



Superfast Broadband in North Dorset
Community Partnerships Executive for North Dorset (CPEND)
Council Chamber, Nordon, NDDC offices, Blandford
Friday 17th October 2014

Present:

Steve Adamson (DT11 Forum), Cllr Pauline Batstone (Lydden Vale), Mike Burt (Okeford Fitzpaine), Richard Choat (COUBA), Ryder Cowan (Stours PC), Simon Firbank (DAPTC), Deanne Foot (Durweston PC), John Goode (Tarrant Monkton & Launceston PC), Mark Hebditch (Three Rivers Partnership), Mike Jones (Iwerne Minster PC), Steve Keenan (Kington Magna PC), Scott Norman (Stourpaine PC), John Parker (Stours PC), Allan Peters (SturQuest), Cllr Val Potheary (NDDC), Ian Lee (South Tarrant PC), Charlotte Moody, Elizabeth Sellen (Milton Abbas PC), Mike Lawson (Marnhull PC), Jim Hayward (Digital Champion), Mike Scott (Steria), David Shepherd (Sturminster Community Learning Centre), Chris Spackman (Sturminster Neighbourhood Plan Group), Ian Watson (Iwerne Minster PC), Chris Wildey (Buckhorn Weston PC), Malcolm Wilson (Hazelbury Bryan PC), Keith Yarwood (Stourpaine), Stephen Hill, John Hammond, Hugh de longh & Susan Sullivan (all NDDC).

1. Apologies.

Cllr Hilary Cox (DCC), Clive Carter (Shaftesbury Chamber of Commerce), David Griffin-Shephard & John Parker (Shaftesbury District Task Force), Andrew Cattaway (DCC), Simon Thompson (DCA)

2. Superfast Broadband

Nic Nicol welcomed all to the meeting. He introduced the Dorset Superfast Broadband team, comprising:

- Dugald Lockhart, Project Lead, Superfast Dorset
- Paul Coles, Regional Director, BT Group
- Grant Munn, Programme Manager, BT Group
- Andrew Cadman, Senior Project Manager, Openreach
- Penny Syddall, Senior Communications Officer, Superfast Dorset

Superfast Broadband presentation

The Superfast team gave a presentation of the roll-out of superfast Broadband in North Dorset. The Powerpoint presentation is available at <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/398134> (note: it is at the bottom of this webpage under 'Minutes of CPEND Meetings', in two parts as it is a large document). The main points of the presentation were as follows:

Phase 3 of the Dorset Superfast broadband programme is focusing on North Dorset, improving internet speeds to communities in the telephone exchange areas of Blandford, Bourton, Child Okeford, Fontmell Magna, Gillingham, Hazelbury Bryan, Marnhull, Milton Abbas, Shaftesbury & Sturminster Newton. Work on this phase has already started, and is anticipated this phase will be completed by Easter 2015. Much of the towns of Blandford, Shaftesbury and Gillingham have already been upgraded through private sector investment.

This will provide improved speeds of a target of more than 24Mbps, with a minimum level of at least 2Mbps. In many areas of the roll-out elsewhere in Dorset, higher speeds than 24Mbps have been

achieved. This programme works by mainly implementing Fibre to the Cabinet (FttC), i.e. with fibre-optics from the exchange to the cabinet, speeds are increased, but the section to the premises remains the existing telephone wire, which limits the overall speeds which can be achieved. This programme is also implementing some Fibre to the Premises (FttP), which achieves much higher speeds, but is significantly more expensive to install.

Because of the complexity of the engineering and technical work in the roll-out, and the need for flexibility, the programme doesn't set out an exact timetable. However, the Superfast Broadband team will hold open meetings in an area as works starts, there will be updated information available on the website at www.dorsetforyou.com/superfast, and everyone is encouraged to register to receive an email when your area has been upgraded and a fibre-optic based service available.

There will be further Phases, with the target that by September 2016, 95% of premises across Dorset, Bournemouth & Poole will have access to superfast broadband at at least 24Mbps, and 100% with access to at least 2Mbps. The map at <http://mapping.dorsetforyou.com/superfast/availability/map> gives more information on the phasing & timing and is updated periodically.

There are some areas which will not get Superfast Broadband through the current programme, but the programme as a whole will deliver a step change in availability and connectivity for the vast majority in North Dorset.

Once the infrastructure has been put in place, it is available for all broadband providers to use; it is not restricted to BT.

Superfast broadband is only the infrastructure, and is of no benefit if not used. There is a programme to stimulate demand, increasing useage and uptake of the faster broadband. On the business side, this is through Superfast Business support programme, and Dorset Business Women Go Digital. On the community side, it is through Digital Champions, digital inclusion work, etc. The greater the uptake, the more the programme can re-invest to achieve more.

Superfast Broadband is funded by a combination of funding from Local authorities (NDDC and DCC for the North Dorset area), Central government and private sector investment by BT.

3. Questions.

Following the presentation, there were wide ranging questions. For the minutes, these are clustered into similar issues, as follows:

Setting priorities

How are priorities on which communities to start with made, e.g. Sturminster & the North Dorset Business Park. DL outlined that the aim was primarily to achieve the highest number of properties across Dorset as quickly as possible. If there is a large community, and there are significant problems in connecting, e.g. as was the case with Bridport, the programme will try and link that community up early.

Delivery of the programme will significantly increase availability to businesses as well as the community in general.

MH suggested there should be a strong focus on business estates & premises to support economic growth, a view reflected by many others at the meeting. DL said that in their experience take up wasn't significantly high on business parks & commercial areas. He is also fully aware of the North Dorset Business Park issue.

Proportionality of roll-out

There were figures of the numbers of premises that would receive superfast broadband at different stages, e.g. 9,000 & 17,000, but no overall figure of existing premises to be able to say what proportion of premises are benefiting. DL agreed to provide the total number of existing premises – this has previously been provided to the district council.

Community influence on the programme

Can local communities influence the programme? Not in terms of the roll-out, but can help with working on local difficulties.

Can communities come up with their own solutions, e.g. microwave point to point. Some communities are working direct with BT, with the possibility of looking at very local solutions.

Managing expectations & information

How to manage expectations; in some places there may be genuine technical limitations and limitations on the overall budget, so how can the Parish Council manage expectations? DL suggested to use the postcode mapping tool to look at a very local level, and if its not clear, then contact the Superfast Broadband team for more detailed info. Best if contact is through Parish Council rather than individuals so the information is then available to the whole community. At a practical level, if a cabinet is being worked on, then that cabinet is likely to come on-stream in the next few months.

As Cabinets are set up by the technicians, the guys doing the work are constantly being asked about when the service will start locally, but they don't always know. Is there a solution to this? The OpenReach answer is that this is a problem, as the technicians won't always know, and the best way to keep up to speed is by using existing communication, i.e. postcode checker, email update, local meetings organised by the SuperFast Broadband team

Uptake.

If you have superfast Broadband provided to your premises, your service will not automatically improve. Consumers need to contact their ISP to change to the higher service, which will normally be a monthly uplift of £4-5. The Openreach infrastructure means that any ISP provider can provide a premises with a service, so when an area is enabled with superfast Broadband, providers normally contact all premises in the area to offer their services if people want to upgrade.

Uptake rates nationally are around 17%, for the Dorset commercial broadband programme are around 19% and in some of the newly enabled areas in Dorset this is above 30% already.

Trailway Broadband project & Stourpaine

SN said that through the Trailway Broadband programme, Stourpaine and other villages along the Trailway could have had 100 mbp, and instead, under the Superfast Broadband programme, part of his parish of Stourpaine gets some superfast soon, and the second gets very little much later. He is deeply disappointed by this.

Areas not being served by the Superfast programme.

How will the 'not have' areas (originally termed white areas, now yellow on the map) be tackled. DL outlined two ways:

- Pushing the boundaries of what can be done within the existing programme, which in other areas has achieved more than originally anticipated in some areas
- The County Council are going through a procurement process at the moment for further work focused on the 'not have' areas, although this will not ultimately serve every property if very isolated

New development

New development, e.g. Gillingham, will this be served? DL clarified that the programme is for existing premises only and not new premises, which have no automatic right to have superfast broadband infrastructure. The decision is for the developer to make, and land use planners should encourage developers to provide the infrastructure as essential, although unfortunately it is not statutory for broadband to be included as infrastructure in new development.

Technical queries

- SA asked how the programme measures the speeds delivered. DL explained that the programme works to the national framework, which has an agreed approach in the framework of what we measure & how. The actual speed may vary for a number of reasons, some internally to the premises, some external, e.g. other use in the immediate area.
- Buckhorn Weston has exchanges across in Somerset, does this create any problems? No, the programme work to the technical solution, so will work to the exchange which serves the area best, if within the County or across the boundary.
- What are the solutions if there are no cabinets in very rural areas? There is an Exchange Only (EO) solution, with fibre-optic lines from an exchange along the poles to a new cabinet in the very rural area. Or building additional cabinets and rearranging the existing copper network.
- TV white space. TV white space can be used for specific purposes, e.g. machine to machine, but not good enough for general use.
- Improving transmission on existing copper wire, GFast technology. There is some research on this, with levels of 700mb in the lab, but not to the level where it can be used in the field. This same technology can be applied to aluminium wire as well.
- Mobile phone coverage, there is a way in which aerials can be linked into cabinets, providing 3 & 4G at a local level. This is for individual mobile phone companies to decide whether to do or not.
- Will there be less telephone poles? Unlikely

Schools.

Are schools being prioritised? Schools had improved service provided through the Dorset Public Sector Network, where superfast broadband is available schools can take a service. The Superfast Broadband programme works closely with DCC IT Services in maximising the benefit to the wide area network.

4. Close

Nic Nicol thanked the Superfast Broadband team for their presentation, and thanked all for attending.