

**All-Party Parliamentary Group for Broadband and Digital Communication
Meeting Minutes: Minister for Digital Infrastructure and Ofcom
25/03/2021**

Opening

The meeting of the APPG for Broadband and Digital Communication was called to order at 10:00 on 25/03/2021 by Selaine Saxby MP. Selaine welcomed attendees and our speakers for today's event: Minister for Digital Infrastructure Matt Warman and David Clarkson, Competition Policy Director, Ofcom

David Clarkson, Ofcom (DC)

- Provided an overview of Ofcom's Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review 2021-26, which is the bringing together of many market reviews for an overarching strategy for promoting competition in gigabit-capable networks (with remedy to access of BT's Ducts and Poles a central part).
- The regulator has categorised areas of the UK: some areas where there will be material competition for fibre build, and others where that will be less likely—decision impacted by Openreach's commitment to build in less commercial areas—regulation of pricing to ensure consumers have certainty and protection (particularly vulnerable consumers).
- Ofcom's regulation also reflects the move away from the copper network (which will be retired) and towards fibre; plus, a decision on dark fibre where network competition is unlikely.

Minister for Digital Infrastructure, Matt Warman MP (MW)

- The Minister briefed the APPG on the recent [Project Gigabit](#) announcement:
 - The first 1 million premises in tranches 1A and 1B have been identified as areas which will not have commercial rollout plans; therefore contracts will be awarded for deployment.
 - A consultation has launched to explore technology solutions and services to provide fast internet speeds in the "very hard to reach" areas (0.3% of premises) where a fibre connection will not be possible.
 - Update on the [Barrier Busting Task Force](#): an update on the "known knowns" in rolling out gigabit capable networks, such as street works, and gigabit-capable connections for new build properties (a MHCLG programme).
 - The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme will be renewed from April 2021 for homes and businesses to apply for funding where there is no expectation of commercial gigabit delivery.
 - Public sector buildings—such as schools and libraries—will become connection "hubs" for fibre deployment.

Q&A

- Regulation of copper switch-off and impact on critical national infrastructure
 - DC: CNI is a separate consideration for Ofcom from the WFTMR, and the switch-off will affect other sectors too (like personal care alarms – healthcare)



- What can industry do to bring forward the £5 billion in funding for Project Gigabit?
 - MW: The £1.2 billion in the Spending Review period is what DCMS believes it can spend in the timeframe; once the tendering process is underway and industry informs DCMS that the process can be accelerated, then a clearer picture will emerge for the remaining funding.
- Potential prioritisation of delivery of gigabit capable infrastructure and services to health and care premises
 - MW: work on this will continue to help improve connectivity for hospitals, surgeries and care homes
- Proposed changes to the Electronic Communications Code
 - The consultation on the ECC will change the Code but not entirely replace it, rather work to make the Code better for all stakeholders. This may involve legislation and that could take time, however, work is ongoing to improve the situation (outside of legislation).

Adjournment

Please follow the APPG on Twitter here: <https://twitter.com/AppgDigicomms>. Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 by Selaine Saxby MP.

Attendees

Name	Company or office (if known)
Paul Renshall	Ashton Paul Consulting
Nigel Garnham	Atos
Andrew Murphy	BBC
Gulistan Ladha	Broadband Stakeholder Group
Richard Wainer	BT
Mark Bartlett	Cellnex UK
Emma Shearer	CityFibre
Jo Swarbrick	CityFibre
Andrew Field	DCMS
Robert Burles	DCMS
Ben Roome	DMSL
David Meyer	DMSL
Peter Jenkins	Grant Thornton UK Limited
Allaster Gair	Interel Group
Dan Parry	John White PM
Rob Duggan	Kenton Group
Jon Parkes	McAfee Security UK Ltd.
T.Abalonin	MLL Telecom Ltd.
Selaine Saxby (Chair)	MP
Matt Warman	MP
Sally-Ann Hart	MP
Jerome Mayhew	MP
Stephen Timms	MP
Laura Warren	Network Rail Telecom
Steve Peel - GBG	Novalpina Capital
David Clarkson	Ofcom
Henrietta	Office of Selaine Saxby, MP
William Frost	Office of Selaine Saxby, MP
Simon Fletcher	Real Wireless
John Okas	Real Wireless
Dimitar Tashev	Scale Focus Ltd.
Aaron Lukas	SNP
Joshua Simmonds-Upton	SNP
Chris Kynaston	Synergy Procurement Services Ltd.
Bronagh McCloskey	TalkTalk
Sophie James	techUK
Matthew Evans	techUK
Julia Ofori-Addo	techUK



Charlene Varley	Telcom
Alex Gore	UBDS IT Consulting Ltd.
James Cemmell	University of Cambridge
Mary Curran	Viasat
Martyn Cheyne	WHP Telecoms
mike knuckey	-
kljordan	-
Josh Burton	-
Steve Ashley	-
Daisy	-
Jo (Jo)	-
SJOPLING	-
Samantha	-
Simon Colvin	-
Beth	-
Natalie	-
MGeen	-
Patrick Clark	-
KMonserr	-
John Ruane	-
Steve Wright	-
Ashleigh Eden	-
John.T	-