

Digital fixed line infrastructure: Invitation for Expressions of Interest

1. Introduction

Islington Council intends to offer a master wayleave for its housing stock to full fibre broadband operators/carriers on a non-exclusive basis. This document accompanies the master wayleave, and sets out the essential requirements associated with entering into the wayleave agreement.

2. Background

Islington Council's Homes and Neighbourhoods seek to enable and facilitate high speed internet connectivity and digital rollout to our residential council tenants and leaseholders across our housing portfolio that comprise 35,000 residential units and circa 100 non-residential, estate-based properties (community buildings, office spaces and caretaker facilities)

We seek to ensure that internet access is rolled out across the entire housing stock within an agreed timescale (including those sites that could be considered less attractive commercially), that offers as broad a choice as possible to residents, including those on lower incomes. The Council is also seeking to deliver social value benefits to residents through the wayleave, focussed on affordability, accessibility, and digital and economic inclusion. The master wayleave is the result of detailed discussions with technical and corporate requirements, and there is strong support for this programme within the Council.

We invite expressions of interest in the master wayleave from Operators/Carriers able to meet the requirements set out in this document. Operators/Carriers are invited to engage with the Council with a view to finalising and signing the wayleave. A checklist of the information required to is included at the end of this document. This document is published alongside the following:

1. Digital fixed line infrastructure wayleave
2. Digital fixed line infrastructure requirements and permissions (Schedule 8)
3. Map of Islington Council housing estates and estate boundaries.

Please contact:

For general enquiries: islingtonbroadband@islington.gov.uk

For informal discussion: Lee McDermott – lee.mcdermott@islington.gov.uk

3. Delivery Requirements

3.1 Connectivity specification

The Operator/Carrier must deliver full fibre connectivity only, meaning either fibre to the home/premise (FTTH/P) or fibre to the building (FTTB). FTTH/P is preferred. All Multi-Dwelling Units must be served with a data feed cable capable of supporting multiple potential 1Gbps customers.

3.2 Coverage and delivery timeframe

The Operator/Carrier commits to, with best endeavours, delivering a connection (i.e. making services available) to at least 70% of the individual properties within Islington Council's housing stock within a 2 year delivery timeframe and 90% within 3 years. To provide assurances and to demonstrate best endeavours in making progress towards this target:

- The Operator/Carrier must provide the Council with a full list of the individual properties (with UPRNs) that it considers to be viable (subject to survey) and to which it intends to deliver a connection within the agreed delivery timeframe. Please note this needs to be shared with the Council before entering into the wayleave agreement.
- The Operator/Carrier must provide quarterly project plans and indicative yearly project plans that demonstrate how the target will be achieved. Please note, an indicative plan for at least the first 12 months of deployment should be shared with the Council before entering into the wayleave agreement.
- The Operator/Carrier commits to working with Islington Council to report openly and transparently on coverage progress.

3.3 Additional infrastructure capacity

To minimise future disruption to residents the council requires the Operator/Carrier to provide spare infrastructure between the public highway and council assets and across estates (additional ducting infrastructure) to enable additional capacity at least equivalent to the capacity required by the Operator/Carrier). The Operator/Carrier will (at no cost to the Council) be required to transfer ownership of the additional ducting infrastructure to the Council for its own use and for sharing with any third party authorised by it together with the right for the Council or any third party authorised by it to share any joint boxes connecting the additional ducting infrastructure

3.4 Installation and technical requirements

The Operator/Carrier will be required to comply with the Council's installation and technical requirements when working in/on the Council's housing assets in a manner that does not cause any deterioration to the asset. These requirements are set out in a separate document, [Digital fixed line infrastructure installation requirements and permissions](#), to be attached as a schedule to the wayleave.

3.5 Resource cost contribution

The Operator/Carrier will be required to contribute to the Council's staffing costs for the duration of the roll-out (up to maximum of 3 years, unless varied by agreement), in order to ensure there is sufficient organisational capacity to administer the roll-out effectively. The Operator/Carrier must be willing to contribute up to £60,000 per annum. Fees and payment arrangements will be mutually agreed between the Council and Operator/Carrier prior to any appointment(s) being made, and fees will reflect actual costs.

3.6 Data reporting and monitoring

For the purposes of monitoring project progress, digital inclusion and demographic analysis, and administration of an affordable tariff scheme (see below). Operators will be asked to share data at household / UPRN level on:

- Coverage (i.e. where services are available to customers)
- Take up of services, and details of packages subscribed to by estate residents.

Our assumption is that the Operator will act as the Data Controller, and will take responsibility for providing information and assurances to customers (data subjects) in its privacy notices.

4. Social value

Islington Council is seeking social value returns for wayleaves, focussed on the following policy objectives:

- Tackling digital poverty - mitigating concerns about financial barriers and the cost of internet services for people experiencing financial hardship
- Improving digital inclusion for Islington residents (i.e. helping digitally excluded people get online, by improving digital skills, motivation, trust, access)
- Improving economic inclusion: delivering employment opportunities, including apprenticeships for Islington residents and local small and micro businesses
- Supporting the council's priority to support homeless households in shared accommodation.

As a condition of the wayleave, the Operator/Carrier must commit to delivering the social value benefits for residents outlined below. Islington Council is willing to discuss variations to the overall package of benefits or the implementation mechanisms, provided these meet the stated policy objectives and provide an equivalent level of benefits to residents.

4.1 Affordable tariff scheme for residents in financial hardship

The Operator commits to offering discounted packages to a proportion of residents in or at risk of financial hardship. Criteria to be agreed by the Council. It is envisaged that residents in need will be allocated a discounted package:

- The number of discounted packages made available should be equivalent to 10% of the Operator's connected customers (households) in Islington Council-owned properties, calculated at a point 12 months after the completion of the agreed coverage target, or 12 months after the agreed delivery timeframe, whichever is earlier. These packages should be available from the beginning of the roll-out, based on a projected/estimated take up figure; this can be adjusted over time to reflect actual take up
- The affordable tariff should enable a resident to subscribe to the Operator's entry level service for a period of at least 12 months at a discounted rate of 50%
- Given the affordable tariff scheme is intended to support residents experiencing financial hardship, there should be a straightforward contract exit mechanism, to mitigate concerns about debt.

4.2 Free connections for nominated community sites, dedicated landlord supplies including communal areas, assets and hostels

The Operator will install a full fibre connection and deliver a free, managed 1Gbps broadband service to nominated sites (community centres, homeless hostels owned by the council, caretaker lodges, boiler houses and communal areas of the assets that are being connected), the service to be sustained in perpetuity.

- It is acknowledged that nominated sites should be on or adjacent to the Operator's (planned) network, so to be commercially viable. Where they are not within the scope of the network, they can be assessed on a case by case basis. It is acknowledged that nominated sites should be on or adjacent to the Operator's (planned) network, so to be commercially viable. Where they are not within the scope of the network, they can be assessed on a case by case basis.
- Islington Council will propose a list of nominated sites (this will be provided on request alongside the housing stock list once engagement has commenced). The Operator must carry out a desktop viability assessment of these sites before entering into the wayleave agreement, to confirm they are viable. This is to avoid disagreements about viability during the roll-out.
- Responsibility for providing connections and service to all the nominated sites will be shared between all the Operators entering into the wayleave agreement. Each Operator will be expected to connect a minimum of 40 sites.
- For some sites, Islington Council may not be the freeholder, and consequently the Operator will need to enter into a wayleave agreement with the relevant freeholder in order to provide a connection. In these instances, Islington Council will support the Operator in securing a wayleave; if it is not possible to secure a wayleave, this will not be construed as a failure of the Operator to fulfil its obligations under the master wayleave agreement.
- The Operator should deliver a managed service, with a commitment to use reasonable endeavours, skill, and care to maintain a high quality fault-free service, and to fix faults or loss of service within reasonable timeframes. The Operator will not be responsible for implementing or managing a Wi-Fi service

4.3 Employment and skills opportunities

Islington council is committed to developing the next generation of workers and ensuring our residents get a chance to start careers in the tech & digital sectors. It has an employment support service, iWork which provides employment coaching and recruitment support to enable more Islington residents to secure jobs. The Operator/Carrier commits to working with Islington Council's Employment & Skills Service to identify training and employment opportunities such as apprenticeships and/or entry level jobs and pathways to local residents, on a best endeavours basis. Ahead of entering into the wayleave agreement, the Operator will be required to work with the Council to develop an **Employment & Skills Plan**. This should specify the types and numbers of employment and apprenticeship opportunities to be delivered, and articulate how this will be achieved. In addition, we expect all jobs related to the contract to be advertised through the Islington Working portal – a free job listing site, targeting local residents and the Operator/Carrier commits to working with Islington Council to report openly and transparently on progress against employment targets.

The Operator/Carrier commits to contributing to the Council's **100 Hours of the World of Work programme**¹, which seeks to expose young people to a wide range of career choices throughout their time in school.

4.4 Small and micro businesses

The Operator/Carrier commits to working with Islington Council's business support team to deliver opportunities for sole traders, small and micro businesses in the local supply chain as outlined in a **Business Support Plan** (to be appended to the wayleave).

In addition, the Operator/Carrier would be encouraged to identify opportunities to support the recovery and resilience of the local business community with voucher schemes, wider connectivity choice, competitive pricing and promotional packages, targeted at small and micro businesses in the borough.

4.5 Digital skills and inclusion support

The Operator/Carrier commits to delivering or contributing to digital skills support to residents in Islington, to be delivered over course of the roll-out (i.e. within the specified delivery timeframe). A **Proposal for digital skills and inclusion support** (to be appended to the wayleave) should be outlined, to be delivered directly, or in partnership with a specialist third party provider. Equally, the Council would be willing for the operator to financially contribute to a suitable organisation working within Islington.

¹ <https://www.islingtoncs.org/wow>

5. Alternative proposals

Islington Council recognises that operators/carriers will have different business models and ways of working, and therefore a one-size-fits-all approach to delivering connectivity and social value may not be appropriate. If an operator/carrier, for compelling reasons, cannot meet the requirements set out in this document, the Council is willing to consider alternative proposals, provided these are in line with the stated policy objectives.

6. Checklist for Operators/Carriers

The following will be required and mutually agreed before the wayleave can be finalised and signed:

- ☐ Confirmation that the Operator agrees to the terms set out in the Digital fixed line infrastructure wayleave
- ☐ Confirmation that the Operator agrees to the requirements set out in this and the Digital fixed line infrastructure requirements and permissions documents
- ☐ List of individual properties (with UPRNs) that are considered viable and will be connected within the agreed delivery timeframe.
- ☐ Indicative roll-out plan (for at least the first 12 months of deployment)
- ☐ Details of the proposed affordable tariff scheme: cost(s), speed, contract details. (To be appended to the wayleave)
- ☐ Details of the proposal (subject to viability assessments) for free connections to community sites, dedicated landlord supply and hostels: connections/service to be provided, and commitment to maintain the service. (To be appended to the wayleave)
- ☐ Employment & Skills Plan. (To be appended to the wayleave)
- ☐ Business Support Plan. (To be appended to the wayleave)
- ☐ Proposal for digital skills and inclusion support. (To be appended to the wayleave).