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Dear Sirs

Strategic Review of Digital Communications

We welcome your consultation entitled 'Strategic Review of Digital Communications' (Closing date 8th October) and are pleased to respond. A good number of topics within it relate more widely to the communications industry and are beyond our expertise however, the provision of effective and timely broadband connections to our customers is of paramount importance to us and something to which we have applied great effort. This is particularly covered by question 14 of your consultation to which we respond as follows:-

Q14: Are there wider concerns relating to good consumer outcomes that may suggest the need for a new regulatory approach to Openreach?

A14: The current model of Openreach as a regulated but commercial organisation does not work as there are conflicting objectives. In particular the universal service obligation is out of date and should be modified to include super-fast broadband. This in itself would necessitate a wholesale amendment to the financial model under which Openreach operates. Without this, Openreach will seek to fulfil the current legal universal service obligation for copper telephone lines and invest in super-fast broadband only where the existing commercial arrangements are viable. Clearly the existing model is not viable enough in order to stimulate the level of investment that government require. This lack of investment is leading to poor consumer outcomes as new homeowners are often left with no fixed line digital communications for months and very often, poor broadband speeds thereafter.

Linden Homes has taken every opportunity to engage with Openreach, government and the HBF on the topic of broadband and prepared a paper with our own suggested policy interventions which was submitted to Ed Vaizey at DCMS. A copy of that paper is attached to this letter and forms part of this response to your consultation.

We hope that this information is useful.

Yours sincerely



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Group Technical Director