

# Agenda Item 6



Policy and Scrutiny

## Open Report on behalf of James Drury, Executive Director – Commercial

Report to:	<b>Environment &amp; Economy Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>09 July 2019</b>
Subject:	<b>Lincolnshire Broadband Programme Progress Report</b>

### Summary:

To provide an update on the current status of the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme. To outline future plans and to provide details relating to the difficulties of deploying faster broadband to rural end users.

### Actions Required:

Members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to review the progress of the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme and highlight any comments for future consideration in relation to future broadband provision.

## 1. Background

The Lincolnshire Broadband Programme commenced in March 2013. The key objectives of the programme was to provide Superfast Broadband (defined as download speeds in excess of 24Mb/s) to 90% of all premises within the county and secondly, to ensure that all remaining premises had a download speed of at least 2Mb/s.

The programme was jointly funded by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), the seven District partners and BDUK (DCMS). Total funding at the start of the programme was £30M, with BT adding a further £10M Capital.

During the course of the first round of deployment, BDUK released further funding to LCC of £1.8M and this was matched by LCC with a further £1.8M. The objective of this second round of deployment was to push Superfast coverage across the county to 95%. At that point, LCC had agreed with BDUK that 93% coverage was the likely outcome given the scale of the programme which was the second largest in the UK.

The first deployment concluded in March 2016, having reached the 90% objective and with an underspend of £14M which, under the terms of the contractual Grant Agreement with BDUK, had to be reinvested in further broadband coverage. At the end of Contract 1, a total of 152K premises had been upgraded by the programme.

LCC has added further funding from underspend to Contract 2 which has extended it from the original deployment of 7.1K premises to 22.5K premises with an aspiration to hit 97% Superfast coverage by June 2020.

At the time of writing this report, an additional 16.7K premises have been upgraded under contract 2 with a further 5.8K premises still in the deployment stages.

At this point, LCC is in the later stages of finalising an Invitation to Tender for a third contract where total funding will be £11M and with an aspiration to get as close to 100% Superfast coverage as possible. Subject to BDUK and final approvals, it is hoped to launch the Invitation to Tender in late May 2019.

There is a concern around recent Government strategy that dictates that only Fibre to the Premises technology can now be used and it is considered that because of the higher costs of this type of deployment that sufficient funds do not exist to meet aspirations.

We are aware of two BDUK run schemes that look to encourage communities and small businesses to take up funding for a full fibre connection.

- The first scheme, the Gigabit Voucher Scheme, will provide £2500 to eligible small businesses (SMEs) and then up to 10 residential premises can each claim £500 per SME. This scheme is administered by BDUK and we already have over 40 communities in Lincolnshire who are at various stages of progress within this scheme.
- The second scheme, the Rural Gigabit Connectivity scheme is new and will provide £3500 per eligible SME and £1500 to any number of eligible residential premises in the same location. This differs from the first scheme in that local bodies are encouraged to apply for funding to provide full fibre to publically owned buildings and then SMEs and residents can claim the funding to branch out from the local 'hub'.

The broadband team has recently sent out a note to parish councils outlining both schemes and offering assistance and advice in getting either scheme off the ground. The Executive Councillors for Highways, Transport and IT has recently made a press announcement to support our involvement and both schemes are described in more detail on the [www.onlincolnshire.org](http://www.onlincolnshire.org) website.

## **2. Conclusion**

Members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to review the progress of the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme and highlight any comments for further consideration in relation to rural broadband provision.

### **3. Consultation**

#### **a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?**

Yes

#### **b) Risks and Impact Analysis**

Risks and Impact analysis has been continually updated and monitored since programme inception. Risks document is stored on IMP.

### **4. Background Papers**

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