

The Rt Hon Ian Murray MP
Minister of State
Department for Digital, Culture, Media
and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ
By email

Katie Stewart
ADEPT President 2026/27
Executive Director of Environment
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Guildhall
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Dear Minister

Re: Project Gigabit delivery and the role of local authorities

On behalf of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT), I write to raise our concerns about the delivery of Project Gigabit as it enters its most challenging phase. I am also seeking a stronger partnership between Building Digital UK (BDUK), local authorities and local digital infrastructure teams.

ADEPT is the voice of local authority place directors and their teams. Our members manage vital local services - from highways, waste, recycling and planning - while also preparing for the challenges and opportunities of the future. We represent over 75% of county, unitary and combined authorities in England, making us the leading voice for place-based leadership in local government. Through our Digital Connectivity Working Group, we bring together digital infrastructure leads from across England who support broadband and mobile connectivity deployment in their areas.

While we recognise the significant progress made by Project Gigabit, many of our members are reporting concerns about limited local engagement, insufficient transparency around delivery plans and uncertainty arising from recent contract changes. As intervention areas are revised and premises are removed from publicly funded programmes - in some areas leaving premises in no build plan at all, commercial or publicly funded - local authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to understand future delivery plans, support affected communities and align local growth ambitions with expected connectivity.

Following the redesign of the BDUK GIS City Fibre contracts in 2026, for example, substantial numbers of premises were removed that were not in any commercial build plan. Such situations reinforce the need for greater transparency and stronger engagement with local authorities, so that affected communities can understand what, if any, future delivery route remains available.

This matters because the premises that remain to be connected are often the most difficult to reach. They frequently face practical local barriers such as wayleaves, missing ducts, direct buried cables, community engagement challenges and delivery constraints that national datasets alone cannot identify or resolve. These are precisely the areas where local authority digital infrastructure teams have extensive experience and established relationships.

Local expertise was a key ingredient in the success of the original BDUK Superfast Broadband Programme. We believe Project Gigabit would benefit from a more collaborative approach combining national programme management with the practical local knowledge and delivery experience available within local authorities.

To support the successful delivery of the programme, we ask that the government and BDUK:

- Establish a more formal, collaborative mechanism for engagement with local authority digital infrastructure teams.
- Improve transparency around intervention areas, contract changes and the future position of removed premises.
- Recognise and utilise local authorities as delivery partners in addressing the final and most difficult-to-connect premises – including creating flexible local delivery pathways that includes delegated funding for authorities who are able and willing to deliver targeted infill schemes, along with greater opportunities for local bodies to input intelligence and barrier busting resolution.

We are concerned that without stronger local partnership working, the government's ambition of 99% gigabit-capable coverage by 2032 is at risk. Conversely, a more collaborative model would help ensure local knowledge, relationships and practical problem-solving capability are fully utilised to support successful delivery.

We would welcome an early meeting with you or your officials to discuss how ADEPT and local authority digital infrastructure teams can support the next phase of delivery.

Yours sincerely,



Katie Stewart

ADEPT President 2026/27

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cc. Hannah Bartram, Chief Executive, ADEPT

Liz Harrison, Chair, ADEPT Digital Connectivity Working Group