

Sir Chris Bryant MP
Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ
United Kingdom

01 August 2025

Dear Sir Chris,

We write to you as political and business leaders in London to express our deep concern regarding the insufficient availability of digital services to our residents and businesses. Whilst we welcome the Government's commitment to the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband and 5G networks, to enable businesses, residents, and institutions to access seamless and reliable connectivity, this doesn't go far enough.

Over a quarter of residents and businesses have no access to full fibre broadband services, and commercial investment is stalling owing to viability and lack of public sector support to anchor investment.

This negatively affects the city's economic growth potential, the living standards of residents and productivity growth. This will, in turn, impact the UK as a whole.

London's productivity growth has been negative since the financial crash. The London Growth Plan has set out the ambition to reverse this trend in the next decade and the importance of good digital connectivity is set out in the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy. Without London increasing its productivity, the government will not achieve its growth mission.

With a combined GDP of approximately £570 billion, our city represents 23% of the UK economy with the potential to do more. We also have a rapidly growing population and a target of delivering 880,000 homes as part of the next London Plan. Infrastructure investment is key to meeting this growth in the coming years. To enable London to compete globally, we want to work with government on the following:

- There needs to be **a refocus of government funding to urban areas**, leveraging commercial investment into fibre for our growth zones and data centres and enhancing mobile coverage and capacity to serve our key commercial areas and transport hubs.
- **London should receive the support that has been given to rural areas through BDUK** led procurements and funding streams. This needs to be urgently delivered as further delay will impact our growth. In addition, sub-regions require information on delivery timescales and progress during implementation.

- **Government should make funding available to stimulate and anchor investment** from a range of both incumbent and alternative network operators to drive competition and deliver the next generation fibre infrastructure London requires.

This will enable us to address major gaps in digital service availability in London:

- Only 72% of our residents and businesses have access to a full fibre broadband service.
- There are over 418,000 homes and businesses unable to receive a gigabit capable service. This is impacting the delivery of public services, creating a digital divide and impacting the productivity of our small and medium sized businesses.
- Over 57,000 of our residents and businesses sit in a 'not spot' unable to receive a 30Mbps service.

Londoners experience slower speeds, poorer reliability and spend more time in 'not spots' when using mobile services compared to those in other global and UK cities.

We also require dark fibre into our growth zones and data centres and enhanced mobile coverage and capacity to serve our key commercial areas and transport hubs. Of particular concern is that industry commercial investment is stalling and appears to be reaching a commercially viable plateau. This is despite the significant work undertaken by London boroughs to remove barriers to investment such as the widespread availability of wayleave agreements.

We believe that:

- Unmet connectivity within urban areas including in London requires recognition within Government and its policies and programmes. To date Government focus and funding has largely been on rural areas.
- Alternative operators are struggling to make a return on investment in London and hence much depends on Openreach delivery with no clear plan, or commitment, on when the 400,000 premises without gigabit connectivity across London will be served.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you and to ensure that we continue to play our part in delivering the national drive for economic growth and that London continues to be one of the best places to invest in the world.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Adam Hug
Chair of Central London Forward and Leader of Westminster City Council



Cllr Anthony Okereke
Chair of Local London and Leader of Royal Borough of Greenwich



Cllr Barry Rawlings
Chair of West London Alliance and Leader of Barnet Council



Cllr Gareth Roberts
Chair of South London Partnership and Leader of Richmond Upon Thames



Mayor Jason Perry
London Councils Executive Member for Business and Growth



Andrew Dakers
Chief Executive of West London Business

