

GTech Surveys Limited

Bowlee Football & Community Wellbeing Hub

Broadband Connectivity Assessment

CHANGE HISTORY

Issue	Date	Details of Changes
0.0	01/07/2026	Working draft
0.1	14/07/2026	First draft issue
1.0	15/07/2026	First issue - minor editing
1.0	27/07/2026	Final issue - site plan and proposed layout updated
1.0	04/08/2026	Final issue - proposed layout updated
Author: G Phillips		Reviewer: O Lloyd

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GTech Surveys Limited

GTech Surveys Limited is a Midlands based broadcast and telecommunications consultancy conducting projects throughout the entire UK. We undertake mobile phone network, television and radio reception surveys (pre- and post-construction signal surveys), conduct broadcast interference and reception investigations, and support telecommunications planning work for wind energy developers, construction companies, architects, broadcasters and Local Planning Authorities.

In addition to radio interference modelling services and television reception surveys, we produce EIA and ES Telecommunications Chapters (also known as an 'Electronic Interference Chapter'), satisfying the requirements of Part 5, Regulation 18 (Parts 5a and 5b) of The Town and Country Planning EIA Regulations 2017. We peer review ES and EIA work, liaising with telecommunications providers (Arqiva, BT etc.) and advise developers with respect to associated Section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and Section 75 (Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997) agreements.

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Professional broadcast trained project engineers deliver, and supply Market UK Ltd insured technical products to support planning applications, discharge planning conditions (including S106 Agreements) and for due diligence. For more information about GTech Surveys Limited please visit our website - www.gtechsurveys.com



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Executive Summary

A desk-based assessment has been undertaken to determine the current availability of broadband services near to and adjacent to the proposal at Bowlee Sports Field, Heywood Old Road, Middleton, M24 4SB.

The findings of this broadband connectivity assessment indicate that existing broadband infrastructure and good connectivity is already available in the study area, with existing fibre installed along roads and public highways adjacent to the Site. Fast download speeds are likely to be experienced. It is suggested that the developer engages with BT Openreach to facilitate a connection to their fibre network.

The Applicant will commit to enable the Proposed Development for robust connectivity and future-proof upgrading by following the statutory guidance, Approved Document R, Volume 2 (Physical infrastructure for high-speed electronic communications networks). This statutory guidance outlines how to provide "high-speed-ready" infrastructure for future fibre optic or copper cables to ensure a building can support broadband speeds of at least 30 Mbps.

This broadband connectivity assessment can be used for reference and to accompany the planning application submission.

1 - Introduction

This assessment has been prepared to support an application for planning permission for the proposal at Bowlee Sports Field, Heywood Old Road, Middleton, M24 4SB. The assessment details the findings of licensed and other available information to address requirements regarding potential broadband connectivity for the Proposed Development. This assessment has been prepared by GTech Surveys Limited for the applicant, Rochdale Borough Council (RBC).

The Application Site and Proposed Layout

The Site is located to the north-west of Middleton at Bowlee Sports Field, Heywood Old Road, Middleton, M24 4SB, and comprises 10.744 ha on land which is currently used for recreational purposes, namely sports pitches.

Figure 1 indicates the Site location, which is centred on Grid Reference SD 85052 07184 (E: 385052, N: 407184). Heywood Old Road forms the north-western boundary and provides access to the Site.

Residential properties form the south-western boundary, whilst Bowlee Park forms the remaining boundaries, with Langley Brook forming part of the south-east boundary.

The Proposed Development and Proposed Layout

The development includes two distinct parts: a new training facility for Rochdale Association Football Club (AFC) and a community wellbeing hub/pavilion for RBC.

Rochdale AFC Training Centre will include two new pitches, one grass and one artificial surface, as well as a club building and car parking.

The community wellbeing hub/pavilion will include two full-size grass pitches, two 3G pitches and other smaller grass pitches. It will also include a new Community Health and Wellbeing Hub, play area and one double lane cricket training net.

The proposed layout of the Proposed Development is shown in Figure 2.

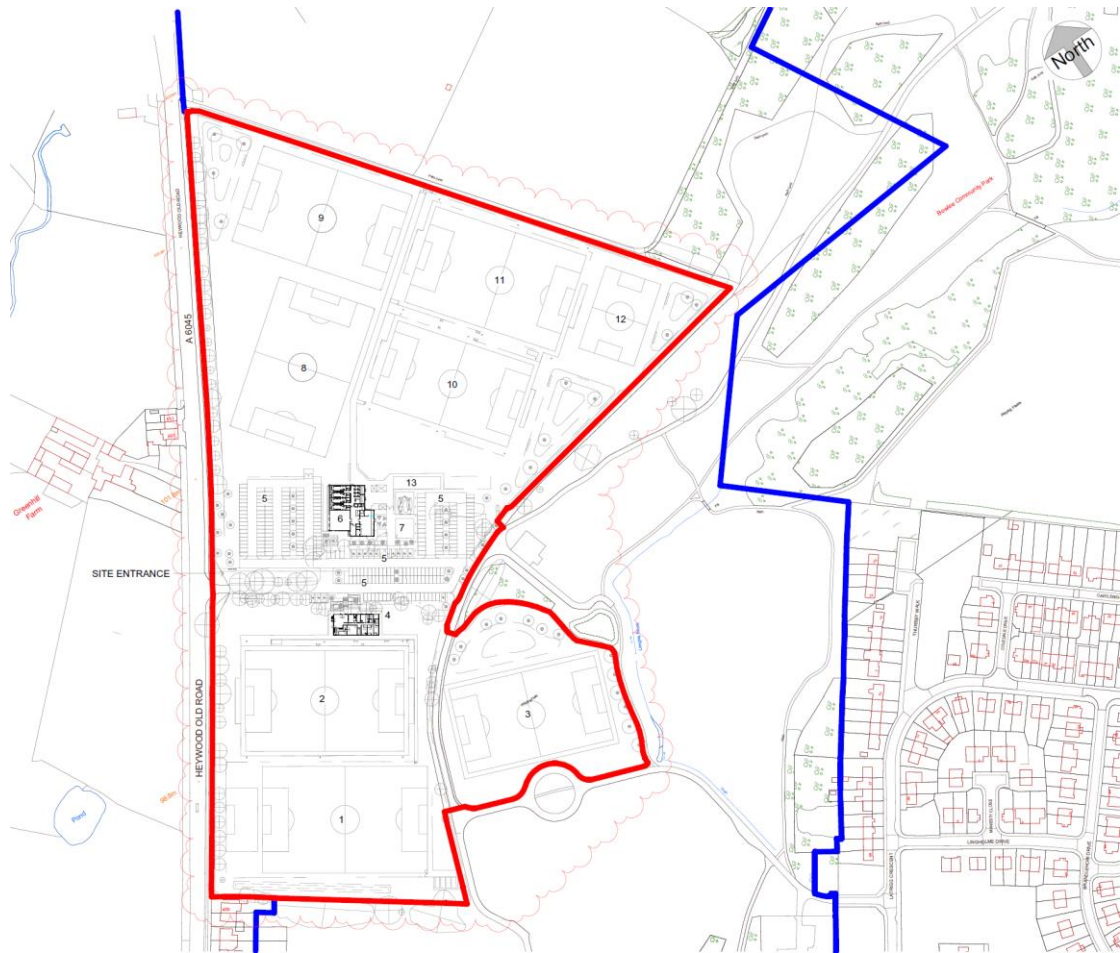


Figure 1 – The location of the Site



Figure 2 - The Proposed Layout of the Proposed Development

The Assessment Requirements

As stipulated in the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document 2022 - 2039, March 2024, it is stated in Policy JP-C2: Digital Connectivity, Part 2;

Requiring all new development to have full fibre to premises connections, unless technically infeasible and/or unviable, and to incorporate multiple-ducting compliant with telecoms standards, to facilitate future-proof gigabit-capable network connections. It is expected that internet connections will be operational and immediately accessible to network providers when occupiers move into new properties

It is considered that all new build developments must incorporate "high-speed-ready" physical infrastructure for electronic communications networks (like copper or fiber-optic cables) (Section 10 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹).

1 - NPPF Section 10, December 2024, (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)

10. Supporting high quality communications

119. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high-quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be

Issue: 1.0

Legislation

The Building etc. (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2022 came into force on 26 December 2022. These regulations introduce gigabit broadband infrastructure and connectivity requirements for the construction of new homes in England. They amend The Building Regulations 2010 and The Building (Approved Inspectors etc.) Regulations 2010.

Statutory Guidance

The regulations are supported by statutory guidance. Approved Document R Volume 1² provides information to assist developers with compliance with the requirements to install gigabit-ready physical infrastructure and gigabit-capable connections for new homes.

The Approved Document R is in a two-volume format:

Volume 1: Physical infrastructure and network connection for new dwellings provides guidance on:

- ‘Requirement RA1: Gigabit-ready physical infrastructure’
- ‘Requirement RA2: Connection to gigabit-capable network’

Volume 1 includes key terms at Appendix A, and a model connectivity plan at Appendix B.

Volume 2: Physical infrastructure for high-speed electronic communications networks provides guidance on:

- ‘Requirement R1: High-speed-ready in-building physical infrastructure’

This covers requirements to install high-speed-ready infrastructure in buildings that are outside of the scope of requirements RA1 and RA2. Volume 2 also includes key terms at Appendix A.

Scope of the requirements

Requirement R1: High-speed-ready in-building physical infrastructure

Part R Infrastructure for electronic communications High-speed-ready in-building physical infrastructure R1

(1) Building work must be carried out so as to ensure that the building is equipped with a high-speed-ready in-building physical infrastructure, up to a network termination point for high-speed electronic communications networks.

delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).

2 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infrastructure-for-electronic-communications-approved-document-r>

Details

Guidance covering the infrastructure for electronic communications requirements of the building regulations as set out in Part R of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations and in a number of specific building regulations.

The current technical guidance is contained in:

Approved Document R Volume 2: Volume 2: Physical infrastructure for high-speed electronic communications networks

Requirement R1: High-speed-ready in-building physical infrastructure³

Developer's Guidance and Responsibility - At the Pre-Application Stage

Broadband connectivity is most helpfully and effectively raised at the earliest possible stage of the planning process. This can help to ensure that the need to provide superfast broadband connectivity is considered in prospective applicants' layout planning and costings before proposals reach the planning application stage. At the pre-application stage, prospective applicants:

- Will be reminded of the requirements of local guidance and Section 10 (NPPF) concerning broadband connectivity, i.e. the provision of superfast broadband connectivity;
- Will be advised that occupiers of the Proposed Development should be able to arrange access to superfast broadband immediately at the point of occupation; and
- Will be encouraged to liaise with broadband providers at an early stage to identify whether the Proposed Development could be connected to existing infrastructure or whether additional infrastructure would be required, and how this would be provided.

3 - <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/637f357ad3bf7f154043fe68/ADR2.pdf>

Developer's Guidance and Responsibility - At the Application Stage

Applications for planning permission for major development should be accompanied by evidence of the superfast broadband connectivity of the site, such as this report. This should take the form of a connectivity assessment, or similar proof, from one or more broadband infrastructure providers evidencing the availability of at least superfast broadband speeds. This can be submitted as part of a sustainability statement accompanying the application.

Where superfast broadband connectivity is available, the development should include the infrastructure to connect to this service and make it available to occupiers. Where superfast broadband connectivity is not currently available:

- Applications should be accompanied by evidence that discussions have been held with a range of providers to upgrade infrastructure to deliver superfast broadband or full fibre connections.
- Where one or more providers have agreed to provide superfast broadband connectivity, the development should be designed to connect to this service and make it available to occupiers.
- Where no provider has agreed to provide superfast broadband connectivity, the development should incorporate additional dedicated telecommunications ducting to enable the provision of superfast broadband in future.

The Broadband Connectivity Assessment

This assessment can be used for reference and to support the planning application submission and has been prepared by GTech Surveys Limited for the applicant. This assessment was undertaken during July 2026 to provide information regarding the connectivity around the Site and the availability of local broadband services.

This report follows the following structure:

Chapter 1 introduces the work, the assessment's requirements, the Proposed Development and Site

Chapter 2 lists which external infrastructure telecommunications utility providers are operating in the study area, with which technology and what likely upload and download speeds are available

Chapter 3 describes the existing local BT Openreach infrastructure around the Site (as of 14 July 2026)

Chapter 4 describes the existing local Virgin Media infrastructure around the Site (as of 3 July 2026)

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion

2 - External Infrastructure Telecommunications Utility Providers

Existing Broadband Providers in the Study Area

A number of telecommunications companies and broadband providers exist and operate in the Bowlee area. Database interrogation indicates that the following providers are active around the Site's postcode centroid.

Provider	Type of Service ⁴	Possible DL ⁵ Speeds	Possible UL ⁶ Speeds
BT Wholesale	ADSL	Up to 8 Mbps	Up to 832 Kbps
BT Wholesale	ADSL Max	Up to 8 Mbps	Up to 832 Kbps
BT Wholesale	WBC (21CN)	Up to 24 Mbps	Up to 2.5 Mbps
BT Wholesale	SDSL	Up to 20 Mbps	Up to 2 Mbps
BT	FTTC	Up to 80 Mbps	Up to 20 Mbps
Vodafone	LLU	Up to 24 Mbps	Up to 2.5 Mbps
TalkTalk (CPW) ⁷	LLU	Up to 24 Mbps	Up to 2.5 Mbps
Vodafone	LLU		

Potential Download Speeds

The postcode centroid is likely to be well served due to existing fibre in the area.

Availability

	Full Fibre FTTH/FTTP	✓
	Ultrafast Broadband (>=100 Mbps)	✓
	Superfast Broadband (>24 Mbps)	✓
	Part Fibre or Full Fibre (FTTC or FTTH or Cable)	✓
	Fixed Wireless	✓
	LLU	✗
A+	ADSL2+	✗
A	ADSL	✗

Connection Options

- **Virgin Media** cable broadband Gigabit speeds using the older coax/fibre network may be available to you.
- Ultrafast Openreach FTTP may be available, speeds range from 40 Mbps to 900 Mbps, retail providers
- Openreach copper stop sell notice is in effect, so FTTC and ADSL2+ are not available for new orders.

Exchange

 MIDDLETON MR MID
Ofcom Market B
Stop Sell Date for Copper: 12-Feb-27
Analogue Switch Off Tranche: Tranche 23

4 - Appendix - Broadband Connection Definitions for definitions

5 - DL means Download

6 - UL means Upload

7 - Car Phone Warehouse (CPW)

3 - BT Openreach External Infrastructure Availability

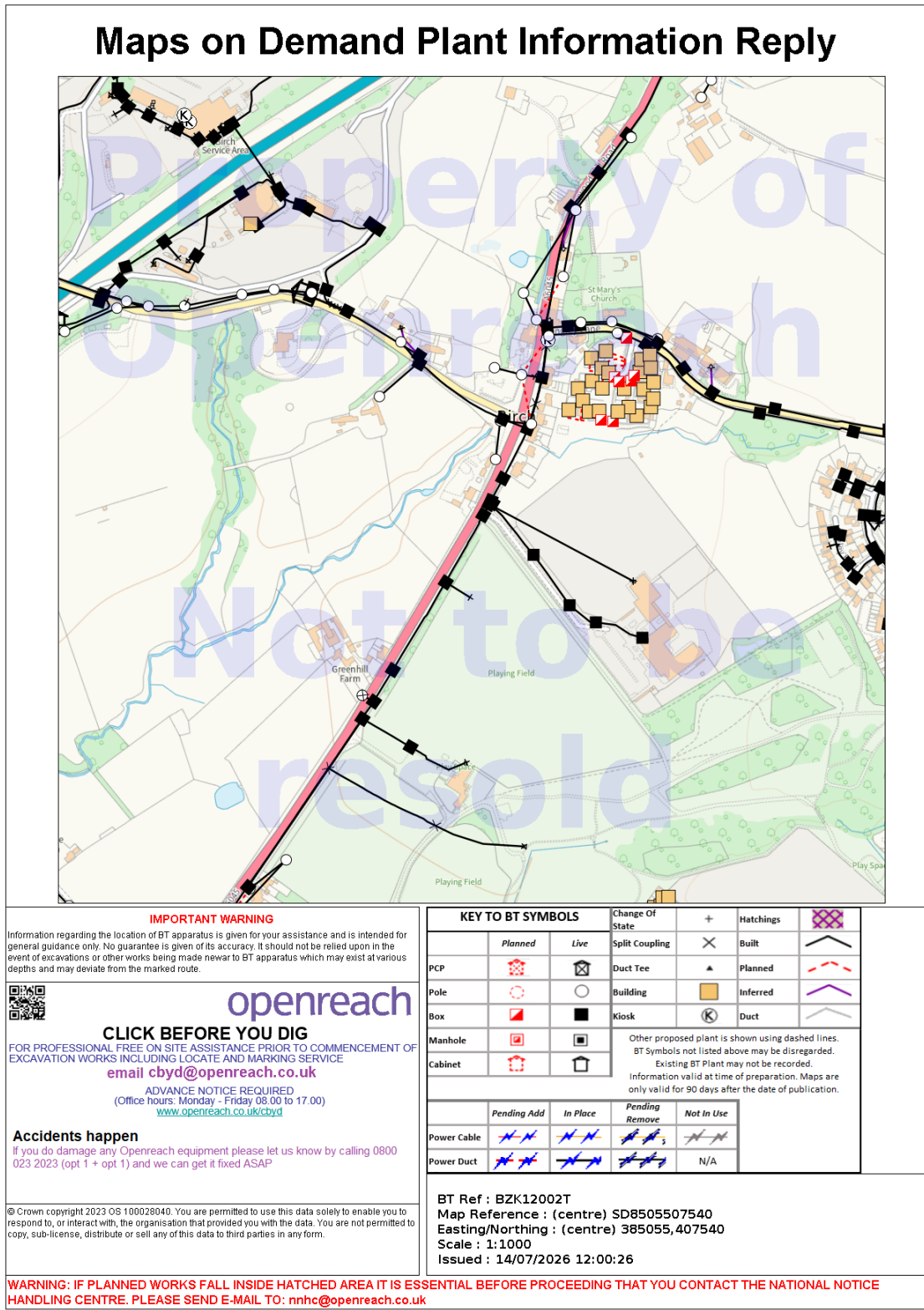


Figure 3 - BT Openreach External Infrastructure Availability

BT Openreach had a universal service obligation (USO) granting remote households the right to request broadband speeds of at least 10 Mbit/s by 2020. As a result of this obligation, BT Openreach has been aggressively installing new fibre and broadband infrastructure throughout the UK, enhancing coverage in major cities and towns.

Based on BT database interrogation on 14th July 2026, there is existing BT Openreach (fibre) infrastructure surrounding the Site on the western boundary of the Site and into the Site itself.

It is considered that the western boundary of the Site is the most optimal location from a connectivity purpose.

4 - Virgin Media External Infrastructure Availability

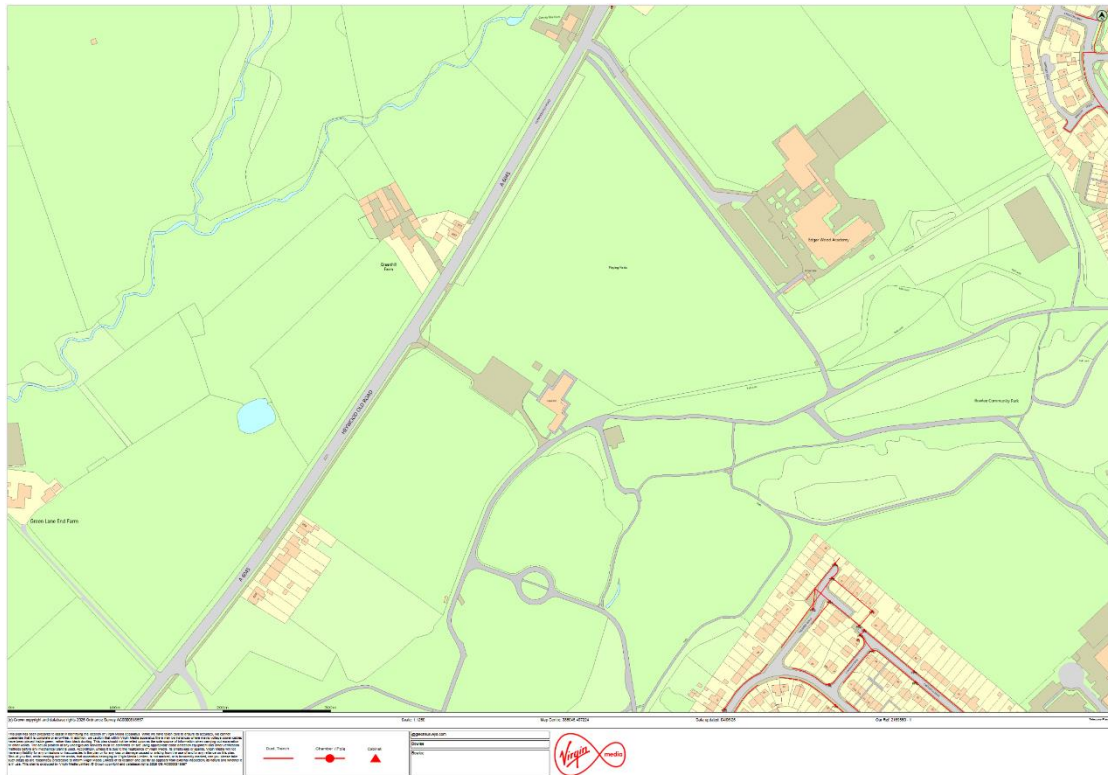


Figure 5 - Existing Virgin Media Infrastructure in the Study Area

Based on Virgin Media's reply on 3 July 2026, there is no existing Virgin Media (fibre) infrastructure in the study area.

5 - Conclusions

A desktop study has been undertaken to assess the potential for broadband connectivity to the proposal at Bowlee Sports Field, Heywood Old Road, Middleton, M24 4SB. The study has utilised licensed information and current technical data regarding connectivity from a number of sources.

The area already is likely to have excellent download speeds (expected to be at least 100+ megabits per second). Only BT Openreach has existing fibre infrastructure immediately adjacent to the Site and into the Site. Consequently, only BT Openreach is able to enable a full fibre connection for the Proposed Development due to the presence of fibre in the study area.

It is recommended that the applicant engages with a broadband infrastructure provider in order to establish the most optimal data infrastructure solution for the Proposed Development. It is considered that BT Openreach offers the most optimal connection. BT Openreach can be contacted via their website⁸.

Full fibre connections represent the most future-proof form of infrastructure. New development should look to increase the spread of full fibre connections, which have the potential to boost Bowlee's economy; help businesses grow and be more productive; and provide more symmetrical upload / download speeds for residents and businesses. Full fibre connections also offer greater reliability and lower energy / maintenance costs.

The applicant will ensure that the proposed development is complete with high-speed-ready infrastructure. This digital connectivity assessment can be used for reference and to accompany the planning application submission.

8 - <https://www.openreach.com/building-developers-and-projects/fibre-for-developers/registering-your-site>

Appendices

Broadband Connection Definitions

Data Ducting Infrastructure for New Homes - Guidance Note, March 2008,
Department for Communities and Local Government

Other Technical Advice

Planning Policies

Broadband Connection Definitions

ADSL - Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line broadband is a connection provided over home telephone lines. Openreach owns the UK's landline infrastructure, so when you have an ADSL connection, you need to rent your phone line from Openreach. If you already have an existing phone line, the broadband is added onto the package. Openreach was previously owned by BT, but ADSL packages can be sold by providers other than BT through a process known as local loop unbundling (LLU). This means that a secondary provider, for example Plusnet or TalkTalk, put their own software in the telephone exchanges and rent line and exchange space from Openreach. Although not as fast as fibre broadband, ADSL provides a high-quality, reliable connection. But if you live far away from your telephone exchange, or if the cable has degraded, then speeds can drop dramatically.

FTTB (fibre to the building/basement) - Fibre-optic cables run all the way to your premises, which is why this is sometimes called **FTTP** (fibre to the premises). For those in flats in a large building, the fibre terminates at the building rather than the individual dwelling. It still provides very fast speeds.

FTTC (fibre to the cabinet) - Fibre-optic cables run all the way to the cabinet in the street, which can be up to 300m away. The cabinet is connected to the property with regular copper wires, which results in a loss of speed. This is the most common connection.

FTTH (fibre to the home) - Fibre-optic cables run all the way to the outside of the property. This is the quickest service, delivering speeds of up to 900Mbps, but it's not widely available.

FTTN (fibre to the node) - Roughly the same as above, only the street cabinet can be further away; up to several km away, with the rest of the distance to the property being covered by regular copper wiring.

LLU - LLU stands for local loop unbundling and applies to ADSL (BT line) internet connections. A 'local loop' is another term for the actual cable through which a user will receive broadband and telephone calls.

SDSL - A symmetric digital subscriber line is a digital subscriber line that transmits digital data over the copper wires of the telephone network, where the bandwidth in the downstream direction, from the network to the subscriber, is identical to the bandwidth in the upstream direction, from the subscriber to the network.

21CN wholesale broadband products - There are two main flavours of 21CN broadband product, which are summarised below:

IPStream Connect - A 21CN variant of the existing IPStream product, with all of the same options and pricing.

Wholesale Broadband Connect (WBC) - The broadband product offers up to 24Mbps ADSL2+, QoS and considerably more flexibility for ISPs. In addition to WBC, there also exists WBMC (Wholesale Broadband Managed Connect) and WBCC (Wholesale Broadband Connect Converge).

Data Ducting Infrastructure for New Homes - Guidance Note, March 2008, Department for Communities and Local Government

The 2008 Data Ducting Infrastructure for New Homes guidance note was primarily replaced by Part R of the Building Regulations, which governs the physical infrastructure for electronic communications. This which came into effect on December 26, 2022.

Approved Document R: Volume 1 (Dwellings): This sets out the statutory standards and introduces Requirements RA1 and RA2, which require new homes to be equipped with gigabit-ready physical infrastructure.

Approved Document R: Volume 2 (Buildings other than dwellings): This covers the requirements for high-speed ready infrastructure in non-residential and major renovation projects.

Key differences in the new regulations

The 2008 guidance note was a voluntary document intended to encourage developers to install ducting. In contrast, the 2022 Approved Document R introduces a mandatory framework with much higher standards in England.

The 2022 Approved Document R (Vol. 2) is the UK Building Regulations guide for installing physical infrastructure for high-speed electronic communications networks in England. It applies to newly built non-residential properties and existing buildings undergoing major renovations.

Key Requirements of Volume 2

Approved Document R, Volume 2 outlines specific rules for digital connectivity and in-building infrastructure:

- **In-Building Infrastructure:** Buildings must be equipped with physical infrastructure (such as ducts, cables, and termination points) that can support high-speed internet.
- **Applicability:** It governs non-domestic buildings (offices, commercial spaces) and mixed-use developments, whereas Volume 1 deals specifically with new dwellings.
- **Speed Standard:** It ensures that buildings are wired and capable of accommodating connection speeds greater than 30 Mbps, with the infrastructure ready to support gigabit-capable networks wherever possible.
- **Access Points:** Requires a common access point or routing system that allows multiple internet service providers to connect to the building without causing disruption.

Other Technical Advice

This presentation by Virgin Media provides an excellent visual guide to how installations should be planned -

https://prod.ctassets.virginmedia.com/uploads/VM_02_Developers_Handbook_V1_67_January_2025_42c252fb6a.pdf

Planning Policies

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, December 2024

10. Supporting high quality communications

119. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).

Regional Policy

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document 2022 - 2039, March 2024, it is stated in Policy JP-C2: Digital Connectivity, Part 2 that;

Requiring all new development to have full fibre to premises connections, unless technically infeasible and/or unviable, and to incorporate multiple-ducting compliant with telecoms standards, to facilitate future-proof gigabit-capable network connections. It is expected that internet connections will be operational and immediately accessible to network providers when occupiers move into new properties

DISCLAIMER

This Report was completed by GTech Surveys Limited on the basis of a defined programme of work and terms and conditions agreed with the Client. We confirm that in preparing this Report we have exercised all reasonable skill and care considering the project objectives, the agreed scope of works, prevailing site conditions and the degree of manpower and resources allocated to the project.

The findings in this document were correct and accurate on the day of draft issue (14th July 2026) but cannot be guaranteed to remain the same for any defined period. This report assumes that there will be changes to telecommunications networks and other surrounding structures, which may result in different broadband technologies becoming unavailable or degraded. GTech Surveys Limited will not be held liable for costs of any requirement to conduct more diagnostic assessments due to changes within the surveyed environment, or due to changes in networks in the study area. BT Openreach information is valid only for 90 days from issue.

GTech Surveys Limited accepts no responsibility to any parties whatsoever, following the issue of the Report, for any matters arising outside the agreed scope of the works. This work was conducted under GTech Surveys Limited's standard terms and conditions which can be found on our website.

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