

## **Exclusive poll reveals more than one million Londoners are unhappy with their broadband speed**

**--- Experts warn of threat to London's future competitiveness – and call on next Mayor of London to take action ---**

London 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016:

An independent group of telecommunications professionals with more than 500 years' combined experience today warn that London's broadband infrastructure is so poor it threatens the capital's ability to compete with other global cities in the future.

The warning comes as a new poll by YouGov reveals that a sixth of Londoners are unhappy with their broadband speed (equating to 1.01 million adults in the capital) and that only two thirds rate their broadband service as good. When asked about the capital's capacity to meet future demands, a third overall and just a quarter of those aged 18 to 24 believe the capital is ready to meet future broadband needs, with more than one in six (17%) rate the capital's chances of meeting future broadband needs badly.

The Foundation for Information Society Policy (FISP) said the poll demonstrated that the market had failed businesses and consumers when it came to providing the infrastructure needed to provide high-speed, future-proofed broadband services, which are already up and running in dozens of cities around the world.

**David Brunnen, FISP member and an independent telecoms infrastructure expert, says:**

*“Demand for broadband capacity in London is growing rapidly, but the capital's broadband, based largely on old networks of copper wires, has a limited future. This dangerous situation will diminish economic and societal growth in the future, unless London's incoming mayor is able and willing to take drastic action.*”

*“Slow broadband has a particularly negative impact on those who are trying to work flexibly from home, and on small businesses and start-ups based in people's homes and reliant on speedy internet to run successful operations.*”

*“Hundreds of thousands of Londoners are already unhappy with their broadband – and unless quick action is taken to support growth and encourage investment, there will be serious repercussions in the near future.”*

FISP is challenging London's mayoral candidates to create a new infrastructure agency – Digital for Londoners (DfL) – dedicated to making London a 'Gigabit City' by 2020.

A Gigabit City would allow all homes and businesses download and upload speeds of 1,000 megabits per second. This would be a first step towards the Institute of Directors' call for 10 Gigabit services by 2030 and is essential for future 5G mobile plans. <sup>Note 4.1</sup>

There are more than 100 Gigabit operations worldwide and, across Europe, countries and capital cities competing for investment with London have both future-proofed fibre connections and access to gigabit speeds. <sup>Note 4.2</sup> **In the UK more than 20 cities are already on track for Gigabit City status but London is not amongst them.**

**Dan Lewis, Senior Advisor, Infrastructure Policy, Institute of Directors, said:**

*"There must be greater ambition. Our digital infrastructure needs improvement now, but that is not enough. We must attempt to future-proof it for increased demand."*

<sup>Note 4.3</sup>

**Mark Boleat, Chair, City of London Policy and Resources Committee, said:**

*"London is a leading world City but we are poorly connected - we must work towards London as a true 'Gigabit City'."* <sup>Note 4.4</sup>

**Sue Terpilowski OBE, London Policy Chairman, Federation of Small Businesses, said:**

*"Digital connectivity is critical for small businesses in the capital. Nearly a third of our members said that broadband was one of their top three priorities for the new Mayor. There is an expectation that connections are excellent across the capital, but our members report significant frustration with widespread 'not spots' and broadband speeds that are lower than in many rural areas"*

**Councillor Jonathan Glanz, Westminster Council, said:**

*"Residents and businesses from Maida Vale to Victoria Square via Marylebone and Soho are amazed that they cannot receive superfast broadband in the heart of London. Their frustration at the lack of clarity, the pace of progress and the unambitious targets which fail to take account of future demand leaves them unable to comprehend why the market cannot or will not provide them with cost effective and affordable superfast or ultrafast broadband connectivity."*

A **Digital for Londoners** agency achieving Gigabit City capabilities will:

- Enhance the lives of Londoners (and their children) and all who work in London
- Boost London's resilience and its future economy.
- Direct infrastructure providers and investors towards long-term objectives
- Energize London Boroughs to simplify planning processes for all providers.
- Reduce administrative costs and improve services for all public sector agencies

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More information is available at [www.digitalforlondoners.co.uk](http://www.digitalforlondoners.co.uk) or by calling David Brunnen on 07714 325 657.

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. FISP identifies three key principles that should govern the creation of a publicly-owned Digital for Londoners Agency.

### Principle 1 – Municipal Enterprise

In the same way that Transport for London is a large-scale, globally-admired example of Municipal Enterprise, with an ability to raise long-term infrastructure investment funds, so ‘Digital for Londoners’ (DfL) would provide the stimulus to finance the replacement of broadband infrastructure through shared public-private ventures.

### Principle 2 – Infrastructure Design

DfL should facilitate an ‘open access’ new digital infrastructure, creating a distinction between the *utility* of the infrastructure, and the many *competitive* services that run across those connections. This principle saves unnecessary duplication of investment, while retaining competition.

### Principle 3 – Authority

Working in partnership with Ofcom in its national regulatory oversight DfL must interpret and shape local standards and expectations to meet Londoners’ specific future requirements. The mayoral role should embrace this essential lever of the economy for the benefit of London’s commerce and citizens including controlling low cost access rights for 5G antenna on all public structures across the capital.

## 2. Interview opportunities

A number of case studies of consumers and businesses affected by poor broadband in London are available, with independent contributors available for interview. Please find these attached at Annex A.

3. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,167 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 22nd - 28th March 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all London adults (aged 18+).

“Thinking about London’s broadband service, how would you rate each of the following?”

- broadband service generally
- speed of their broadband
- London’s ability to meet future broadband needs

There are 6.6 million Londoners aged 18+\* and internet penetration in London is 90%\*\* which equates to 6 million London adults online. The YouGov polling suggests 17% of online Londoners aged 18+ rate their broadband speed as bad or very bad, which equates to 1,009,800 London adults.

\*source: ONS population estimates

\*\*source: ONS Internet Access Quarterly Update (Q1 2014)

## 4. References:

4.1 “5G success will depend upon being able to put millions of small antenna across London on public structures whilst holding the total site rent bill constant (otherwise consumer

mobile subscriptions will rocket). Getting London from a mobile site model featuring 10's of thousands of mobile base stations antennas with a high rent per antenna to tens of millions of small antenna with a very low rent per antenna will be the crucial difference between Londoners being able to get their 1 Gb/s everywhere or Londoners keep falling over data speed cliff edges everywhere." Stephen Temple, visiting Professor at the University of Surrey 5G Innovation Centre.

4.2 "In the US, 10Gb/s residential services are already available with every State moving to have a 'Gigabit' city and there are more than 100 gigabit operations worldwide. In Europe, countries and capital cities competing for investment with London have both fibre connections and access to Gigabit speeds becoming commonplace - nearly 11 million FTTH homes in Spain, Sweden enjoying 100Mb/s services since 2005, Gigabit fibre speeds available to all in Luxembourg by 2020 and Ireland is rolling out fibre to 700,000 homes," Richard Jones, CCO VenturaTeam.

4.3 [Ultrafast Britain Broadband Report](#), Institute of Directors. Compared to other European cities, "London ranks just 12th in Europe on the quality of its 'digital infrastructure,' 26th for download/upload speeds and 28th for mobile internet." (Page 6 and Table 3)

4.4. Mark Boleat quoted from [Connected Property Seminar](#), City Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016

5. The **Foundation for Information Society Policy** (FISP) is a not-for-profit think tank that is not aligned with political parties, communications & network providers or any other significant commercial interests in technologies, products and services. It was formed in 2012 and exists to formulate inputs for policy and regulatory development with the overriding objective of encouraging maturity in the digitalised economy – our 'Information Society'. FISP speaks with an authority derived from the guidance of experienced voices and is driven by a realisation of the UK's economic dependence on the functionality and performance of digital networks. More details at [www.fisp.org.uk](http://www.fisp.org.uk)