

# Boosting Broadband Rollout: Reform of the Electronic Communications Code

## The Broadband and Digital Communications APPG

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Broadband and Digital Communication seeks to further the rollout of broadband in rural and urban areas, and to look at digital communication across the UK. Secretariat is provided by [techUK](https://techuk.org), the trade association that brings together people, companies and organisations to realise the positive outcomes that digital technology can achieve.

## The Inquiry

The Broadband and Digital Communication All Party Parliamentary Group is launching an inquiry on how the Electronic Communications Code (the 'Code') could be practically reformed to make it easier to deploy full-fibre broadband in both urban and rural areas.

The Code provides the statutory framework underpinning the rights to install and maintain electronic communications apparatus on public and private land. It has long been considered a barrier to deploying fixed and mobile networks, despite reforms in 2017.

## Aims

The inquiry aims to hear evidence from industry and stakeholders on how reforms to the Code could deliver an accelerated rollout of full-fibre broadband right across the UK, helping the Government to meet its targets of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025. Specifically, the inquiry will aim to:

- Educate how the Code currently operates and its impact on network deployment with regard to access to land, particularly on the fixed network which is often underplayed in discussions on the ECC compared to mobile networks.
- Highlight the benefits that could be delivered if reforms to the Code can be made.
- Highlight that without reform to the ECC, millions of constituents both in multi-dwelling units – including social housing – as well as those in rural areas could be left behind and lose out on the social and economic benefits full fibre broadband can deliver.

## Outputs

The inquiry will commence on Monday 19 July 2021 and will aim to conclude by October 2021. Written evidence of no more than 4 A4 pages will be accepted by Friday 3 September 2021. A series of 3 oral evidence sessions will then be conducted with the APPG publishing its findings in the form of a public letter.

Witnesses will be invited to give oral evidence on the basis of their written evidence and at the discretion of the APPG.

## Questions

1. What is your view on the functioning of the Electronic Communications Code and is it deliver on its policy objectives of supporting faster and easier deployment of digital networks?
2. How can the Government introduce measures that facilitate;
  - a. Faster and collaborative completion of agreements
  - b. More certainty about the automatic rights to upgrade and share
3. Are there complimentary measures to reform of the Electronic Communications Code that could better assist in ensuring full fibre deployment targets are met?

Please submit your written evidence by Friday 3 September 2021 to [appg@techUK.org](mailto:appg@techUK.org)

## Key dates

- Monday 19 July 2021: Inquiry launches
- Friday 3 September 2021: Written evidence deadline
- Oral evidence sessions (TBC):
  - Friday 10 September 2021
  - Tuesday 14 September 2021
  - Friday 17 September 2021
- Week commencing 18 October 2021: Publication