**April newsletter – DCWG and Mobile UK roundtable**

The Digital Connectivity Working Group met on 13th March with representatives from Cambridgeshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, and South Gloucestershire. The meeting started with a discussion with representatives from the DCMS’ Barrier Busting Team, covering the Government’s [Digital Connectivity Portal](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-connectivity-portal) – how much use it is getting, the perceived value of it , and any other support that councils want from Government to implement or deliver improved digital connectivity at the local level. We also considered the draft DCMS Street Works Toolkit document to be published soon, and an update on policy for full fibre connectivity in new housing developments.

The Working Group also considered drafts of two forthcoming documents – the Councillor’s Digital Connectivity Guide, commissioned by the LGA, and the ADEPT policy position on digital connectivity. The latter aims to set out some key messages around broadband and mobile service geographical coverage, quality (speed and strength), competition and choice for consumers, new build standards, inclusivity, and the need for Local Industrial Strategies to encompass better digital connectivity locally. The policy position is now being updated to reflect input to date and will be available from 8th April, anyone who would like to comment on the updated version can request a copy from the ADEPT Policy Officer daviddale2401@gmail.com.

On the morning of the same day, a number of ADEPT colleagues and others had come together for a roundtable discussion with the mobile phone industry. The event had been proposed by Mobile UK, the trade association for the UK’s mobile network operators, to present their recent report on [Councils & Connectivity](http://www.mobileuk.org/20180905%20-%20Mobile%20UK%20%E2%80%93%20Councils%20and%20Connectivity%20%E2%80%93%205%20Sep%202018%20Web.pdf)  and to discuss matters of common concern. Other participants included infrastructure providers CTIL and MBNL, one of the mobile network operators (MNOs) Three, the LGA, and Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership representing the LEP Network. The session was chaired by Councillor Rob Waltham from the LGA’s member Digital Connectivity Working Group (of the People and Places Board).

The event opened with short introductions by Mobile UK, the LGA, ADEPT and the LEP, followed by a lively discussion around four main issues – mobile coverage and barriers to deployment; partnership models; best practice; and opportunities for joint advocacy. There was progress towards each of the parties identifying a list of ‘asks’ of the others, and all of the parties identifying what is needed from Government. The infrastructure providers are willing to hold engagement events around the country to develop better understanding of the mobile industry and its plans for extending and upgrading the networks, it is likely that the ADEPT sub-national Boards could play a role in this.

It was agreed to reconvene the roundtable in six months’ time to review progress and explore the idea of developing a memorandum of understanding between the mobile industry and local government.