are likely to be affected by poor broadband connectivity?
- What is the impact of poor broadband connectivity on London's households and businesses?
- What actions should local government, central government and the Mayor take to ensure all of London's households and businesses can access fast and reliable broadband internet?

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Read the letter in full.
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