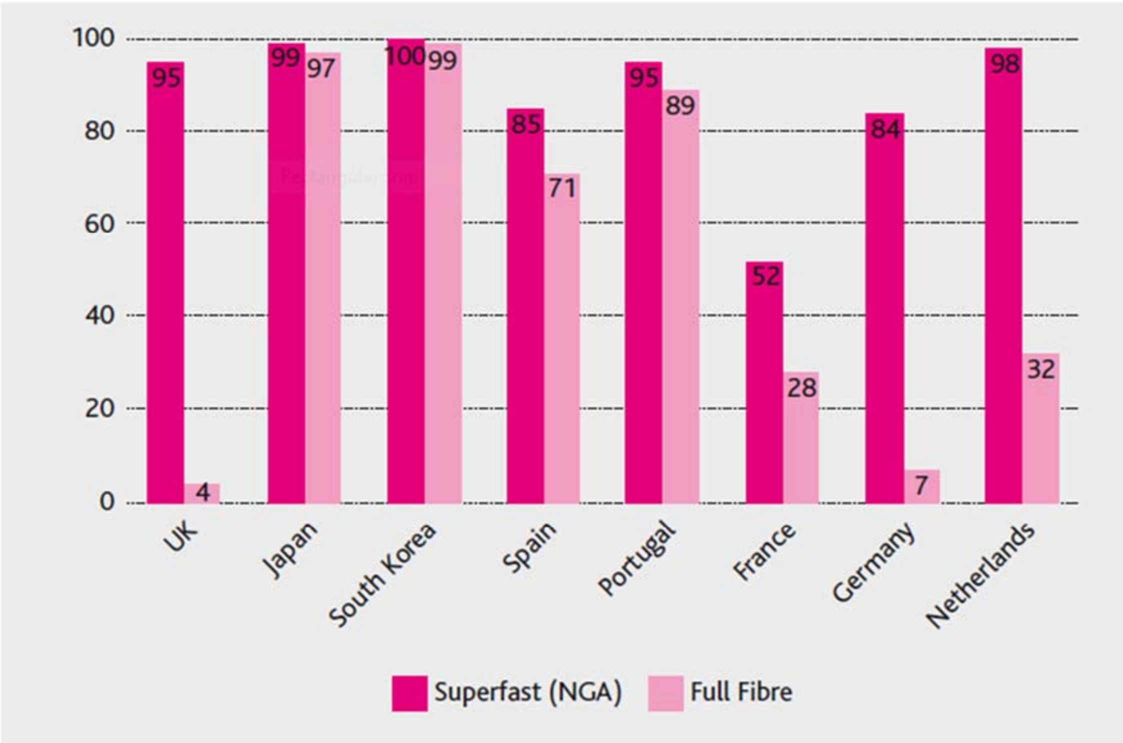
Appendix C Full Fibre coverage in the UK, national and local initiatives

Full Fibre Coverage in the UK

The table below is taken from the Government's Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR, published July 2018) and shows how UK provision of superfast and full fibre broadband compares internationally. Since this table was published there has been activity by market operators and the latest Ofcom Connected Nations update report (October 2018) estimates that 5% of UK premises now have full fibre availability.

Increased activity by market operators is welcome but on its own will be unlikely to deliver coverage at rates enjoyed elsewhere in the near future. Research commissioned to support the FTIR suggests that without any external factors (e.g. Government or other funding sources) full fibre networks will at best only ever reach three quarters of the country and will take more than 20 years to do so (FTIR, p24)

Figure 2: How UK compares internationally on superfast and full fibre broadband (as %)



Source: Ofcom (2017), 'International Communications Market Report; Ofcom (2018), 'Connected Nations Update'; European Commission (2018), 'Study on Broadband Coverage in Europe'

Actions to support Full Fibre Rollout at National and Local Level

Actions to support full fibre roll out

Government:

- The £400 million Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund will unlock over £1 billion for full fibre broadband, and kick-start better broadband connections across the country.
- The £200 million Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Challenge Fund is open for local bodies to bid into, to stimulate commercial investment in full fibre networks in both rural and urban locations across the UK.
- A further £67 million will fund the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme for small businesses and the local communities to contribute to the cost of fibre installation.
- Funding of £35 million to deploy fibre and 5G connectivity along the Trans-Pennine Rail route.
- Five year business rates relief on full fibre investments.

Ofcom:

- Facilitating market entry by making it cheaper and easier for network competitors to reuse BT's existing network of underground ducts and telegraph poles.
- Reform of Openreach to a legally separate entity, with a greater openness to different models of investment and risk sharing, and stronger incentives to be responsive to all its customers, including in its consideration of technology investment choices.
- Continuing pricing flexibility for BT's wholesale services with speeds above 40 Mbps to support incentives to invest in fibre network build.
- Maintaining access and pricing controls on Openreach copper network to protect consumers in the transition to greater network competition.

Leeds City Council:

- Engagement with market operators – Virgin Media, Openreach and CityFibre to understand their investment plans for the city and make them aware of our priority investment locations.
- Exploring options around using LCC full fibre requirement to deliver new full fibre network build in the district.
- Engagement with Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) around funding opportunities within their Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme. There is a West Yorkshire (WCYA) dimension to these discussions.
- Consider options for including building of new duct capacity (capable of carrying fibre optic cable) into LCC infrastructure schemes such as DHN, ELOR etc.
- Use Smart Cities governance structures to share information and make links across service areas to maximise the opportunities presented by potential digital infrastructure investments.