



NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2013

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors R L Butler (Chairman), S J Boote, N K Boughton-Smith, T Combellack, L B Cooper, J E Greenwood, M G Hemsley, Mrs M M Males, G R Mallender

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr P Bimson Regional Partnership Director, British Telecom
Mr M Lockley Team Manager, Economic Development, Nottinghamshire County Council
Ms N McCoy-Brown Programme Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council

OFFICERS PRESENT:

D Banks Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods
K Marriott Executive Manager - Transformation
D Mitchell Executive Manager - Communities
V Nightingale Senior Member Support Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence

7. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

8. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the joint meeting with the Partnership Delivery Group held on Tuesday 2 July 2013 were accepted as a true record.

Following questions regarding funding the Group was informed that Rushcliffe Community & Voluntary Service had raised £220,000 towards project work; and that there would be no funding for any wards in the Borough from the South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership as funding was only available for the ten wards in Nottinghamshire with the highest crime statistics. The Executive Manager - Communities explained that Cotgrave had previously received funding but due to the successes of the Partnership none of the Borough's wards fell into this criteria.

9. Update on Delivery of Rural Broadband in Rushcliffe

The Executive Manager - Transformation presented a report which updated the Group on the work being carried out by Nottinghamshire County Council to deliver rural broadband across Nottinghamshire. She explained that as part of the £15.2 million programme British Telecom had been awarded the contract

to provide the required infrastructure. Currently there were an estimated 13,000 properties in the Borough that were unable to receive superfast broadband so the Borough Council had committed £245,000 towards this project.

The Group received a presentation regarding the project from officers from Nottinghamshire County Council and British Telecom. Mr Bimson stated that in the present environment people and businesses wanted faster broadband with increased capacity. He explained that there was the technology being tested for speeds up to 300 mbps (mega bits per second). British Telecom was working on changes to the access network frequency plan which has allowed them to deliver up to 80 mbps through fibre to the cabinet technology. He also stated that British Telecom were working on developing speeds of over 100 mbps. However, there were areas of the country where it was considered that it was not commercially viable to install this technology. The Group was informed that British Telecom had invested £2.5 billion to bring superfast broadband to 2/3 of premises by the Spring of 2014 and it was envisaged that through the Rural Broadband UK project 95% of Nottinghamshire properties would have access to fibre technology.

Mr Bimson explained that the County Council's contract, which was to have 94.8% fibre coverage by Autumn 2016 had been awarded to British Telecom in August 2013. At present survey and planning work was being undertaken as well as putting equipment in the exchanges. Work was being carried out with Highways and Planning to enable a successful roll out. One of the principles of the Government scheme was that the network would be open access thus leading to competition from most internet providers which would give people choice and low prices.

Mr Lockley and Ms McCoy Brown informed the Group that for this project the County Council had received £2.7 million from the European Union, contributions from all the Nottinghamshire district councils and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It had also invested £2.15 million itself. It was anticipated that 6,349 properties would be included in phase one of the project, however some areas do overlap with other counties, eg some parts of Rushcliffe are served by exchanges in Leicestershire. They stated that one of the criteria for European funding was to enable businesses in the area and this had been one of the drivers for the direction of the project. Members were informed that businesses were being front loaded into phases one and two, it was noted that 18% of the identified small to medium enterprises were in the Rushcliffe area. It was also explained that the project only funded technology to the cabinets and not to premises. People would be able to access the technology through their chosen internet provider. Following a question Members were informed that getting fibre technology to the cabinets would be very quick and represented value for money, however getting the fibre technology to premises could be an engineering challenge. Mr Bimson explained that Open Reach offer 'fibre to the premise' to businesses, however, they would have to meet the costs. He also stated that new estates were planned with fibre technology. After a question regarding the costs of fibre to the premises for residential properties, Members were informed that some providers would include it within the package however, other providers might charge an up front fee for installation.

The Group were informed that there were exclusions to the project, these included:

- wireless and emerging technologies, such as 4G, as the Government stated that the technology had to be tried and tested
- areas of known investment in the next three years
- 3.6% of the Nottinghamshire properties

In respect of 4G Members asked if this technology would overtake cabling. Mr Bimson stated that mobile providers used the fibre infrastructure from the base station. It was recognised that the improvements to the fibre infrastructure would also benefit mobile operators, however this could be expensive if the network did not have the capacity. Ms McCoy-Brown agreed that the project would assist mobile providers which in turn would help the properties that were not covered by the project due to the commercial viability.

With regard to the properties that were prohibitively expensive to connect, Members were informed that there were two funds available, both of which required match funding. The £250 million Superfast Extension Programme and the Rural Community Fund from DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). In respect of this latter funding there had been one application from a community in Bassetlaw. Members queried if this funding could help those communities that were in the most commercially unviable areas. Mr Bimson said that it would be difficult for these small communities to raise the amount of match funding that would be required even with this funding.

Following a question the Group was informed that by placing a cabinet in a village this reduced the number of joints along the cabling route which gave a better service. Mr Bimson stated that properties in the Rutland area had received very low speeds but were now reaching up to 40 mbps.

During the discussion Members were made aware that even though the new cabinets were live in an area, customers would still have to ask their providers to update their home equipment, as residents would not automatically receive superfast broadband,

In respect of 'fibre to the cabinet' capacity the Group was informed that trials were being carried out in Cornwall to ascertain what speeds can be obtained by keeping the copper technology to the premise, including speeds of up to 10 gbps (giga bits per second).

With regard to maintenance to the infrastructure the Group were informed that, through innovation, these costs were reducing and that with ongoing upgrades this would be carried out as part of British Telecom's commercial model. This maintenance would benefit customers as there would be less jointing in the cables.

The Group queried how the project had identified the businesses to be prioritised. Mr Lockley explained that for the European Union funding this had to be evidenced based and data collated by Businesslink in 2011 had been used. It was recognised that this data did not include all businesses but was

as robust as possible. The project team was always looking how to capture more businesses, including new businesses, but the data sets needed to be auditable. It was agreed that home businesses would have the same status as other businesses in principle, however these were extremely difficult to identify.

In respect of speeds Mr Bimson stated that upload speeds were slower than download speeds. He explained that fibre capacity was growing all the time and the speeds would be determined by the end electronics. Ms McCoy-Brown confirmed that not everyone would receive superfast broadband, which was 24 mbps or more, as there would be a degradation of speed depending on the distance from the home to the Cabinet.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Group, thanked Mr Bimson, Mr Lockley and Ms McCoy-Brown, for attending the meeting, their presentation and answering Members' questions.

It was also agreed that a further update on this issue should be included in the Group's work programme.

10. **HS2 – Consultation on the Route to Manchester, Leeds and Beyond**

The Executive Manager - Communities gave a presentation on the proposed route for the HS2 line. He stated that the Department of Transport were consulting the public with regard to phase 2 of the proposed route from Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds. The consultation would close on 31 January 2014. The Group was asked to consider the comments made in the consultation document and to formulate a response for Cabinet's consideration on 3 December. Members were reminded that Council had passed a motion in June 2011 which called for investment in the HS2 project to be deferred and transferred to other transport projects. In March 2013 the Council had passed a further motion stating that as the Government had decided to continue promoting HS2 then the Council wished to ensure that a case for a station near East Midlands Parkway should be fully made and considered. The motion also asked for the Leader to represent those advantages to the relevant minister should HS2 go ahead.

There was only a very small proportion of the proposed route that crossed the Borough's boundaries near Ratcliffe on Soar. This part of the line would go across the Soar and Trent valleys and would be on a viaduct 10 – 13 metres in height. The proposal included a station at Toton, which was accessible from Derby and Nottingham and was close to current rail lines and the Nottingham Express Transit. In the consultation document the main issues against a station at the East Midlands Parkway were the alignment of the station and the angle of track, and the fact that there were perceived to be restrictive planning issues as the Parkway station was in the greenbelt

There were nine questions proposed in the document, of which two were relevant to Rushcliffe. Members were asked to consider whether they:

- Agreed with the Government's proposed route
- Agreed or disagreed with the Government's proposal for an East Midlands station to be located at Toton

The Group considered the merits for a station at Toton including:

- The isolation of the Parkway station
- That it covered both the Derby and Nottingham areas
- It already had some infrastructure
- Changes to the Parkway station could be expensive

Also the merits for a station at East Midlands Parkway including:

- Its close location to the motorway and East Midlands Airport, therefore was more accessible
- It had a wider footprint
- It was equi-distant between Loughborough, Leicestershire, Nottingham and Derby
- It was easy to take spurs off the current track
- There was the possibility of further development South of Clifton
- There was no economic advantages for the East Midlands by having a station at Toton
- The A453 would be dualled

Members also had further comments, including:

- There might not be a need for such high speeds by the time the HS2 is developed, especially those in Europe, therefore it should be classified as high capacity
- Consideration should be given to the carbon footprint of the route
- There was a need to consider the development of the infrastructure for either station

The Group agreed that it had considered the Government's proposals for the HS2 route including the proposed station locations having regard to the Council resolution of 7 March 2013 as follows:

'As the Government has decided to continue promoting HS2, this Council wishes to ensure that the case for a station near East Midlands Parkway is fully made and considered, should HS2 go ahead, and asks the Leader to represent those advantages to the relevant Minister'

The Group agreed with the proposed route and endorsed the Council's motion for a station near East Midlands Parkway in preference to the proposed option at Toton which, they considered should be the second preference for an East Midlands Hub. The following comments were presented to support the case for a HS2 station at Parkway:

- There has been significant investment in dualling the A453 which would provide a high speed link to both Nottingham City Centre, M1 and other East Midlands cities for car and bus travellers
- There were already rail links from the existing Parkway Station to Nottingham, Derby and Leicester City centres and surrounding smaller towns

- Parkway was between all three main East Midlands Cities (Nottingham, Derby and Leicester)
- Parkway was close to the expanding East Midlands Airport which also supported the three main East Midlands cities (Nottingham, Derby and Leicester) and would provide a good link for airport passengers
- It was acknowledged that the HS2 route would conflict with the current East Midlands services at the existing Parkway Station but it was felt that the benefits of having a HS2 Station directly connected to the existing wider rail network would outweigh these initial construction issues
- The green belt within Rushcliffe was currently under review and the opportunity could be taken to enable development of a HS2 station at Parkway
- Under the Rushcliffe draft Core Strategy housing numbers South of the River Trent could increase by 13,500 by 2028. A significant proportion of these houses would be at Clifton and around Nottingham's principal urban area. There would be a quick link from the Nottingham ringroad along the newly dualled A453 to a HS2 station
- The Ratcliffe on Soar coal powered power station which, was immediately adjacent to the Parkway station, is reaching the end of its life and could potentially present a brown field site opportunity for development supporting a high speed station
- As with any major development the associated infrastructure issues to support the new development would need further consideration but could include for example an extension to the Nottingham Express Transit from its current proposed terminus in Clifton to link to a HS2 Parkway Station

11. Work Programme

The Group considered its work programme and agreed it following the inclusion of a further update on the rural broadband project in July 2014.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP - TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2013

Minute Number	Actions	Officer Responsible
9. Update on Delivery of Rural Broadband in Rushcliffe	A further report on this issue be added to the Group's work programme.	Member Services
10. HS2 Consultation on the Route to Manchester, Leeds and Beyond	The Group's comments be forwarded to Cabinet.	Executive Manager - Communities