

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

17 July 2013

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 LOCAL BROADBAND SERVICES

Presentation from George Chandler (KCC) to provide an update on the provision of enhanced broadband services for Kent.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Kent County Council is working with the Government's broadband agency, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), to bring better broadband to Kent. KCC have signed a contract with BT to build the network. The roll out plans will mean that:

- At least 95% of all properties in Kent will have access to higher-speed fibre broadband by the end of 2015;
- Every property in the project area will be able to access a broadband service of at least 2mbps and
- A minimum of 91% of premises will get superfast broadband of at least 24mbps

1.2 Areas of need within the Borough

1.2.1 Broadband infrastructure is essential for economic growth and efficient service delivery, yet there are some more rural areas within the borough that currently have poor broadband access and do not benefit from either superfast or basic broadband. Annex 1 shows the current level of broadband service within Tonbridge and Malling. Following the roll out, the map should not show any red areas (currently sub 2Mbps) and many other areas should also gain improved services. Some of the green areas on the map (those currently receiving superfast broadband) may not receive any additional investment as they already receive a good level of service.

1.3 Current progress and timescale of project

1.3.1 Planning and survey work is currently underway, which involves the Openreach (BT's local network business) team:

- Carrying out a full assessment of the existing infrastructure in the project area
- Planning where new equipment will go within BT's telephone exchanges
- Designing the network
- Surveying underground ducts
- Identifying the optimal location for the new fibre street cabinets and over-ground equipment

1.3.2 The survey work will allow them to confirm deployment plans and share rollout information. It will not be possible to confirm the geographical phasing of the rollout until the survey/planning work for each phase has been undertaken and an implementation plan has been finalised with BT, however they can confirm:

- The build will start later this year
- The first communities to benefit from this project will be able to order services in early 2014
- They are aiming for services to be available to all properties by the end of 2015

1.4 Local Initiatives

1.4.1 There are currently some independent local initiatives that have arisen. "Ultrafast Underriver" which aims to improve internet speed in Underriver and the surrounding areas. Within Tonbridge and Malling this is likely to affect areas around Shipbourne, Plaxtol and Ightham. The group is trying to encourage "Gigaclear" an internet service provider, to move into the area. Gigaclear offer fibre cables direct to houses rather than street side cabinets, however they require commitment from residents before they will provide the infrastructure – at the moment the latest report suggests they are 60% of the way to getting 190 commitments needed to sign up to the service.

1.4.2 An additional initiative has developed in Kemsing, where "Call Flow Solutions" have installed transmitters capable of delivering speeds of 20 Mbps – although the transmitters are situated out of the borough the transmitters can provide coverage as far as Ightham.

Background papers:

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Nil

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Chief Executive