

West Lothian Local Development Plan 2 Evidence Report

Schedule	24. Digital Infrastructure
<p>Information required by the Act and NPF4 regarding the issue addressed in this section</p>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <p>To set out statutory compliance with the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5) (d) the infrastructure of the district (including communication systems) • e) how that infrastructure is used National Planning Policy 4 (adopted 13 February 2023):National Planning Policy 4 (adopted 13 February 2023): <p>To set out evidence in relation to NPF4 policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPF4 Policy 24: LDPs should support the delivery of digital infrastructure, including fixed line and mobile connectivity, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access. <p>NPF4 Policy 18: LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Plans should: - be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;</p> <p>This schedule aims not to repeat the content of other topics covered by the LDP2 Evidence Report. Other schedules which should be read alongside this schedule on digital infrastructure are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Place Plans
<p>Links to Evidence referenced in this schedule</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFCOM, Connected Nations 2024 • Think Broadband Data Centre

Summary of Evidence

Purpose, scope and structure of this schedule

This schedule focuses on Digital Infrastructure within West Lothian. The schedule and its evidence are set out in the following sections:

1. Broadband
2. Mobile Data

Part 1 – Current Broadband Provision in West Lothian

Current capacity

1.1 The current capacity of broadband provision in West Lothian is as follows:

- Universal Service Obligation Availability 99.9%
- Superfast Broadband Availability – 98.9%
- Ultrafast Broadband Availability – 91.2%
- Gigabit Broadband Availability – 90.3%
- Full Fibre Broadband Availability – 69%

Data from OFCOM Connection Nations 2024.

- Universal Service Obligation defined as 10Mbps+
- Superfast defined as 30 Mbps+
- Ultrafast defined as 100 Mbps+
- Gigabit defined as 1000Mbps+

Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB)

1.2 Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) program provided fibre broadband access to over 22,400 homes and businesses in West Lothian taking coverage from the 73% delivered by commercial only coverage to 96% Superfast Coverage availability. This has now been increased to 98.9% coverage with Superfast availability.

Reaching 100% (R100)

1.3 The Scottish Government's R100 programme continues to rollout in West Lothian with a further 445 premises planned for delivery in 2025 (equivalent to a 0.5% increase in availability for Superfast which should take West Lothian above 99% availability.)

1.4 There remain 895 premises in West Lothian that are not expected to be delivered by R100. These can be divided into:

- 539 premises within existing settlement boundaries – These are expected to be addressed by a combination of data cleansing and commercial delivery although some properties with complex wayleaves may need to be addressed by Project Gigabit.
- 434 premises in rural West Lothian – These properties are not expected to be addressed by commercial coverage. All are eligible for Project Gigabit but the likely coverage rollout in West Lothian is as yet unconfirmed.

Project Gigabit

1.5 Project Gigabit is a UK Government project delivered by Scottish Government and Building Digital UK (BDUK) that aims to roll out Gigabit services across Scotland. All of West Lothian falls into: Call-off 6 lot which covers 96,900 premises in Central and North Scotland. This lot has been awarded to BT Openreach but delivery will not commence until 2025/26.

1.6 An Open Market Review (OMR) process has been carried out to classify premises for eligibility. Overall lot 6 is expected to deliver 96,900 premises but the exact number in West Lothian will be determined as the commercial rollout of Superfast Broadband in West Lothian becomes clearer. It is expected that the combined delivery of commercial operators and Project Gigabit coverage together will increase West Lothian Ultrafast availability to a similar circa 99% level as Superfast

availability by 2030. The council operated nursery provision across West Lothian is currently under review with 9 settings currently under consultation for closure.

Commercial Gigabit Coverage in West Lothian

Openreach - West Lothian Exchanges

Exchange	Premises	Complete	Building now	Building next 12 months	Building in future	Future programme
Armadale	5000				Yes	
Bathgate	12000	Yes				
Broxburn	7000	Yes				
Dechmont	500				Yes	
Fauldhouse	3000	Yes				
Linlithgow	7000		Yes			
Livingston Bridge	11000					TBC
Livingston Station	13000		Yes			
Midcalder	5000			Yes		
Philpstoun	1000				Yes	
Stoneyburn	2000					TBC
West Calder	3000	Yes				
Whitburn	6000	Yes				
Winchburgh	2000				Yes	

Openreach - Exchanges with partial West Lothian coverage

Exchange	Premises	Complete	Building now	Building next 12 months	Building in future	Future programme
Auchengray	<10					TBC
Avonbridge	<50					TBC
Caldercruix	<10				Yes	
Harthill	1000		Yes			
Kirkliston	<100		Yes			
Pentland	<10					TBC
South Queensferry	<100		Yes			

Virgin Media / Altnet Full Fibre coverage in West Lothian

Virgin Media Cable:	62.93%
Openreach FTTP:	60.79%
Alt Net FTTP:	8.56%

Data Source – Think Broadband

<https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/S12000040>

Part 2 – Mobile Data

- 2.1 Coverage Data from OFCOM (Connected Nations 2024) shows that West Lothian has 4G mobile coverage as follows:
- 4G Premises coverage – 99.81%
 - Data Geographic Coverage – 99.86%
- 2.2 With high levels of commercially delivered coverage it is not currently expected that West Lothian will be involved in any schemes to deliver additional capacity such as Shared Rural Network (SRN).

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

This will summarise the steps taken by the planning authority to seek the views of all relevant stakeholders. This will also summarise the views expressed, and explain how they have been taken account of in the Evidence Report.

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

This will include statements from stakeholders highlighting their agreement or the areas they dispute.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

West Lothian has excellent digital infrastructure connectivity which is forecast to improve to near universal coverage.

Existing or future digital infrastructure availability is unlikely to be a significant factor in the site selection process although future developments should continue to ensure availability of excellent digital connectivity across West Lothian.

Based on the evidence the proposed plan is required to:

- Take into account existing digital infrastructure availability
- Ensure potential new digital infrastructure is delivered alongside current and future development sites to ensure sufficient digital infrastructure is in place across West Lothian.