

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 29 NOVEMBER 2017

SUPERFAST BROADBAND - UPDATE

Summary

1. The Panel is to be updated on progress of the roll-out of superfast broadband to Worcestershire residents and businesses.
2. Representatives from the Council's Superfast Worcestershire Programme and from BT have been invited to the meeting.

Background

3. The County Council and BT formed a partnership known as Superfast Worcestershire, which aimed to deliver high speed broadband to 90% of Worcestershire homes and businesses (including 55,000 in rural locations) by June 2016.
4. The Council's contract with BT as broadband infrastructure supplier (set up in August 2013), asks for an annual report to be submitted to scrutiny, to provide a summary of programme activity, achievements against targets for connecting residents and businesses, and how public concerns and demand have been managed. An update is attached at Appendix 1 (to follow).

Scrutiny to Date

5. Prior to the County Council elections in May 2017, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's main discussion points focused on the very positive levels of Worcestershire's broadband coverage and uptake. Areas highlighted for improvement included the need to recognise the plight of problem areas when publicising successes, the need for improved communication with councillors, and greater use of local councillor knowledge. Assurance around value for money from the contract was also sought. In response to this request a value for money briefing was delivered to Scrutiny Panel Members in March 2017.
6. Therefore, some areas for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to explore could include:
 - Communications, including those to inform residents and businesses who do not currently have Superfast Broadband or Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)
 - Whether Councillors are being kept proactively informed on progress and any issues or delays with the roll-out of Superfast Broadband in their Division
 - Whether deadlines and targets are being met
 - Public satisfaction with information on the Superfast Broadband programme on the Council's website
 - How customers are being engaged.

7. The plan for delivery and progress with roll out has been regularly discussed with the Scrutiny Panel and the background papers section of this report provides links to these discussions.

Purpose of the Meeting

8. The Panel is asked to consider the latest information provided on superfast broadband in Worcestershire, and:

- consider whether any further information or scrutiny is required at this time
- determine any comments or recommendations to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Infrastructure

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Update on Superfast Broadband (to follow).

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and Minutes of:

- Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 10 October 2016 and 30 September 2015
- Economy, Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17 September 2014 and 20 May 2015
- Cabinet on 5 February 2015, 15 October 2015 and 29 June 2017

Minutes and Agendas are available on the Council's website at

<http://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>