

Giggle Fibre Response to Community Concerns

Dear Residents,

Following our recent meeting with your local MP, Mr. Richard Burgon, Giggle Fibre would like to address the concerns raised on behalf of his constituents regarding our infrastructure plans in Garforth.

1. Clarification on Previous Agreements

Giggle Fibre is a distinct legal entity separate from Spring Fibre and is not bound by any agreements they may have made. Our approach is based on the most feasible and sustainable infrastructure deployment within the regulatory framework.

2. Impact of Telegraph Poles on the Community

We understand the concerns regarding the installation of telegraph poles and their potential impact on the local area. We appreciate the opportunity to provide some context around our approach and the challenges we have encountered in delivering high-speed broadband to the community.

According to recent research and reports from estate agents having gigabit connectivity (or "full fibre" broadband) can significantly increase the value of your home. Fast internet is now considered a key feature for many potential buyers especially with the rise of remote work and streaming entertainment; Studies suggest it can add several thousand pounds to a property's value.

As a collective of local companies based in Micklefield, employing approximately 80 local residents, we have been working on this project for over a year. Throughout this process, we have carefully considered all available options to minimise disruption while ensuring reliable and future-proof connectivity. Our priority is to utilise existing infrastructure wherever possible to reduce the need for trench excavation, footpath closures, roadworks, and diversions.

In some areas, we have successfully collaborated with Openreach to share infrastructure. However, much of the existing underground network in East Garforth, which was installed in the 1970s, consists of direct-buried cables without suitable ducting. This makes it impractical for shared use and significantly limits alternative installation methods.

Additionally, previous installations by a different Statutory Undertaker have presented further challenges. Unfortunately, some of their network was not installed in line with their own specifications, industry standards, or The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. This has led to multiple instances of damage, resulting in legal disputes over repair costs. Given these risks, the only viable solution to complete the network build in this area is the installation of new telegraph poles.

The below images are examples of the damage caused whilst using a mechanical saw to cut the surface of the footways.



We understand that overhead infrastructure may not be the preferred solution for all residents, and we sincerely appreciate your feedback. Our goal remains to provide high-quality broadband access while working as considerately as possible within the constraints of the existing infrastructure and regulatory framework.

Installing fibre via telegraph poles is a well-established, efficient, minimally disruptive method with a low environmental impact. While we understand that some residents would prefer an underground network, as demonstrated, this approach presents considerable challenges. The risk of damaging existing underground utilities, many of which have not been installed to industry standards, is too high to make this a practical method of deploying the network

Regarding the planned pole locations, the sites were selected following thorough site visits and careful planning. The process used adheres to the Cabinet Siting and Pole Siting Code of Practice. Through this process we have managed to reduce the number of planned poles from 487 to 262 poles in the entirety of Garforth, Kippax and Allerton Bywater in Garforth

3. Moratorium on Telegraph Pole Installations

As requested by Mr Burgon and Leeds Highways, we placed a moratorium on pole installations pending discussions with Mr. Burgon. Following this meeting, we will now proceed with our infrastructure deployment in compliance with all UK legislation. This is not an uncontrolled expansion but a necessary and engineered solution to complete the network given the challenges presented by the existing infrastructure.

4. Public Engagement and Meetings

Giggle Fibre remains committed to constructive dialogue. While our senior leadership team participated in the previous public meeting, we acknowledge that at times it became unstructured, limiting productive discussion.

We have proactively reached out to your local councillor for a one-on-one meeting, which has not yet been accepted. To ensure meaningful engagement, we will continue to consult affected residents on a case-by-case basis, as each location presents unique circumstances.

Additionally, we propose the following steps:

- Arranging a meeting with affected residents and a senior Giggle Fibre representative to clarify our approach and explore potential mitigations.
- Establishing a working group of approximately five residents to facilitate discussions and improve communication.
- Scheduling bi-weekly meetings to address emerging concerns and maintain transparency.

5. Consideration of Underground Installation

We acknowledge the request for a full underground installation, as was previously discussed with Spring Fibre. However, it is important to note that at no stage did Spring Fibre commit to an entirely underground network, please see the Spring Fibre statement below

Following the feedback received, we have placed a temporary halt on pole installations in Garforth while we assess all options, including:

- 1. Proceeding with the planned pole installations (though we recognise this is not a preferred option for many residents).*
- 2. Implementing a hybrid solution with fewer poles and selective underground deployment to minimize direct property impact.*
- 3. A full underground solution, which significantly increases costs and affects service affordability.*
- 4. We abandon our plans for full fibre internet to Garforth – and we consider options on the asset we have already built to another provider*

6. Permitted Development Rights and Infrastructure Planning

The current permitted development rights allow telecommunications providers to expedite broadband deployment without the extended delays of local planning processes. However, this does not equate to an uncontrolled proliferation of infrastructure. Our approach aligns with national policy objectives to improve digital connectivity while ensuring compliance with all necessary regulations.

Giggle Fibre remains open to continued discussions with residents and local representatives to balance community concerns with the need for modern, high-speed broadband infrastructure.

We appreciate your feedback and look forward to working together

For further inquiries, please contact:

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<https://www.gigglefibre.co.uk/contact>