



Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Connectivity and Communications

Report of the Director Growth and Economic Development

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. There have previously been reports to Growth and Development Scrutiny about the roll out of Broadband across Rushcliffe. These updates have been presented by officers from Nottinghamshire County Council as the lead authority on this area of work.
- 1.2. A scrutiny matrix has been completed requesting an update on this work as some residents still do not have or struggle with access to broadband and phone coverage.
- 1.3. Officers from the County Council will attend the Scrutiny Group and provide an update for Councillors as well as answer questions they may have.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) review the scrutiny matrix and ask questions of the expert witnesses
- b) identify if there are any areas where further work or further updates are required.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. It is increasingly important that residents and businesses have access to broadband and mobile phone coverage. Councillors would like to understand what the opportunities are in the Borough and also what the challenges are to achieving 100% coverage. The delivery of broadband and mobile phone coverage is not within the Council's control so colleagues from the County Council have been invited to the meeting to provide an update.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. A scrutiny matrix has been completed, included at Appendix A, outlining the areas of interest which will be covered by officers from Nottinghamshire County Council at the meeting. This includes:
 - Full fibre broadband and the latest upgrades

- Building Digital UK (BDUK) roll out – where are the gaps in Rushcliffe and what can we do about them
- An update on Gigahubs
- An update on project Gigabit
- Broadband voucher scheme
- Land line disconnection scheduled by 2025 leaves many reliant on Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) which needs a good Broadband connection
- Mobile mast connectivity and opportunities for improvement. There are companies already looking for mast sites – are we/could we be engaging with these companies to ensure residents are well served.

4.2. Councillors will hear from officers from Nottinghamshire County Council and will have the opportunity to ask questions to understand more about what is currently being delivered in Rushcliffe.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

5.1. There are, of course, risks associated with limited/no internet or mobile phone access including health and safety risks. This report and supporting presentation are intended to provide Councillors with an update on connectivity in Rushcliffe at the moment, with the opportunity for further more focussed/detailed discussions in future.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are potential equalities implications where a lack of/limited access to mobile phone coverage or the internet mean residents do not have access to the same level of service as others in the Borough. This can be mitigated by offering services in different ways e.g. not all online.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no biodiversity net gain implications associated with this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	There are no links to the Council's environment priority.
Quality of Life	Providing good access to mobile phone and internet access enables residents to access services they need.
Efficient Services	As further opportunities are sought to move services online to make them more efficient/accessible this is only made possible with access for all.
Sustainable Growth	To operate effectively now businesses need access to good broadband and mobile phone coverage. It is important to support existing businesses and attract new ones that there is a good service.

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) review the scrutiny matrix and ask questions of the expert witnesses
- b) identify if there are any areas where further work or further updates are required.

For more information contact:	Catherine Evans, Service Manager - Economic Growth and Property cevens@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	
List of appendices:	Appendix One – Scrutiny Matrix