



MARK GARNIER MP
Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Michael

19 September 2023

I recently met with a 100 or members of my local community who are about to have superfast broadband delivered to their homes. Whilst they welcome the broadband, the circumstances under which it will be delivered is causing unrest.

Because their specific neighbourhoods have neither existing telegraph poles, nor ducting connecting their homes to the local, existing BT Openreach infrastructure (they were connected on the cheap when their homes were built), the local broadband infrastructure provider is proposing to erect poles throughout their neighbourhoods to connect their homes.

The estates in question were built without poles and so the erection of poles will have a detrimental effect on the ambience of the communities. Indeed, in some cases, there are planning restrictions on hedges and fences in front of houses, in order to maintain the open nature of the local development. As I am sure you can imagine, there is local anger at the broadband cabling provider being able to ignore local planning restrictions through the use of the planning concession that allows them to erect these poles without any planning permission whatsoever.

We have been advised that it is possible, but costly, to instal underground ducts to each and every property concerned. The community appears to be in agreement that they would be prepared to put up with some local disruption in order to secure underground ducts to avoid overhead blight.

The community has asked that I explore whether there is a fund available to bid from in order to maintain the local ambience. I would be grateful, therefore, if you could advise on what funding may be available to help the communities in my constituency that are affected by this peculiar and unique problem.

With best wishes,

Mark

Mark Garnier MP
Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest