

Westminster eForum Keynote Seminar

Priorities for UK broadband connectivity: infrastructure, investment and the Digital Strategy

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 12th September 2017

Venue: Central London

Draft agenda subject to change



- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 - 9.15 **Priorities for improving the UK's digital infrastructure**
Philip Graham, Chief Executive Officer, National Infrastructure Commission
- 9.15 - 10.05 **Developing the national digital infrastructure: investment priorities, collaboration and the prospects for ultra-fast**
Following the government announcement of £1 billion investment in the next generation of digital infrastructure, what are key perspectives on how new funding would be applied most effectively? What is the latest state of full fibre rollout and the development of 5G, what R&D and other development challenges remain, and how should they be approached? With a strategy focus on using the full range of technologies - fixed line, mobile, wireless and satellite - and in public places and on the move - how should practical issues for collaboration within the sector and with partners in transport and local government be addressed, and what will it mean for rollout and service provision going forward? Is the ambition to reach the final 5% of the UK now in sight? What is the most likely shape of the communications network as fixed and wireless continue to overlap in the future and what will this mean for reliability and capacity?
Catherine Colloms, Director, Corporate Affairs, Openreach
Professor Rahim Tafazoli, Director, 5G Innovation Centre and Institute of Communication Systems, University of Surrey
Cormac Whelan, Chief Executive Officer, UK and Ireland, Nokia
Senior analyst
Questions and comments from the floor with **Philip Graham**, Chief Executive Officer, National Infrastructure Commission
- 10.05 - 10.50 **Connectivity for consumers and businesses**
With government commitments to improved broadband for all businesses, what is the likely future and role of the newly created Productivity Council - as well as the new Business Connectivity Forum - and what will need to be done to ensure that meaningful practical steps are taken, particularly for businesses in rural settings and SMEs? Are predictions of the benefits in productivity justified? Following the success of the Connection Voucher scheme and with 80% of SMEs now having access to superfast broadband, what more can be done for the remaining 20%? How effectively is BDUK utilising the £1.7 billion of public funding in those final 10% of areas - both rural and urban - which still do not have adequate connectivity? Does the UK Digital Strategy along with proposals for a broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) provide an adequate basis for improved services in public areas, including free Wi-Fi on trains and public places? How will the new Digital Skills Partnership work in practice, what will be the role of partners in the scheme and what incentives might need to be put in place for partners and potential beneficiaries?
Richard Neudegg, Head of Regulation, uSwitch
Tom Thackray, Director for Innovation, CBI
Suzanne Clear, Senior Advisor, Planning and Rural Affairs, NFU
Senior representative, digital skills
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.50 - 10.55 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.55 - 11.20 Coffee
- 11.20 - 11.25 **Chair's opening remarks**
Julie Elliott MP
- 11.25 - 12.20 **The future for broadband delivery: USO, infrastructure investment and the consumer market**
What are the implications of recent policy and regulatory decisions - including surrounding the USO, Openreach and the Digital Economy Act - for competition, rollout and investment? With the reformed Electronic Communications Code and with Government exploring wayleave reform, what are the priorities for re-addressing the UK's planning framework to support digital infrastructure rollout? As the ASA reviews advertising rules what will be needed to secure an advertising regime that supports clear and accurate information for consumers on speeds, pricing and the availability of fibre? How are the packages being offered to consumers set to evolve, including in terms of bundling, content offerings and pricing?
Julian Ashworth, Global Director of Group Industry Policy, BT Group
Daniel Butler, Head of Public Affairs and Policy, Virgin Media
David Stewart, Partner, Towerhouse
Dr Matt Yardley, Partner, Analysys Mason
Matthew Evans, Executive Director, Broadband Stakeholder Group
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.20 - 12.55 **The UK digital strategy: priorities for policy and regulation**
With the UK Digital Strategy - including the USO and large scale infrastructure investment - seeking to ensure that the UK has the digital infrastructure it needs to increase productivity and economic growth, what will be the roles and priorities for Government, regulation and industry? What are the regulatory priorities going forward including the design of the USO and for ensuring fair competition in the broadband market?
Senior representative, regulator
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Westminster eForum closing remarks**
Julie Elliott MP
Daniel Patefield, Forum Lead, Westminster eForum