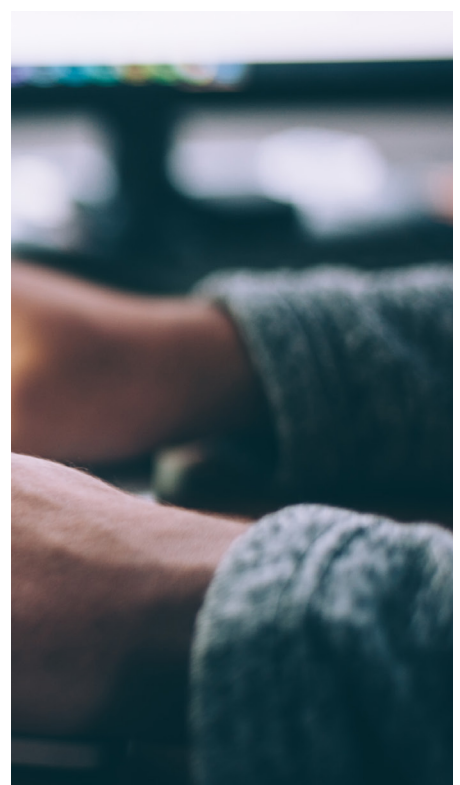
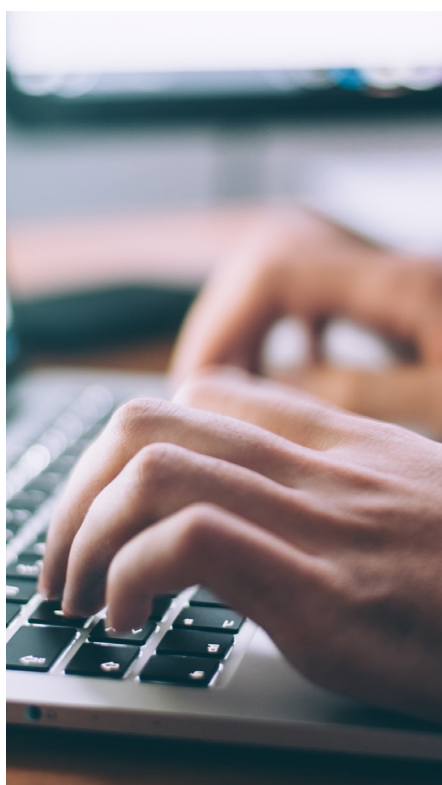
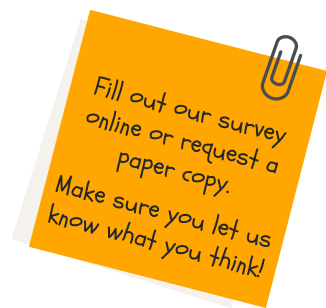


Access to new technologies and digital communications

5.1 The government has an ambitious target for all parts of the country to have full fibre broadband coverage by 2033 and for the majority of the population to have 5G coverage by 2027⁸. Digital connectivity such as broadband and mobile phone coverage that allows a wireless internet access provides a vital platform for social interaction and well-being. Poor broadband or wireless internet access can be a significant barrier to growth for businesses, and the future competitiveness of Mid Devon and its towns and villages will be influenced by the quality and capacity of digital infrastructure. A key consideration in future proofing development will be to make sure ducting is provided, which is open access (open to all fibre providers of a broadband service) and is suitable for and includes full fibre connections to each building. This ducting should have capacity for multi-operator fibre to encourage competition, and give choice for consumers. Other considerations include coordinating the provision of digital infrastructure with development, and with highway and utilities improvements (i.e. 'dig once'), and the speed of digital connectivity.





5.2 Digital infrastructure will be key to help economic growth and prosperity, supporting employment, education and social opportunities. Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS), a Government funded and local government-led partnership programme has helped with broadband rollout across Mid Devon, which has a goal of bring connectivity and opportunities to more isolated homes, businesses and communities. However Mid Devon still has some of the most digitally isolated areas in the whole of the UK in terms of broadband speeds and coverage, which is mostly due to the highly rural nature of the area. In comparison to other local authority areas in Devon, Mid Devon has 20.8% of connections less than 30MB, the highest percentage in the CDS areas, in comparison to 10.16% in East Devon, 10.9% in Teignbridge and 3.6% in Exeter City⁹.

5.3 During the Covid-19 pandemic, restrictions were placed by national government on the nation to help reduce the spread of the disease, which included the encouragement of home working and a range of social restrictions. Many depended on digital connectivity as a replacement for their day to day work, and connecting with friends and family where physical contact was not possible. This brought to the foreground the importance of digital communications but also highlighted the inequalities faced by some communities in accessing digital connectivity.

Scan our QR code to access our online survey or visit middevon.gov.uk



If you require a printed version of our questions please call **01884 255255** or email us at planmiddevon@middevon.gov.uk

Question 9

Which new technologies and/or digital communications are most important to you and you think we should encourage/support through the new Local Plan?

- **Fibre broadband connection to new premises (Yes/No)**
- **Wireless internet access (Yes/No)**
- **Satellite signal (Yes/No)**
- **Other (Please state what this is)**

