

## Digital infrastructure responses in Questionnaire

Digital infrastructure. Digital Infrastructure is the essential foundation of hardware, software, networks and data centres that enables digital services like the internet to help people and businesses. One example is fibre optic cable.

### Summary of Responses

#### 1) Overall sentiment: “Generally good, but uneven”

Most respondents feel digital connectivity in Balerno is **already decent or good**, especially where **fibre broadband** is available. However, this is **not consistent across all areas**.

- Many: “fine”, “satisfactory”, “already good”
- But: specific areas report **slower speeds or gaps** (e.g. outskirts, certain streets)

☞ **Takeaway:** The issue is less about starting from scratch and more about **closing gaps and improving consistency**.

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#### 2) Strong demand for full fibre coverage

The most common request by far:

- “Full fibre across all areas”
- “Fibre for all residents”
- “Extend availability”
- Mentions of missed areas (e.g. Glenbrook, Harlaw Road)

☞ **Takeaway:** Residents want **universal, not partial, high-speed access**.

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#### 3) Mobile coverage is patchy

A major secondary issue:

- “Patchy signal”
- “Better 4G/5G”
- “Decent mobile signal needed”

☞ **Takeaway:** Even where broadband is good, **mobile connectivity is unreliable**.

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#### 4) Reliability matters as much as speed

People highlighted:

- Dropouts (internet, electricity, storms)
- Interruptions with certain providers

☞ **Takeaway:** **Consistency and resilience** are just as important as faster speeds.

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#### 5) Frustration with roadworks & disruption

One of the most repeated complaints:

- “Roads constantly being dug up”
- “Poor reinstatement”
- “Repeated works by different providers”

☞ **Takeaway:** Infrastructure rollout is seen as **poorly coordinated and disruptive**.

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#### 6) Desire for more choice and competition

Some residents noted:

- Over-reliance on certain providers (e.g. Virgin)
- Desire for **more ISP choice**

☞ **Takeaway:** Competition is linked to **better service quality and reliability**.

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#### 7) Interest in public / shared connectivity

Less common but present:

- Public WiFi in village centre
- Community access points

☞ **Takeaway:** There’s **moderate support for shared/public digital spaces**.

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#### 8) Environmental concerns

A notable minority raised concerns about:

- Impact on countryside
- Visual clutter (masts, infrastructure)
- Opposition to data centres

☞ **Takeaway:** Improvements must be **sensitive to Balerno's semi-rural character**.

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### 9) A minority think it's not a priority

Some responses:

- "Focus on real-world infrastructure instead"
- "Not high priority"

☞ **Takeaway:** Digital upgrades should be **balanced with other community needs**.

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### Key Themes (Condensed)

1. **Finish the job** → full fibre everywhere
  2. **Fix the gaps** → mobile coverage & rural edges
  3. **Improve reliability** → fewer outages
  4. **Coordinate works** → stop repeated road digging
  5. **Increase choice** → more providers
  6. **Protect environment** → careful planning
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### Proposals (Actionable Recommendations)

#### 1) Universal Full Fibre Programme

- Ensure **100% fibre coverage across Balerno**
- Prioritise **currently underserved streets and outskirts**
- Require providers to publish **clear rollout timelines**

☞ Outcome: Eliminates inequality in access

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#### 2) Mobile Coverage Improvement Plan

- Work with telecom providers to:
  - Identify **signal "black spots"**
  - Install **targeted small-scale masts or boosters**
- Encourage **infrastructure sharing** between networks

☞ Outcome: Better everyday connectivity without excessive new structures

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#### 3) "Dig Once" Infrastructure Policy

Introduce a local policy requiring:

- **Coordination between providers**
- Shared trenching and ducts
- Alignment with **road resurfacing schedules**
- Stronger standards for **road/pavement reinstatement**

☞ Outcome: Less disruption, lower costs, better public satisfaction

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#### 4) Reliability & Resilience Standards

- Encourage/require providers to:
  - Improve **network redundancy**
  - Harden infrastructure against **weather disruptions**
- Explore backup solutions for vulnerable areas

☞ Outcome: Fewer outages and more dependable service

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#### 5) Increase Market Competition

- Support infrastructure like **open-access fibre networks**
- Make it easier for **multiple ISPs to operate locally**

☞ Outcome: Better pricing, service quality, and innovation

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#### 6) Targeted Public WiFi Zones

- Introduce **free public WiFi** in:
  - Village centre
  - Community hubs

👉 Outcome: Supports local businesses and accessibility

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### 7) Environmentally Sensitive Rollout Guidelines

- Underground cabling where possible
- Careful placement of masts
- Avoid large-scale developments like data centres

👉 Outcome: Maintains village character while upgrading infrastructure

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### 8) Ongoing Upgrade Commitment

- Ensure infrastructure keeps pace with future tech (5G → 6G → beyond)
- Regular review every 5 years

👉 Outcome: Future-proofing without overbuilding

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### Bottom line

Balerno doesn't need a digital overhaul—it needs **targeted, coordinated upgrades**:

- **Finish fibre rollout**
- **Fix mobile gaps**
- **Improve reliability**
- **Stop messy infrastructure works**