

## **Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

### **Wednesday, 30 September 2015, County Hall, Worcester -**

### **10.00 am**

#### **Minutes**

#### **Present:**

Dr K A Pollock (Chairman), Mr A T Amos,  
Mr A A J Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr W P Gretton,  
Mr M E Jenkins, Mr J W R Thomas and Mr P A Tuthill

#### **Also attended:**

Mr S E Geraghty, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member  
for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure  
Mark Stansfeld, Chairman, Worcestershire Local  
Economic Partnership  
Andy Rudd, Research Manager  
Cassie Bray, Head of Business Development, H&W  
Chamber of Commerce  
Ken Wigfield, Federation of Small Businesses  
Steve Henderson, Regional Director, Next Generation  
Access  
Rob Shakespeare, BT Contracts Manager  
Louise Gibbs, General Manager, Jaguar XK Club  
Mrs E B Tucker

Nigel Hudson (Head of Strategy and Infrastructure),  
Andy Rudd (Research Manager),  
Susan Crow (Economic Development Manager),  
Steve Ashton (Broadband Project Officer),  
Pauline Harris (Corporate Programme Manager),  
Suzanne O'Leary (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny  
Manager) and  
Stella Wood (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

#### **Available Papers**

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the meeting held on <date> (previously circulated).

Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes.

#### **219 Apologies and Welcome**

Apologies were received from Mr G J Vickery.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A member of the public wished to speak during Public Participation in relation to Item 6: Superfast Broadband. As no others wished to speak on any other item, the Chairman advised that Public Participation would be moved to before Item 6.

**220**      **Declarations of Interest and of any Party Whip**

None.

**221**      **Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous two meetings**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 20 May and 24 June 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**222**      **Economic Progress in Worcestershire**

Mark Stansfeld, the Chairman of the Worcestershire Local Economic Partnership, Cassie Bray from the Chamber of Commerce, Ken Wigfield from the Federation of Small Business, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure, and the Head of Strategy and Infrastructure, had been invited to discuss economic progress in Worcestershire.

Economic progress in Worcestershire was an issue on the Panel's work programme and as part of this, the Panel had asked for information on:

- economic conditions in Worcestershire and what the Council might do to help increase "Gross Value Added (GVA)" (i.e. the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector)
- progress on the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) projects
- the Local Economic Multiplier – how Council spending might benefit the local economy
- development of 'Worcestershire Business Central' as the county's growth hub
- the role of the Federation of Small Businesses and Chamber of Commerce in supporting small/medium sized businesses

Relevant officers had attended to discuss these issues. The information requested was attached to the agenda report as appendices.

The Panel Chairman introduced the Chairman of the Worcestershire Local Economic Partnership (WLEP), outlining his wide ranging employment history with many

of the UK's top companies and services.

The Cabinet Member began with a brief overview of the current situation in relation to economic conditions in Worcestershire which included the following main points.

- 'Open for Business' had become a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan following the downturn in the economy. Increases in growth and employment now showed a period of recovery. Worcestershire was the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing economy although it needed to catch up with neighbouring authorities such as Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire which had higher Gross Value Added (GVA)
- The Strategic Economic Plan had moved into the delivery phase. It was essential to invest in infrastructure and get the right quality of businesses on sites being developed. There were links to the devolution debate on whether it was better for the County to have greater powers rather than central control.

The Chairman of WLEP explained that he had taken on the role for a number of reasons including: he had strong family ties in the County; he believed the Strategic Economic Plan was a good plan to which all partners had signed up and funding had been secured; the next phase was about delivering the plan which he was keen to do; all of the plan needed to be delivered for it to work and he was keen to make it happen for the benefit of Worcestershire. This was a huge opportunity.

Last year the WLEP was awarded £54m for plans over the next 3 years. Combined with other partner contributions the total investment package was £154m. A good start had been made with the delivery of projects to the value of £13.6m. The right people needed to be in place to deliver the plans. The WLEP Business Board aimed to encourage an army of backers to both help deliver the plan and act as advocates in promoting Worcestershire to potential businesses and investors.

Members asked what the principal selling points were in attracting national companies to locate in the county and it was explained that the game-changer sites were important. There was a focus on science and technology, defence and cyber security and advanced engineering. People wanted to be in a sector relevant to their business, for example, Silicon Valley attracted similar high tech businesses in one location. An innovation centre set up in Shoreditch attracted bright young minds

where they could bounce ideas off each other. Worcester Six business park would provide an opportunity for growth. The first buildings and the types of buildings often determined the type of businesses attracted and this needed careful consideration. It was hoped that Redditch Gateway could attract automotive and manufacturing industries and Hoobrook advanced engineering.

An improved digital economy meant increasingly that businesses could now thrive in rural areas as well as in cities.

Members asked what reaction people outside the County had to living or working in Worcestershire and were advised that it was mostly neutral. A good brand was needed to attract high value businesses. and the partners in the LEP needed to understand the drivers and stakeholders in relation to attracting high value businesses.

Members asked about investment going to Birmingham with Worcestershire as a dormitory. The Chairman of the WLEP felt that both areas should benefit from business investment and that the Strategic Economic Plan would ensure economic benefits for Worcestershire.

Members felt that the SEP was good news for the County and asked for details of how WLEP planned to attract businesses to sites such as Worcester Six and the Vale Park, Evesham. It was explained that marketing plans were in the early stages and would be developed over the next month. Discussions with UK Trade & Investment (UKTI)<sup>1</sup> and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) could be helpful. The LEP did not have all the answers and needed to identify who was best at marketing. Businesses might relocate for a number of reasons. One major business for example was known to have moved to a particular location because the Managing Director lived in that area.

In response to a question about why Worcestershire was successful when GDP had been relatively flat between 2008 and 2013 it was explained that traditionally Worcestershire had underperformed and was therefore starting from a low base. There had been a land supply issue for developments and low Broadband speeds were being tackled.

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<sup>1</sup> a UK Government department working with businesses based in the UK to assist their success in international markets, and with overseas investors looking to the UK as an investment destination

It was believed that existing sectors such as manufacturing had grown although there was a need to bring in new digital technology businesses. New figures on growth were due out in December 2015.

Although Worcestershire's GVA had been the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest increase, the way growth was measured had changed since LEPs were introduced, favouring LEP areas like Worcestershire. Worcestershire was well placed for manufacturing although fell behind on GVA per head (£18,454) which was over 20% less than in England and Warwickshire, and 36% less than Oxfordshire. Productivity per person was less in Worcestershire than in neighbouring authorities and needed to improve both locally and nationally.

Local Multiplier analysis of Council spend helped the council to understand how the money it spent flowed through the local economy and had established that every £1 spent contributes £2.12 to the local economy. There was greater scope to increase this from supplier spend rather than staff spend, although there was a need to comply with procurement rules. A Member had worked for a Charity where the economic multiplier was £8 for every £1 spent and felt that Worcestershire could do better.

Improving rail links and facilities were included in the SEP. The Chairman of WLEP had recently attended a meeting in Parliament about dualling the line from Worcester to London (at a cost of £38m) by improving the Cotswold line. There were plans to increase the frequency of trains to London and Birmingham and to reduce journey times from Worcester to London to 2 hours 10 minutes, although still shorter times were desirable. The long term aim was to attract people to live and work in the County, reducing the need to travel to London.

Members asked whether there would be a focus on attracting green economy sector businesses and whether this would be an area of growth. It was explained that no such focus was planned, although the results of the pilot on geothermal energy were awaited with interest. If this could be commercially viable it should be publicised widely to enhance Worcestershire as a great location.

If green electricity was produced it could not be fed into the National Grid, which was almost at full capacity in Worcestershire. Infrastructure had not been built in to Worcester's original town plan and was in the wrong place

Some members felt that the local bus network was less than adequate and wished to see a commitment to greener travel, including plans for how workers could access employment sites.

The number of empty shop premises in Worcester led some members to believe that retail was lagging behind and more support was needed. It was explained that evidence showed that footfall in Worcester was holding up well and that Worcester had a comparatively low rate of vacant premises in the West Midlands. The quality of retail was considered good compared to neighbouring areas. The focus should be on support across the County rather than Worcester only; Kidderminster for example, where there was significant planned investment in railway station improvements, was in need of such support.

In response to the feeling that too many local residents went to shop in Cheltenham, it was explained that there were different tiers of shopping destinations, including out of town sites.

There needed to be a balance of infrastructure investment across the County and there was a need to ensure that people had the necessary skills for the economy. It was confirmed that GVA analysis covered economic activity across all sectors including, for example, care for the elderly. Malvern was becoming a centre of excellence for looked after older people. Becoming a centre of excellence meant the County became a better place to live which would help increase GVA across the whole area.

#### *Federation of Small Businesses*

The Federation of Small Businesses representative had previously been a member of the LEP Business Board, currently Chaired the Wyre Forest Local Strategic Partnership, and fully supported the SEP. In his long experience, for any corporate strategy to be effective, it must be communicated to those on the ground and all strategies needed to be aligned. In Wyre Forest for example, land designated for industrial use had in the past been consumed for retail or warehousing. .

Discussions on which businesses might be brought in had already taken place with, for example, Birmingham University, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and organisations in Wolverhampton. Further talks on the best way forward were planned.

There was much more to economic growth than large scale developments. Over 90% of companies employed

less than 50 people. Two thirds of companies were sole traders. Recent changes to legislation such as the Consumer Rights Act and Pension Scheme enrolment for all employees meant increasingly burdensome red tape for small businesses, which needed support.

#### *H&W Chamber of Commerce*

The view of the Chamber was that Worcestershire's economy was growing and this was very positive. The H&W Chamber of Commerce was the 8<sup>th</sup> largest out of 52 in total showing good engagement with the business community. As part of a recent World Class Worcestershire event, a delegation had gone to London to attract inward investment. The delegation included, for example, County and District Council Leaders, training providers and business representatives. About 200 people attended the event, some of who commented that they had never seen a County with such a joined up strategy and collective support for inward investment. Next steps included how UKTI might be encouraged to advise key sector businesses to locate to Worcestershire.

#### *Worcestershire Business Central*

Worcestershire Business Central (WBC) was piloted in Oct 2012 and launched in February 2013. Information about the service had been circulated to members after some concerns that it was not widely known to Councillors. The service was developed in response to the closure of Regional Development Agencies leaving local businesses with no obvious point of contact.

WBC was a gateway for business support. As part of the service offer, H&W Chamber was contracted to work with the strategic businesses in the county ensuring large employers had a key contact, another team worked with growing companies and business networks and another with start-ups. Teams had access to the Research and Intelligence Team at the County Council and a European Funding Programme was being developed.

Since the launch of WBC, LEPs had been tasked with establishing Growth Hubs. Recognising its success, WBC was acknowledged as the Worcestershire LEP's Growth Hub in June 2015. WBC was the first Growth Hub in the West Midlands and 9th in the Country, a real success story for Worcestershire. 5,000 businesses had been supported.

WBC co-located to the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce (HWCC) on 15 September 2015, under the governance of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership. The County Council (WCC)

continued to support the staffing of WBC.

Next steps would build on the success of the existing service and would offer further support to the sectors identified by WLEP as having particularly strong potential for growth in Worcestershire i.e.: Defence & Security, Agri Tech and Advanced Engineering.

A team provided support, advice and signposting by phone while other staff were proactive in targeting key sectors. The top 100 companies employed 50% of the workforce and these were being asked about what else businesses might need in way of support.

Members asked about the impact on Impetus (a Worcestershire loan fund for SMEs) and were advised that the list of business support programmes 2013-15 (appended to Appendix 4 of the agenda item) was a selection of the many support programmes available and the number of grants available had little effect on Impetus. Some companies might need grant funding as well as loans and Impetus could still provide loans where companies could not secure loans from banks.

Members believed that most businesses were generally too busy to engage with the Council, unless there was a planning issue. In Wychavon, Councillors had made contact with local businesses and had discovered a surprising number of diverse businesses. For example one company bred falcons for the Middle-East, another made fine furnishings. This company had an ageing workforce and had problems recruiting those with the necessary skills. Small businesses needed help with succession planning and access to superfast broadband.

Members asked how many advisers WBC provided and it was explained that there were 4 Business Relationship Advisers who would be able to signpost businesses to a variety of services available. There were also 4 Business Engagement Managers for face to face business advice. It was not possible to help or contact all 22,000 plus businesses in the County.

It was understood that Worcestershire had 249 of the Country's 4,900 or so fastest growing businesses (with a turnover of £1m or more). It would be helpful to identify and engage with these businesses to find out how they could be helped further or how they might become advocates for the County.

Members noted that small business growth was key to developing the economy, but that small businesses



needed support.

The WLEP had a limited budget of around £1m and aimed to invest wisely. A level of realism was needed about what could be done, particularly at a national level although it was acknowledged that much could be done without money.

**223 Public Participation**

Louis Gibbs (General Manager, Porter Press International) spoke on behalf Philp Porter and made the following main points.

Porter Press International was a publishing company with 6 employees, based near Tenbury Wells, which printed sports car magazines and publications. Their offices had access to superfast broadband although the supply was intermittent and unreliable. Broadband was likened to the supply of water and electricity in that it was essential for the company to operate effectively. They felt that reliable broadband had been promised by the County Council and BT and that these promises had been broken. Superfast broadband was urgently needed now.

**224 Superfast Broadband**

Steve Henderson, BT Regional Director, Next Generation Access, and Rob Shakespeare, BT Contract Manager, were invited to provide an update on the delivery of Superfast Broadband in Worcestershire. Pauline Harris (Programme Manager) and Stephen Ashton (Senior Project Manager) Worcestershire County Council, were also invited. This update covered progress of the Superfast Worcestershire Partnership including the Extension Programme.

As outlined in the agenda, Worcestershire County Council signed a £20 million contract with BT in August 2013 (Contract 1) to ensure Superfast Broadband was available to over 90% of the County's residential and 90% of business premises by June 2016.

Since the last scrutiny update in May 2015, a second contract (Contract 2) was signed for £5.9m [WCC £4.78m BT £1.12m] to provide fibre coverage to a further 9154 premises. Superfast Worcestershire partnership programme would now benefit 65,500 (94%) of Worcestershire rural homes and businesses with access to fibre broadband infrastructure.

The BT Regional Director gave a presentation highlighting the following:

- BT shared the ambition to use fibre networks to support economic social and public benefit for all
- The speed of broadband required depended on need in each home. New technology such as Super hi-Vision TV needed 110 Mbps. Fortunately, it was expected that Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) would be able to deliver speeds of 1Gbps in future.
- Fibre was transforming small businesses by: improving web presence and customer experience; enabling expansion and rural businesses to compete. Productivity was improved by: faster speeds enabling large files to be sent and received; improved home working capability; and carrying out bandwidth hungry tasks simultaneously. Cost savings made by: site based and hosted VoIP (internet based phone systems); improved video conferencing reducing need for travel; utilising more cloud computing resources.
- The main technology for supplying broadband was:
  - ADSL – copper from exchange to the premises (enabling speeds of 20Mbps)
  - Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) - the fibre goes to a powered cabinet in the street. The final connection to the premises is on copper. Previous speeds of 40Mbps could now be increased to 80Mbps and were expected to exceed this in future
  - Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) – The fibre connection to the cabinet goes all the way to the premises. This method brings disruption as drives need to be dug up although it can be the most efficient way to supply in remote areas where there are no existing cabinets
  - 'Fibre on Demand' - was launched last year and suspended before being re-piloted based on feedback. This allowed customers with FTTC to pay for the supply of FTTP from the cabinet so they could choose higher quality speed and price from any of the 145 internet service providers.
  - Another business based option was to have ethernet pipes fitted to ensure speed and reliability.

#### Rollout Update

BT appreciated the help and support received from Worcestershire County Council staff in delivering the roll-out, including advice on planning matters and road closures. Nearly 700km of new fibre would be laid involving more than 45 engineers, connecting to 69 exchanges.

*BDUK (Contract 1)* - rollout was ahead of schedule: 286 cabinets stood (out of 396 cabinets), with 255 now live, enabling 41,820 premises. It was anticipated that 42,000 premises would be enabled by the end of Quarter 2 (30 September 2015).

*BDUK+ (Contract 2)* - structures were in planning for deployment over the next 2-3 Quarters, delivering 1300 Total Homes Passed (THP) in rural areas as set out in Table 1 below (NB the term THP includes residential and business premises)

Table 1 – Update on BDUK+ (contract 2) activity

Exchange	THP	Tech	Status
<b>Ombersley</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>FTTC</b>	<b>LIVE</b>
Birtsmorton	59	FTTC	Surveyed. Cabinet build for Qtr 3 delivery
Hallow	104	FTTC	Surveyed. Cabinet build for Qtr 3 delivery
Hartlebury	77	FTTC	Surveyed. Cabinet build for Qtr 3 delivery
Great Witley	143	FTTC	Surveyed. Cabinet build for Qtr 3 delivery
Severn Stoke	182	FTTC	Spine proving underway. EO cabinet surveyed for qtr 3 delivery
Badsey	36	FOTP	In early planning stages for Qtr 4 delivery
Birtsmorton	12	FOTP	In early planning stages for Qtr 4 delivery
Birtsmorton	38	FOTP	In early planning stages for Qtr 4 delivery
Birtsmorton	129	FOTP	In early planning stages for Qtr 4 delivery
Bromsberrow	30	FOTP	In early planning stages for Qtr 4 delivery
Bromsberrow	129	FOTP	In early planning stages for Qtr 4 delivery
Cutnall Green	19	FOTP	In early planning stages for Qtr 4 delivery
Colwall	16	FOTP	Planning yet to commence
Great Witley	89	FTTC	Survey pending for Qtr 4 delivery
Wichenford	187	FTTC	Survey pending. For Qtr 4 delivery
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1359</b>		

*Extension Programme* – a schedule was being developed, which would deliver approx. 8,500 Total Homes Passed (THP)

*BT Commercial* - 533 cabinets already delivered servicing 189,384 THP.

Take up

The average take up rate in Worcestershire was close to

20%. This was about 5 to 8 percentage points above neighbouring authorities in the midlands area, or 40% higher at a similar time, or 3-6months ahead.

To help with encouraging take up, BT invested £millions in national advertising and worked with the County Council team on the best ways of letting households know when an area had been enabled. Stickers on Cabinets were helpful in reminding people that superfast broadband was available in their area.

Current demand stimulation activities and campaigns

*Business packs* - Business packs had been created and would be distributed at all relevant business events, trade shows & parish council meetings. The packs contained details of the programme and the business benefits that broadband offered.

*GetNetWise Campaign* – This was a school internet safety campaign which outlined how both children and parents could ensure that their online experience was fun & safe. All pupils in Worcestershire will be receiving a GetNetWise leaflet including tips from etiquette to security settings on their home PCs

*Fibre Friends* –was being launched as part of the GetNetWise campaign and would be used for the Social media campaign

*Social Media Campaign* – much activity was taking place with local news and programme information being posted throughout the day. It was having a positive impact on driving awareness about the programme. A new interactive map had been created.

During the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

Members asked why final coverage had slipped from 95% to 94% and it was explained that it depended on how it was measured. 95% of premises would be enabled with speeds which might be below requirements although 94% would be enabled with broadband speeds needed. Another factor was that more houses were being built and some commercial providers hadn't provided as much as first anticipated.

90% coverage had been achieved by June 2015 and BT were ahead of schedule which was something to celebrate. Before the project began, only 70% of residents and 40% of businesses had access to

superfast broadband. It was important to note that there would still be 5-6% not enabled as some places were too expensive to reach with limited resources.

Members asked whether there was any flexibility in deciding which communities would be enabled when (for those covered in the contracts). It was explained that the roll out was planned in the most efficient way to achieve best value for money although there was some flexibility. For example, business parks were brought forward in the programme due to the Council's strategic priority and BT had taken a steer on plans for the 1300 premises as part of contract 2.

It was good that 8 parishes in the Littletons had gone live although there had been an issue with communication. In one village where a new cabinet had been installed and advertised as being live, villagers were advised in the local newsletter. When residents phoned ISPs to sign up for faster speeds they were advised by the BT call centre and other providers that the Cabinet was not live. It was explained that when the network was re-engineered and a new cabinet installed, there were about 7 different BT databases that needed to be changed. There had been some delays in updating these databases which had caused the problem, which was now resolved. There was a similar problem in Mill Hill where an issue with record keeping had been identified although there could also be an issue with telegraph poles. Members were assured that BT was looking into the problem and expected a resolution within 2 to 3 weeks.

Table 2 below (from page 73 of the agenda report) showed the main sources of funding for contracts 1 and 2.

Table 2 – Source of Funding

<b>Source of Funding</b>	<b>Value</b>
BT	£10.4 million
WCC	£8.5 million
BDUK	£6.9 million
Local Growth Fund	£2.4 million

It was explained that £1.5m of the funding from BDUK was additional funding for the DEFRA communities.

It was confirmed that the value of the first contract was £20m and the second was £5.9m although Members queried why funding sources amounted to £28.2m in total.

It was also confirmed that the chart on slide 6 of the presentation slides showed progress for contract 1. A separate progress chart would be produced for contract 2 (BDUK+) although an update on activity is shown in Table 1 of these Minutes.

It was confirmed that take up of new faster speeds by the 145 service providers was measured.

14 parishes had signed up to faster broadband from Airband (Satellite based broadband) before the BDUK contract was in place. It was unfortunate that Porter Press International was a couple of miles away from such coverage and it was not available in that area. It was welcomed that the area would be covered as part of the Extension Programme which would be completed by June 2018. It was hoped that the pace of the roll out might be increased and an announcement was expected on Friday (2 October). If Porter Press International wished to access faster speeds sooner, there were other options such as the Government's Connection Voucher Scheme. The fund was popular and it was anticipated that all the money would be used up by December this year.

The Panel asked how confident BT were in achieving the roll out of the remaining phases within target, given that these would include reaching more difficult and remote premises. It was explained that while the focus had been on higher volumes, not all the hard to reach places had been left until the end of the contract. It was acknowledged that the longer the spine the greater danger of collapse although overall, BT was confident that future targets would be reached and timescales met.

It was confirmed that 100% of premises in the County would be enabled to access minimum broadband speeds of 2Mbps. BT planned to provide a satellite solution in areas where fibre wouldn't reach. Trials, expected to finish in December, were taking place in York and Suffolk. It was expected that a voucher scheme would be set up for communities in the last 5% without superfast broadband. It was anticipated that premises in Worcestershire not covered by contracts 1 and 2 would be eligible to apply. BT felt it best to wait to identify which areas might need a satellite solution as it might become possible to extend a fibre solution further than first thought.

BT Chief Executive Gavin Patterson had announced at a conference last week, proposals which would give a major boost to broadband speeds in the West Midlands.

Pledges included:

- tackling slow speeds in hard-to-reach parts of the country;
- achieving new universal minimum speeds overall of 5 – 10 Mbps, with ultrafast rollout (1Gbps) starting next year. Trials were taking place in Huntingdon and Cambridge; and
- improving customer service, possibly moving call centres back to the UK

Technology and broadband speeds were developing fast. Sky were carrying out trials of Ultrafast broadband in York and were ready to roll it out to 20,000 homes.

BT was developing new structures and was anticipating that FTTC would be capable of delivering speeds of up to 1 Gbps. Openreach infrastructure allowed a number of options, the most popular of which was Infinity 1 which delivered speeds of 38-40Mbps, so most users did not opt for higher speeds. BT was investing in Research and Intelligence so that upgrades to infrastructure in future would support higher speeds.

A member advised that a cabinet had been upgraded in Peabworth in July this year yet residents had still not received a card notifying them of the upgrade. It was explained that the County Council waited to find out exactly which premises could access the faster broadband speeds before sending out any notification. This was a cautious approach to avoid card drops to premises that might not have access. This had caused the delay.

Members advised that the map on the Superfast website could not be expanded. It was confirmed that this would be put right.

Members understood that FTTP cost ten times more to supply than FTTC and asked why it was planned to provide FTTP in so many parishes in contract 2, for example, 30 in Bromsberrow, 129 in Birtsmorton and 36 in Badsey. It was explained that there were no cabinets in these locations and this was the most cost effective solution.

It was understood that Gloucestershire and Herefordshire had signed a contract with Gigaclear to provide FTTP in rural areas. Members believed that the project, 'Fastershire', would provide speeds of 1Gbps at lower cost than in Worcestershire, and asked how this was possible. BT advised that Members should speak to Fastershire to find out how this could be achieved and

**Available Papers**

whether similar options applied.

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation slides in relation to Superfast Broadband; and
- C. The Minutes of the meetings held on 20 May and 24 June 2015 (previously circulated).

Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes.

The meeting ended at 12.50

Chairman .....