



## **Community Development Group**

**20 November 2018**

### **Rural Broadband Update**

## **Report of the Executive Manager – Communities**

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. Over the past 5 years, Nottinghamshire County Council has been leading a programme to deliver fibre broadband across Nottinghamshire. This is a multi-million pound programme which will result in 98% of Nottinghamshire premises being able to access a network, capable of delivering superfast broadband by March 2019.
- 1.2. Members will receive a presentation from Ceren Clulow, Broadband Project Manager, Better Broadband For Nottinghamshire Team (BBFN), Growth and Economic Development, Place, Nottinghamshire County Council on:
  - What's already covered (Contract 1 and 2)
  - What's planned for coverage in Contract 3
  - What are the options for the premises within the remaining 2%.

### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Community Development Group consider and make comments on the presentation from Nottinghamshire County Council Officers particularly on the rollout of fibre broadband to the remaining 2% of properties in the Borough.

### **3. Supporting Evidence**

- 3.1. Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire is a £31m partnership between the County Council and a range of funding partners including Central Government, European Regional Development Fund, D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership, BT and the area's district, borough and City councils. Rushcliffe Borough Council has contributed £245,000 to the programme.
- 3.2. The programme builds on the commercial roll out of fibre based broadband which alone provided superfast access to 86% of properties in Nottinghamshire. However, as a result of the Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire programme, over 95% of properties across the county gained superfast access by March 2016.

- 3.3. In May 2015, Nottinghamshire County Council announced a £6.3m deal to extend the reach of fibre even further. This Contract 2 rollout will increase coverage to 98% of homes and businesses across the county by March 2019.
- 3.4. In the first stage of the Better Broadband programme, Rushcliffe's superfast coverage increased from 73% to 92.4%, with almost 9,500 properties gaining superfast broadband access for the first time.
- 3.5. A further 3.6% uplift was originally planned to be delivered through contract 2 rollout. As of 1 November 2018, the current coverage in Rushcliffe is 96.4%. Now following further modelling, the aim is to deliver 98% superfast coverage by March 2019. This modelling utilised underspend and gainshare funds released from Contract 1.
- 3.6. Ahead of the procurement for a third contract, the programme has undertaken an Open Market Review (OMR) which establishes which properties do not currently have access to superfast broadband and are not due to have superfast broadband provided through the commercial delivery of any infrastructure provider.
- 3.7. This differs from previous OMRs the programme has undertaken in that the results are at premises level rather than postcode. This means that we now have a list of addresses which do not have access to superfast Broadband. The list comprises:
  - 1,889 White Premises - properties which cannot currently access superfast speeds and where there are no further plans to provide superfast broadband either through the BBfN programme or the commercial deployment of any infrastructure provider.
  - 1,324 Under review Premises - where premise level broadband coverage has not been clarified. These areas have previously been indicated to have planned commercial coverage for superfast broadband but those plans have been reported through the OMR as being 'at risk' of not being completed. Areas that potentially have superfast premises but where individual premises cannot yet be identified, have also been marked "under review".
- 3.8. Of the 1,889 white premises, approximately 60 of which were identified as built during the last 3 years. This lack of investment is adding to the challenge that the BBfN programme faces and does not meet the expectation of residents and businesses particularly when it is widely accepted that it is more cost effective to install broadband infrastructure as the sites are being developed.
- 3.9. Newly built properties unable to benefit from 21st century connectivity are unacceptable; particularly in light of recent commitments from Openreach (in association with the Government and the Home Builders Federation) which agreed to provide Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) infrastructure - for free - to all new developments of 30 or more dwellings with associated co-funding for

smaller developments. This is alongside similar offers from other infrastructure providers such as Virgin Media.

- 3.10. Contract 3 will initially focus on deployment across Bassetlaw and Newark and Sherwood District Council areas as these areas represent the majority of unserved properties across the County. However the contract will retain the capability to include further deployment across Rushcliffe should further funding be made available.

#### **4. Risk and Uncertainties**

- 4.1. The significant number of under review premises will need to be monitored. For these properties to be provided with access to superfast speeds relies on the infrastructure providers (such as Openreach and Virgin Media) to deliver the broadband infrastructure that they have indicated they will provide through their commercial investment plans. Opportunities should be sought to facilitate this investment within the Borough.
- 4.2. New properties being built without access to superfast broadband is unacceptable, developer obligations should include the installation of broadband infrastructure as new properties are built. As a planning authority Rushcliffe Borough Council is well placed to encourage developers to do this, particularly by raising awareness of the support infrastructure providers are offering.

#### **5. Implications**

##### **5.1. Finance**

There are no financial implications contained in this report.

##### **5.2. Legal**

The Contract will be subject to legal review and the appropriate Procurement process.

##### **5.3 Equalities**

There are no Equality implications

##### **5.3. Corporate Priorities**

- Supporting economic growth to ensure a sustainable, prosperous and thriving local economy.
- Maintaining and enhancing our resident's quality of life.

##### **5.4. Other Implications**

None.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	David Mitchell Executive Manager – Communities 0115 914 8291 <a href="mailto:dmitchell@rushcliffe.gov.uk">dmitchell@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	None