

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

30 September 2015

SUPERFAST BROADBAND

Summary

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

Background

2. The contract with BT asks for an Annual Report, summarising programme activity, achievements against milestones and how public concerns and demand have been managed, to be submitted to scrutiny. The latest annual report was in September 2014 and included confirmation that BT was meeting its contractual milestones and that targets were being met.

3. The Panel also discussed superfast broadband on 20 May 2015, including progress of the five rural communities originally supported by the County Council to submit a bid to DEFRA. Members had a number of concerns about the clarity and transparency of information on the roll-out of superfast broadband. Members had suggested it would be helpful for communities to know whether the link had been surveyed, where it was in the programme plan, whether the cabinet had been installed, or power had been connected and when residents could ask their service provider to upgrade.

4. This year's annual update is attached at Appendix 1.

Purpose of the meeting

5. Members are asked to discuss the delivery of Superfast Broadband in Worcestershire. In doing so, Members may wish to consider:

- how value for money is being ensured
- timeliness and transparency of information on which areas will be upgraded, when and how they were prioritised
- how customers are being engaged in the roll out
- what are the reasons for seemingly low take up in some enabled areas and what can be done to stimulate increased demand – is it possible to know which Internet Service Providers were providing SFBB to how many residents how many upgrades are taking place

- progress on discussions with planners and BT colleagues to help inform developers of the need to liaise with BT (or other providers of open access networks) to ensure broadband access for new developments is designed in at the planning stage.
6. Members are asked to determine whether they wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Superfast Broadband Annual Update 2014/15

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 Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 17 September 2014
- Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel 20 May 2015

All of which are available on the Council's website at

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/democratic-services/minutes-and-agendas.aspx>