



**Prosperous Communities
Committee**

6 June 2017

**Subject: Broadband Provision Across the District – Current Position
and Future Options**

Report by:

Director of Resources

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Purpose / Summary:

To provide Members with an up to date position with regard to Broadband Provision across the District. The report also sets out high level options for future consideration.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members are requested to consider the next steps and ask officers for a further paper in July to set out a full proposal.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Financial :

Financial Implications: FIN/108/17

A Capital Budget of £555k was approved as part of the 2013/14 Capital Programme to support the BDUK roll out within West Lindsey as detailed within the report. This was to be funded from Capital Receipts. Any reduction in the amount paid will result in capital receipts being available for future capital investment.

Staffing :

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Risk Assessment :

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2016 a decision was made by the Prosperous Communities Committee for a survey to be developed that would test out the extent of the issue of broadband throughout West Lindsey. West Lindsey were not part of the Onlincolnshire Phase 2 and we therefore need to consider how to support residents in delivering the last 10-15% of coverage across West Lindsey.
- 1.2 To undertake this work we undertook a dual approach to gain the maximum information possible and to include those with broadband and those without it. This was be through an online speed test and a manual survey. There was 1536 responses to the survey and over 900 to the online speed test which were both split evenly across the district.

2. Survey results

- 2.1 Out of the 1536 respondents to the survey 92% of those do currently have broadband while only 8% don't. From mapping this data there is no correlation between those who do not have broadband and any specific area in the district. From the 8% who do not have broadband, 52% of those do not have it due to it being unavailable, too slow or too expensive.
- 2.2 The respondents were asked who their supplier is and 40 suppliers were named as being used within the district. However 55% of those who gave the name of their supplier said it was BT.
- 2.3 When asked if respondents have had issues with availability of broadband, 923 out of the 1536 said that they had with the top 2 reasons being too slow and losing connection.
- 2.4 The results indicate better coverage than reflected on earlier report. However it is clear that the consistency of coverage can be problematic.

3. Speed test results

- 3.1 Thinkbroadband.com is the company which run the speedtest for WLDC. The link was attached to our broadband survey web page and also the online surveys took the respondents directly to the speedtest upon completion. During the time the survey was running there was more than 900 results uploaded to the speedtest.
- 3.2 These results were spread across the district and attached to postcodes. From these postcodes the results were averaged if more than 1 test was received for the postcode. There was 34 locations which had an average speed of less than 10 Mbps.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 There are 3 options which are possible for West Lindsey DC being:

1 – Work with Onlincolnshire and BDUK to remove the barrier to providing funding in West Lindsey

Members and Officers have attempted to engage with the officers and Members with this portfolio at the County without success. The potential to use this option would depend entirely on being able to change the view of BDUK with regards their ability and hence the ability of Onlincolnshire to provide funding in the West Lindsey district.

2 – Direct support by the Authority

Whilst there is no allocated funding for this purpose, it maybe an option if members wished, subject to appropriate legal advice.

As there is an underspend within the BDUK Phase 1 members may wish to consider withholding the West Lindsey share of the underspend for use within West Lindsey should it be legally possible. A higher level of withholding amount maybe justifiable given the current assessment of coverage is below the target 90%.

However, it is unlikely there would be sufficient funds to treat all areas equally and therefore this option is not recommended for being taken forward.

3 – Provide Broadband expertise to support local neighbourhoods

One of the issues for localities is obtaining appropriate advice on the options available to them, given their individual and specific difficulties. Each neighbourhood is likely to have different challenges where broadband is concerned and will need a tailored solution.

The Authority may wish to consider providing specialist support using tools such as The Rural Broadband Partnership to localities in a similar way that we support Neighbourhood plans. This would require additional funding.

In addition, it is proposed that the Council uses its influence with MP's and through Local Authority networks to lobby for further government support for the District and rural areas more generally.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended to the Prosperous Communities Committee that WLDC undertake a mixture of option 1 and 3 due to having no additional funding available to undertake any work in house. By signposting communities to an external expertise to support the work this would enable to the communities to progress at their own speed while having an expert who understands the issues and can ensure the correct route is undertaken.
- 5.2 That officers are asked to work up a proposal for consideration at the next meeting of Prosperous Communities Committee.



Broadband Survey and Speed Test 2017

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and method

This report summarises the views of residents, parish councils and West Lindsey Councillors that a survey which was either online or in a paper format. West Lindsey residents, Parish Councillors, Parish Meetings and West Lindsey District Council Members were invited through either a direct invite or by visiting the website.

In December 2016 a decision was made by the Prosperous Communities Committee for a survey to be developed that would test out the extent of the issue of broadband throughout West Lindsey. West Lindsey were not part of the Onlincolnshire Phase 2 and we therefore need to consider how to support residents in delivering the last 10-15% of coverage across West Lindsey.

To undertake this work we undertook a dual approach to gain the maximum information possible and to include those with broadband and those without it. This was to be through an online speed test and a manual survey.

Manual Survey

To ensure we got a wide variety of residents completing the survey and speed test we asked all Parish Councils and Parish Meetings to inform their residents of this survey and pointing them to the website where they can complete it, we asked all West Lindsey Councillors to distribute up to 100 surveys in their area and we also asked all members of the West Lindsey Citizen Panel to complete it. A copy of the survey can be seen at appendix A.

Number of Citizen Panel responses - 737

Number of resident responses - 799

Total number of surveys returned – 1536

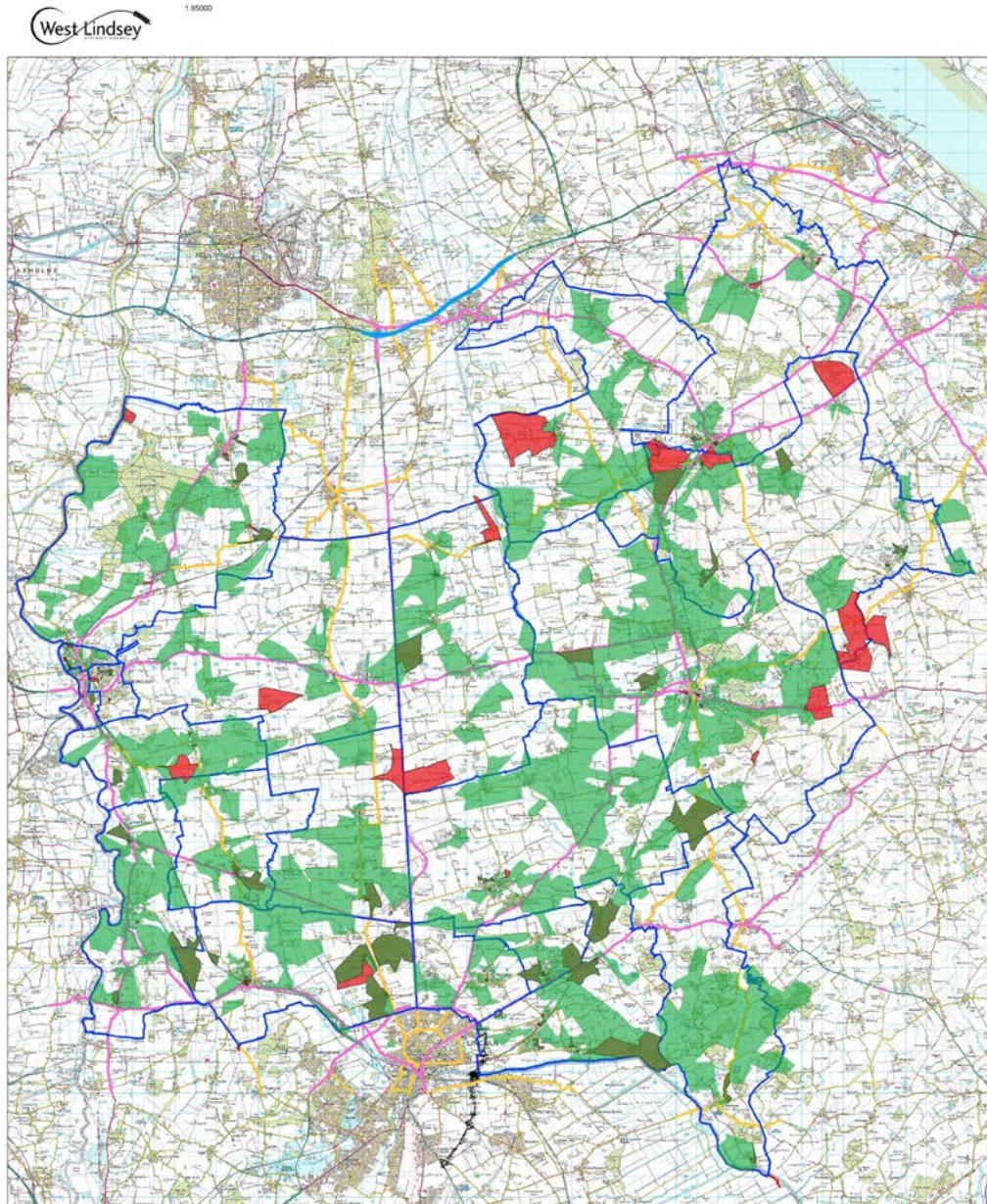
Speed test

The speed test was added to the West Lindsey website and all survey respondents were asked to also complete. This speed test is run by ThinkBroadband who gather the information together. This information can be found on their website but specific information has been sent specific to this report. This can be found in section 3.

2 Manual Survey

2.1 Profile of responders

The responders have covered the area of West Lindsey and can be seen in map 1. This map shows that there was a good spread across the district of respondents to the survey.



Map 1: Location of respondents

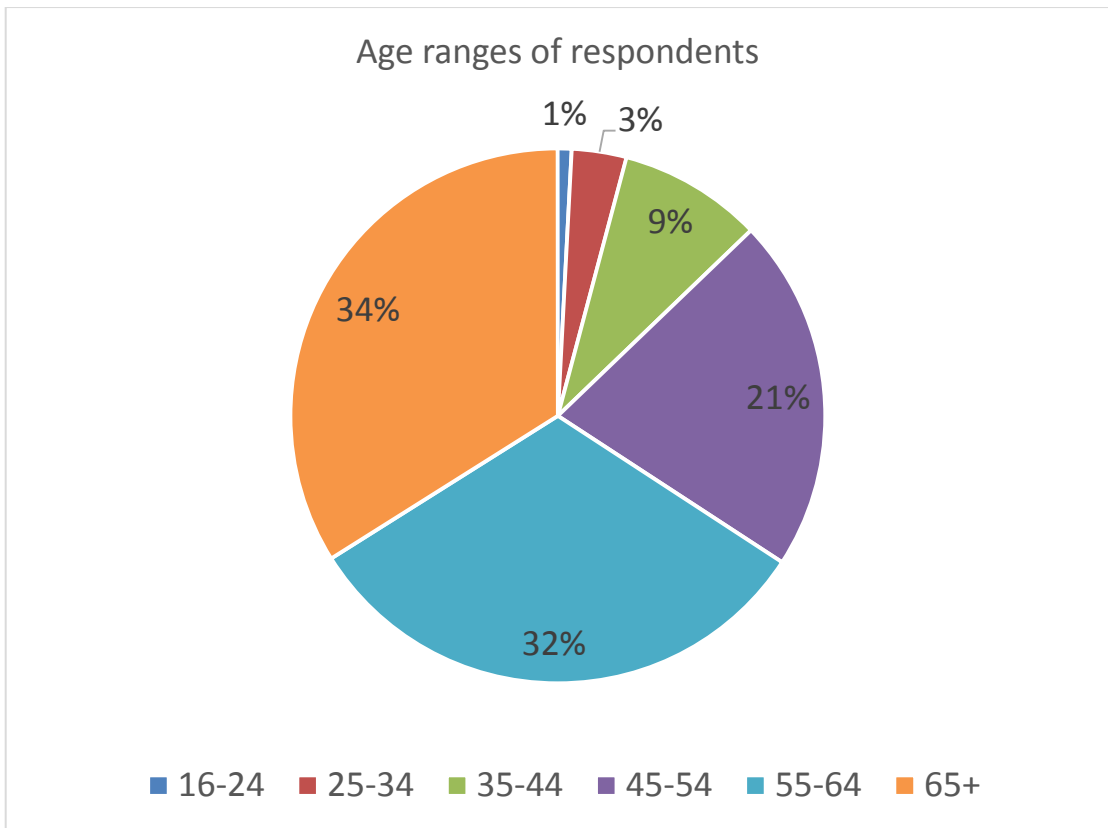


Figure 1: Age range of Citizen Panel respondents

This data can be seen compared to the 2015 population estimates in figure 2. This data is slightly skewed as the panel can only be joined if 16 or over while the population percentages include all ages.

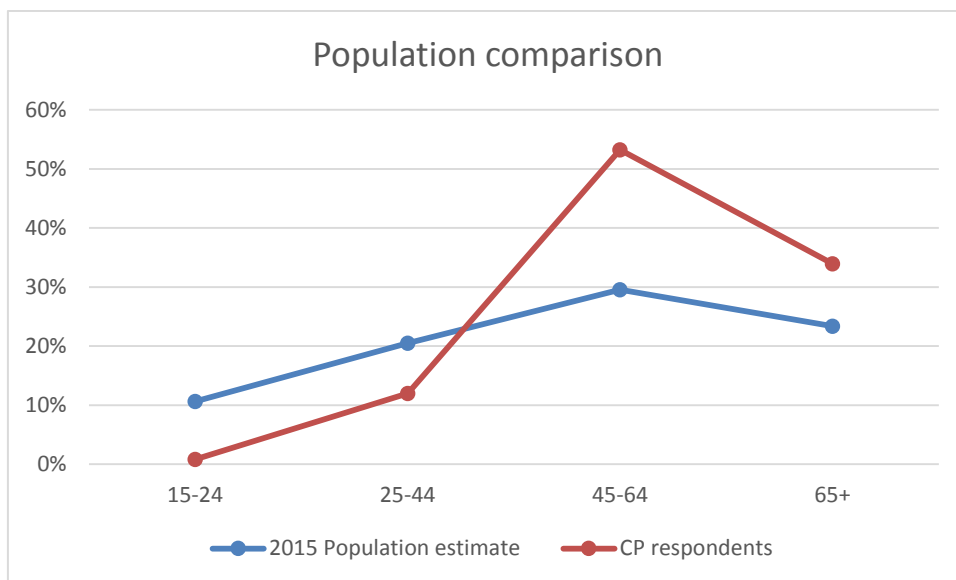
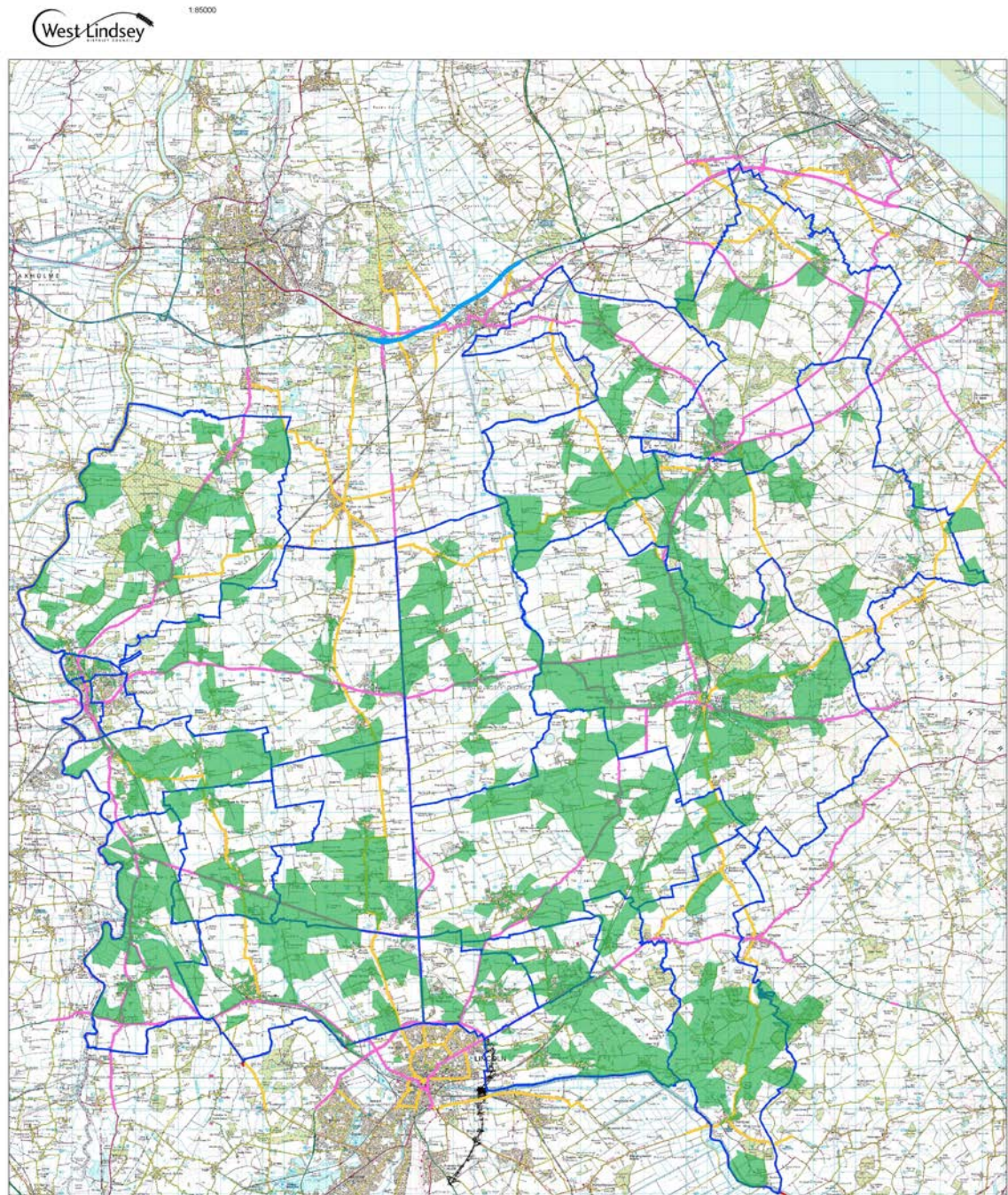


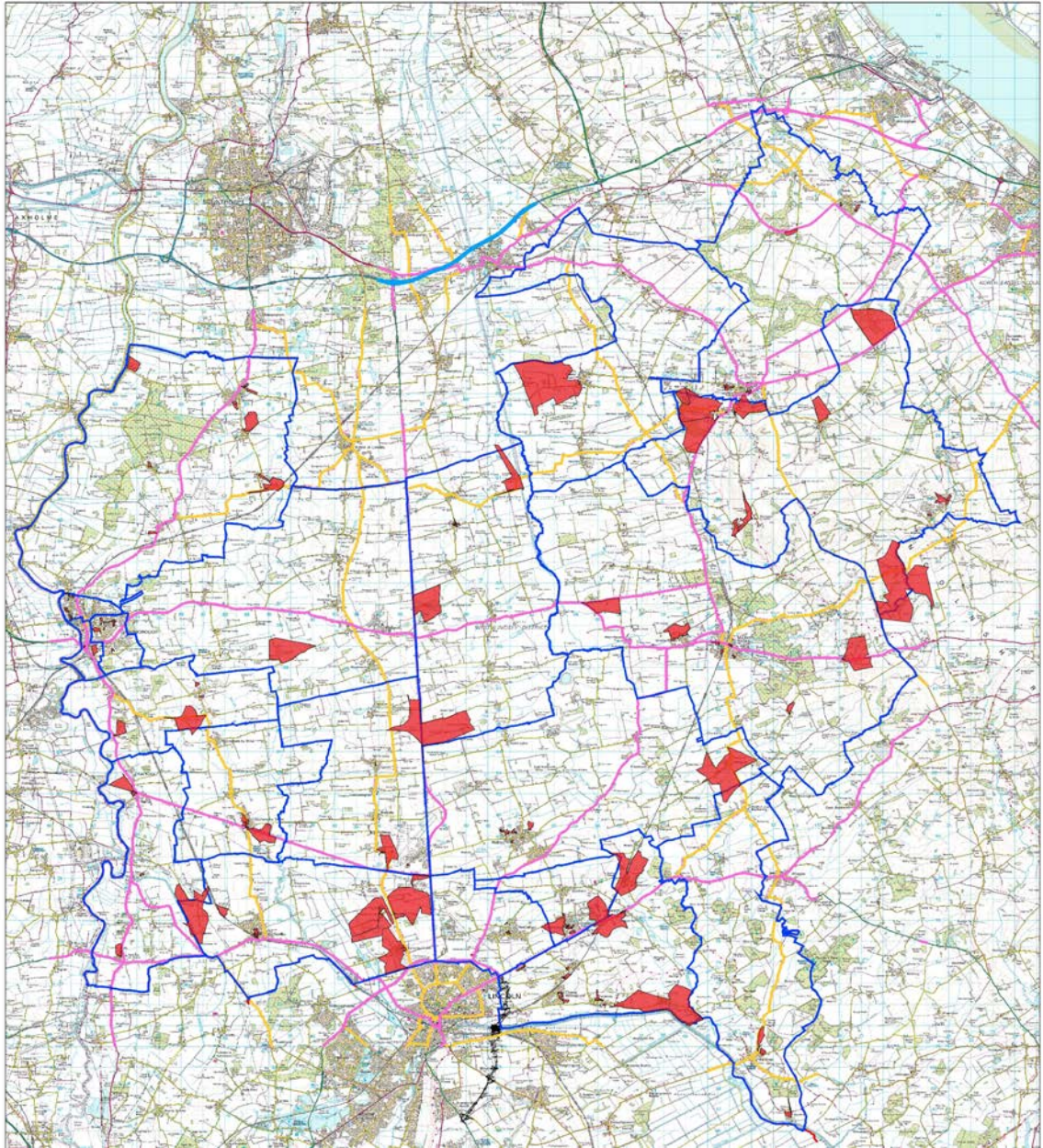
Figure 2: Population comparison

2.2 Broadband currently in home

Out of the 1536 respondents to the survey it showed that 92% of those do have broadband. However 8% do not have broadband. Map 2 shows who currently has broadband and map 3 shows those without broadband.



Map 2: Broadband locations



Map 3: No broadband locations

These 2 maps show that there is a spread across the district for both those with and those without broadband and not specific to 1 part of the district.

The following chart shows why they do not have it; with 48% not wanting broadband or not needing it and 52% not being able to have broadband due to it being unavailable, too slow or too expensive.

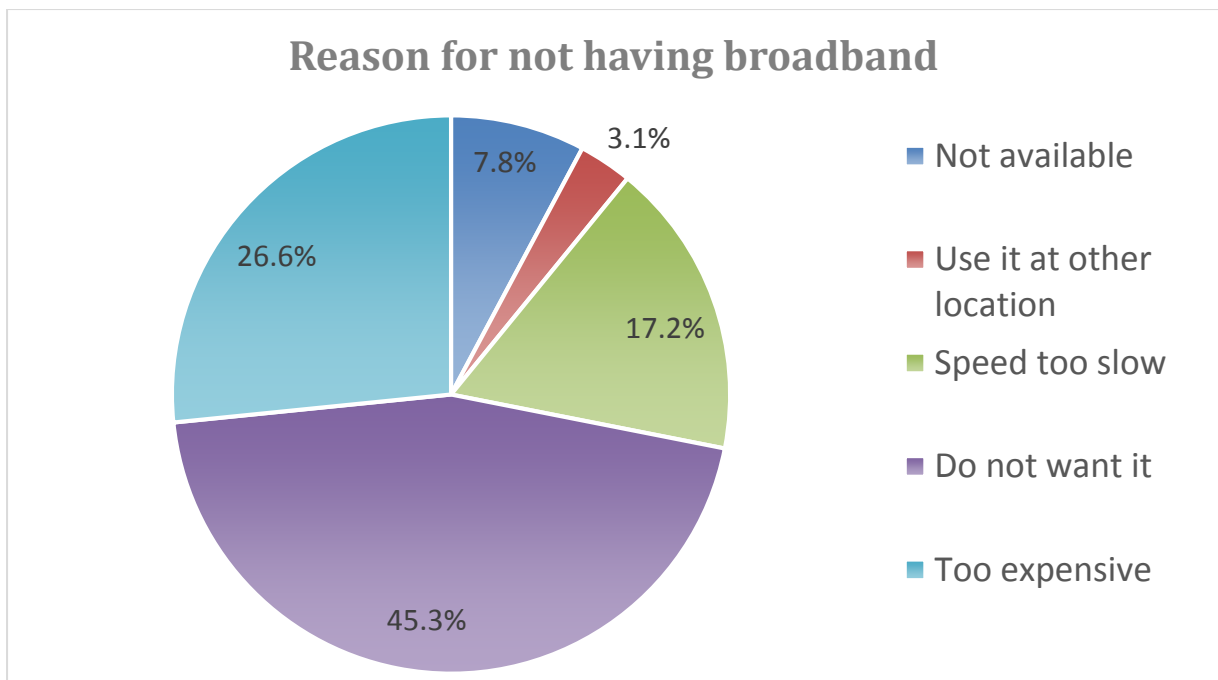


Figure 3: Reason for not having broadband

2.3 Suppliers currently used

Table 1 shows the 40 suppliers which the respondents stated to currently using. The highest percentage was with BT at 55%.

Supplier	Number	Percentage
BT	786	55.3%
TalkTalk	136	9.6%
Sky	114	8.0%
Plusnet	98	6.9%
Virginmedia	60	4.2%
EE	52	3.7%
Quickline	43	3.0%
Post Office	26	1.8%
Utility Warehouse	18	1.3%
Fleur	15	1.1%
SSE	11	0.8%
Vodafone	11	0.8%
John Lewis	8	0.6%
Zen	6	0.4%
Poptelecom	4	0.3%
Three	3	0.2%
XLN Telecom	3	0.2%
Fuel Broadband	2	0.1%

Supplier	Number	Percentage
NowTV	2	0.1%
Supanet	2	0.1%
Unicom	2	0.1%
.Satelite	1	0.1%
AOL	1	0.1%
Avanti Satellite	1	0.1%
Ayrtel	1	0.1%
Chilli telecom	1	0.1%
Daist Group	1	0.1%
Demon	1	0.1%
Eclipse	1	0.1%
EemPSN/embc	1	0.1%
Entanet	1	0.1%
Hive	1	0.1%
Just Telecomms	1	0.1%
Orange	1	0.1%
Origen	1	0.1%
Phone cooperative	1	0.1%
Primus	1	0.1%
Sparta Telecom	1	0.1%
Titan Telecom	1	0.1%
Vispa	1	0.1%

Table 1: Suppliers currently used

2.4 Issues with availability of broadband

Section 3 of the survey was asking respondents if they had encountered any issues with the availability of broadband. Out of the 1536 respondents to the survey, 923 of those have had issues with broadband availability. Figure 2 shows this breakdown.

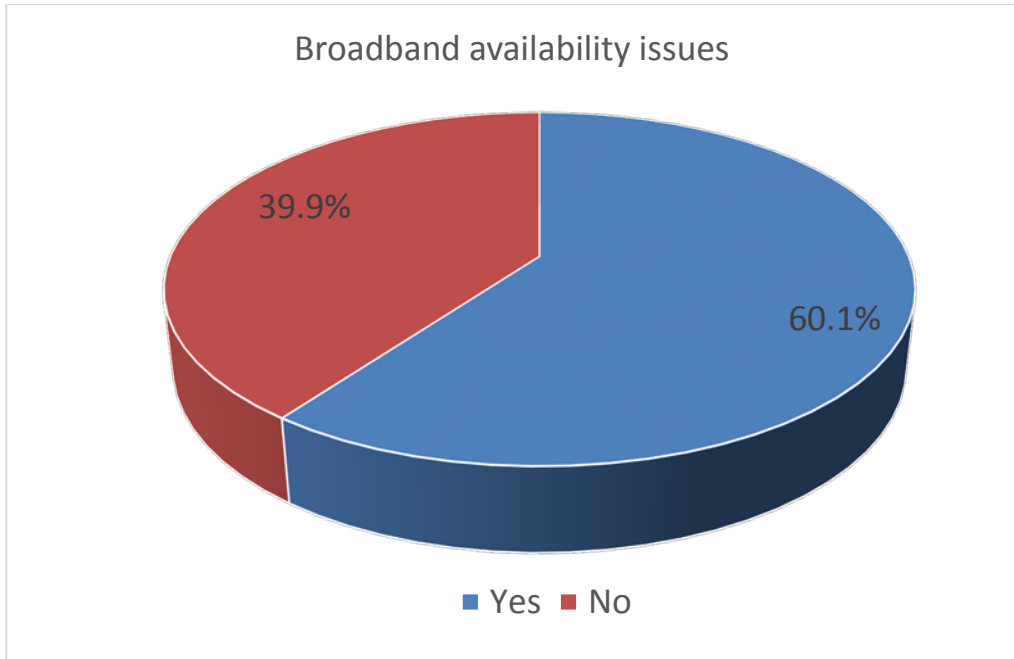


Figure 4: Broadband availability issues

These figures include both those who currently have broadband and those who don't. To show a different between those who have broadband and issues and those who don't have broadband and issues the split can be seen in figure 3. This chart shows that nearly 2 thirds of those with broadband have incurred availability issues of some kind.

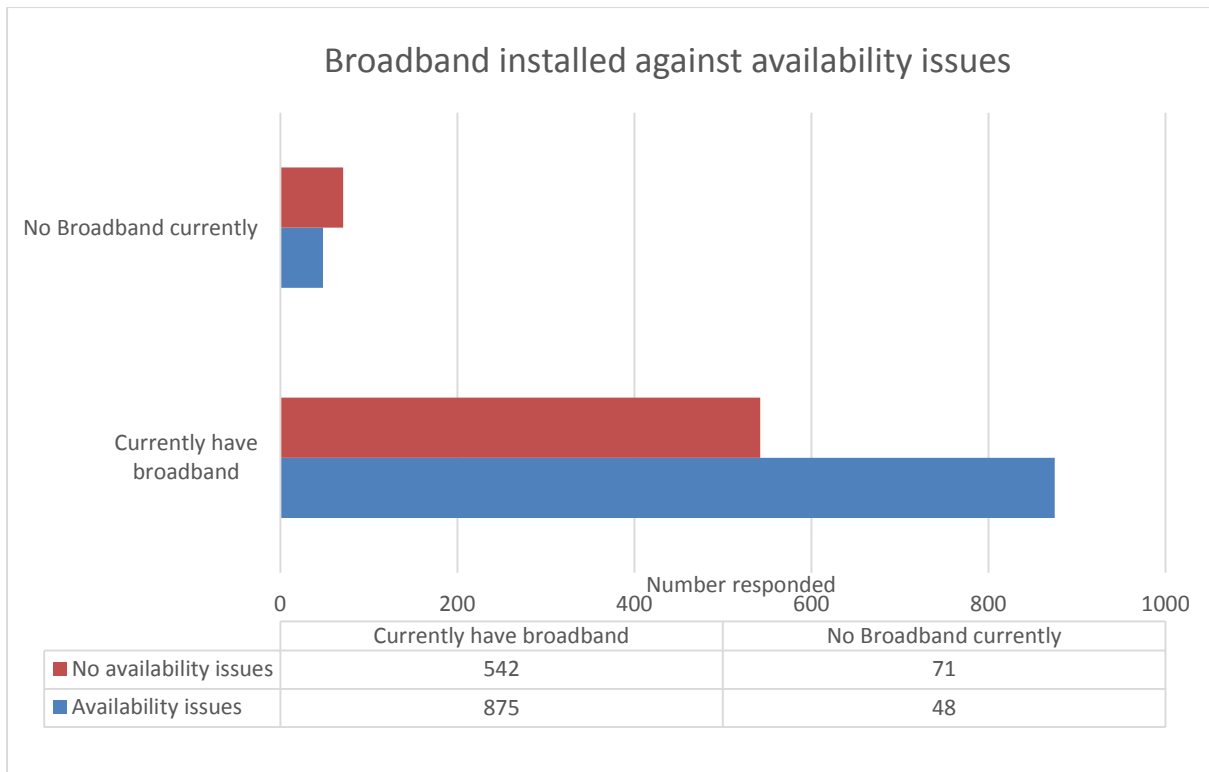


Figure 5: Broadband installed against availability issues

There was 1504 comments around these availability issues that respondents had found with getting or having broadband, please note that respondents were able to mark more than 1 issue. The top 5 can be seen in figure 4 with the rest being shown in figure 5.

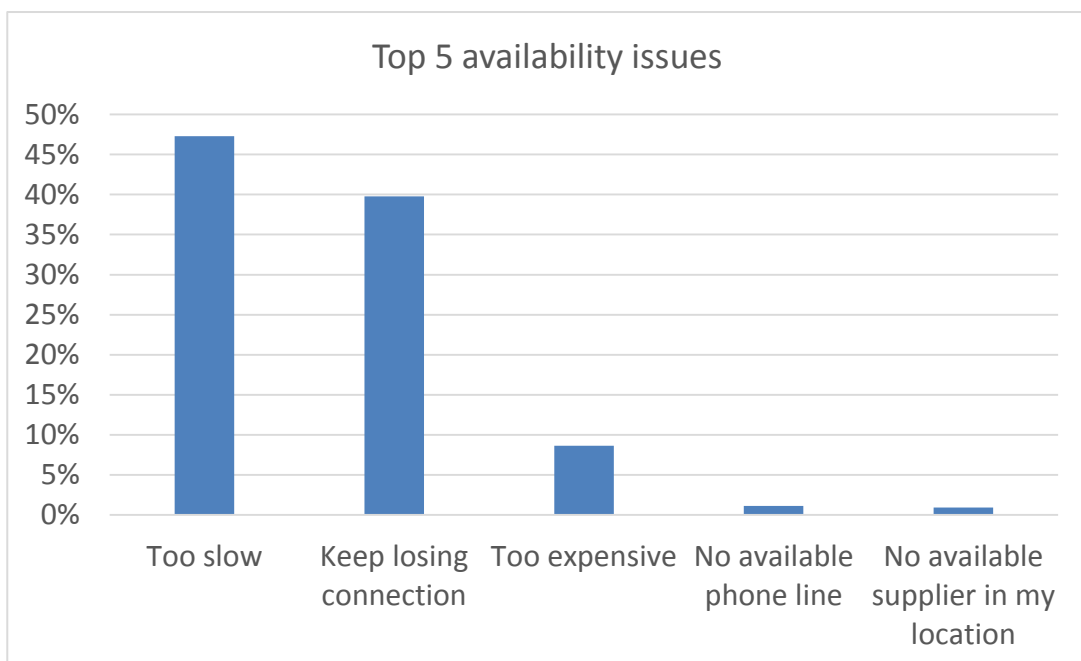


Figure 6: Top 5 availability issues

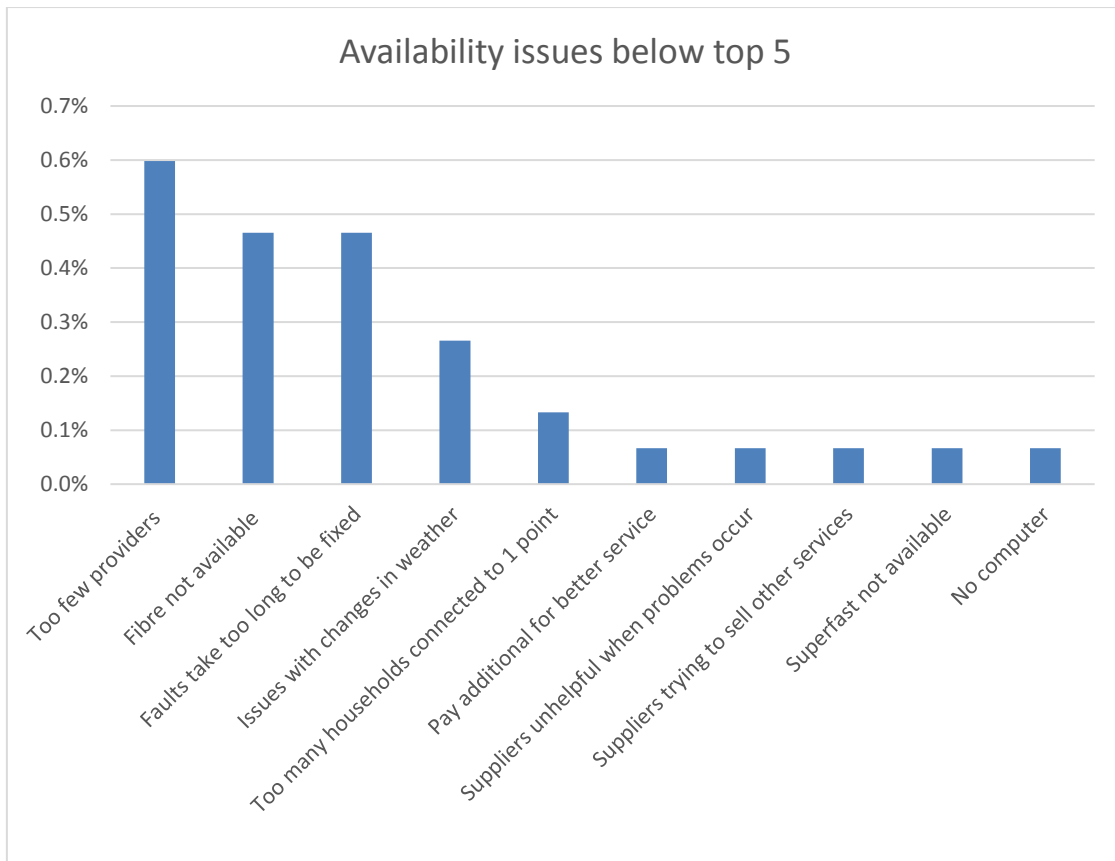


Figure 7: Availability issues below top 5

2.5 Comments made

Out of the 1536 responses to the survey there was 772 comments in this section. Therefore the only comments that have been pulled out are those which do not repeat what has already been stated in the survey such as the broadband being too slow or losing connection.

These additional comments are:

- Cabinet too far away
- Too many on the same cabinet
- No mobile signal
- You get what you pay for
- Speedtests give different speeds on wifi compared to Ethernet cable
- Purchased more equipment to make broadband work
- Pay extra for extra speed
- Pay the same as those who get an excellent service
- Level of service changes at different times

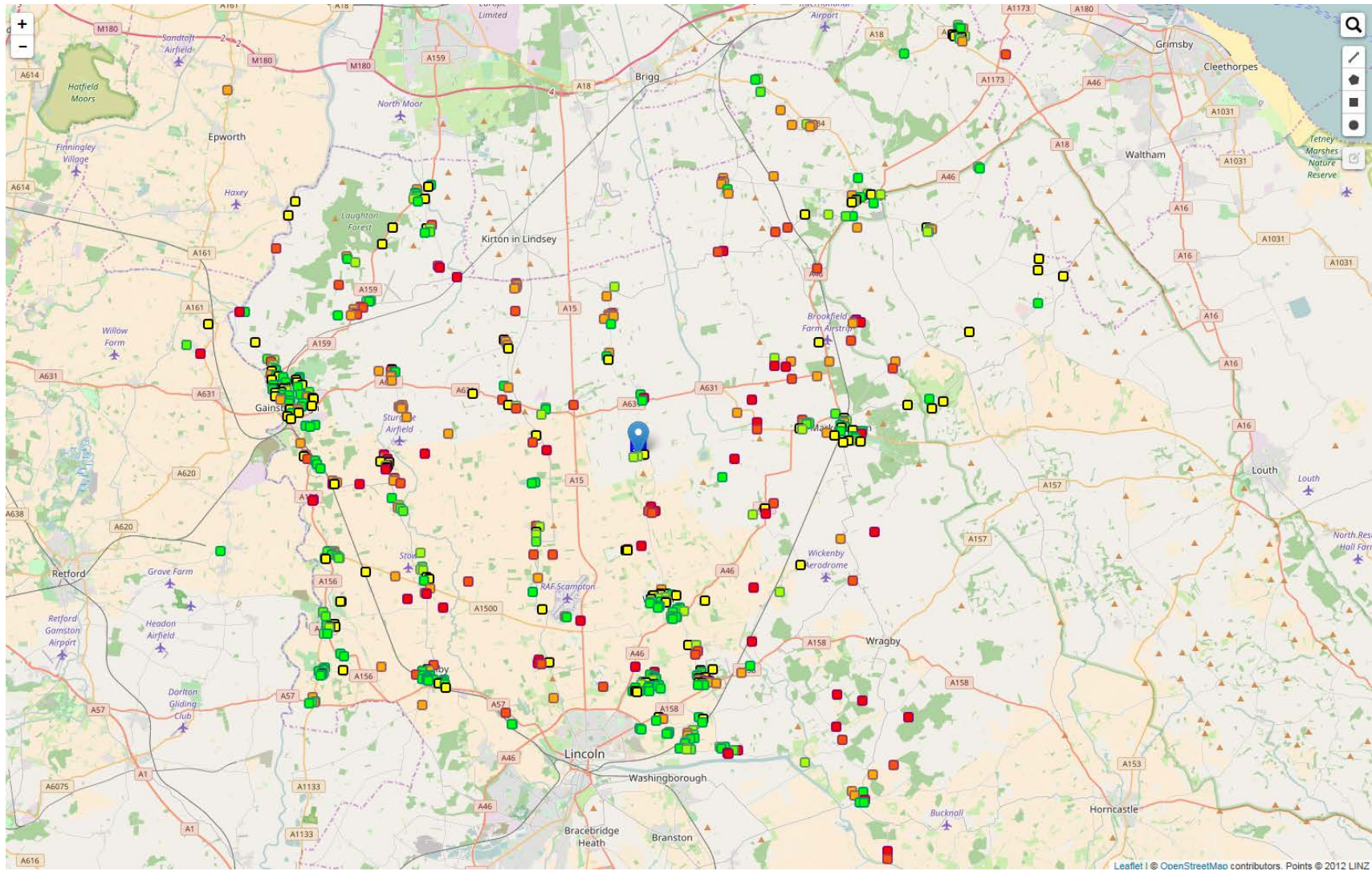
- Fibre/Cable not accessible
- Infrastructure too old
- Village Hall broadband not even supplied here
- Community contacted Quickline for better service
- WLDC responsible for BT not doing more
- Weather affects service
- Suppliers not interested in faults
- Fibre should be to house
- Rural villages need fast internet service to survive
- No good for businesses
- Some villages have good broadband and others very poor
- Cable laid but not connected
- Listed houses not allowed dish on outside so reduces the suppliers
- No room at junction box for phone or broadband
- Cable old and not able to deliver service
- No suppliers available
- Superfast broadband was scheduled in but has never happened
- Freeview poor
- Unable to get broadband without getting a home phone
- Been told by suppliers that we will stop getting broadband soon
- Use the library but closing soon

3 Speed test

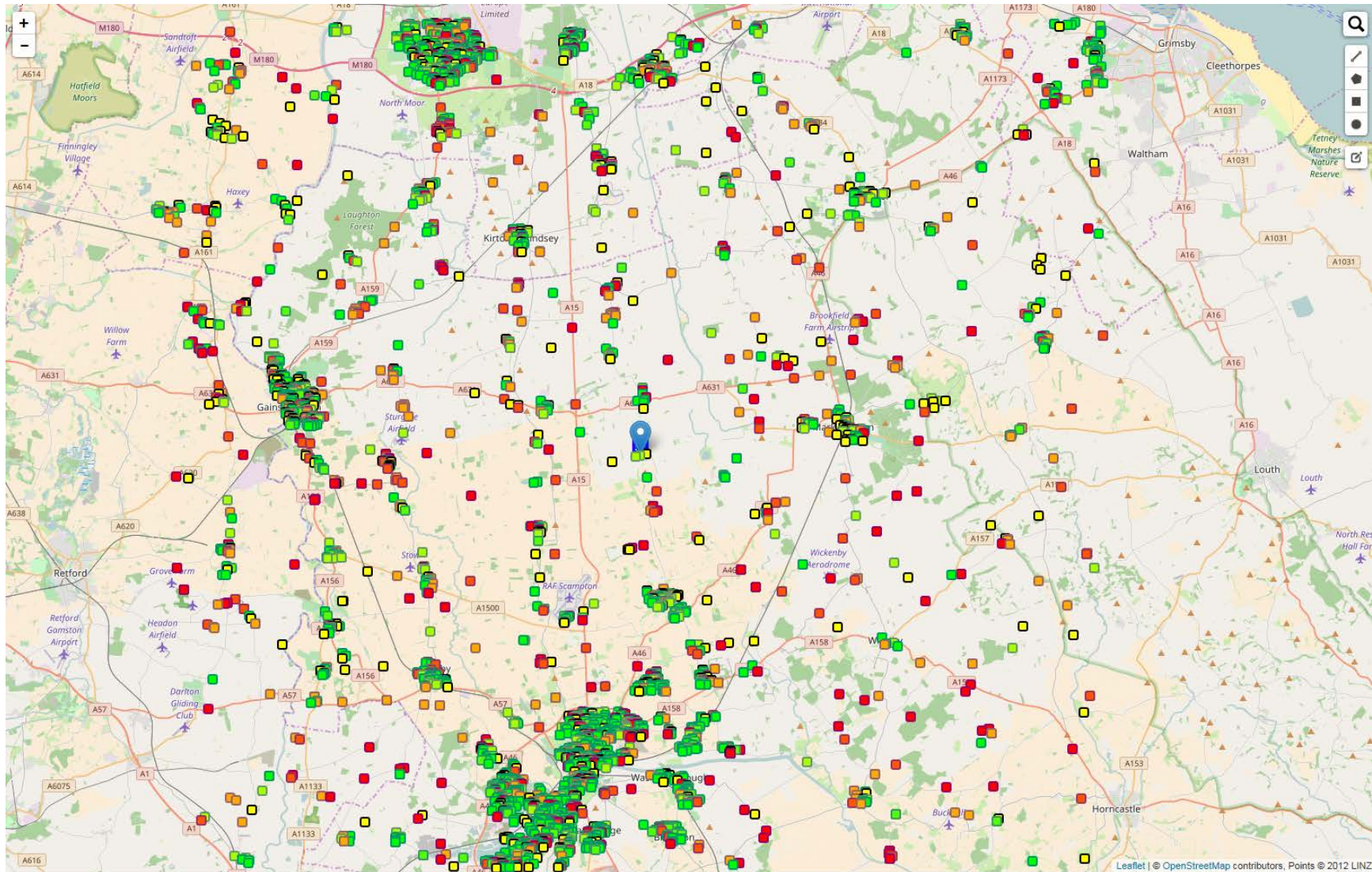
3.1 Information from reports

Thinkbroadband.com is the company which run the speedtest for WLDC. The link was attached to our broadband survey web page and also the online surveys took the respondents directly to the speedtest upon completion. During the time the survey was running there was more than 900 results uploaded to the speedtest.

Map 1 shows the points which the speedtest was completed through our website only while map 2 shows the full data which Thinkbroadband hold for West Lindsey on speedtest completed through all routes including our website, the thinkbroadband website and the onlincolnshire website. Please note that these results are by postcode so therefore the location may vary slightly from that shown on the map. The colours on the map relate to the scale of speed where 2 Mbps is solid red through to higher than 30 Mbps being solid green.



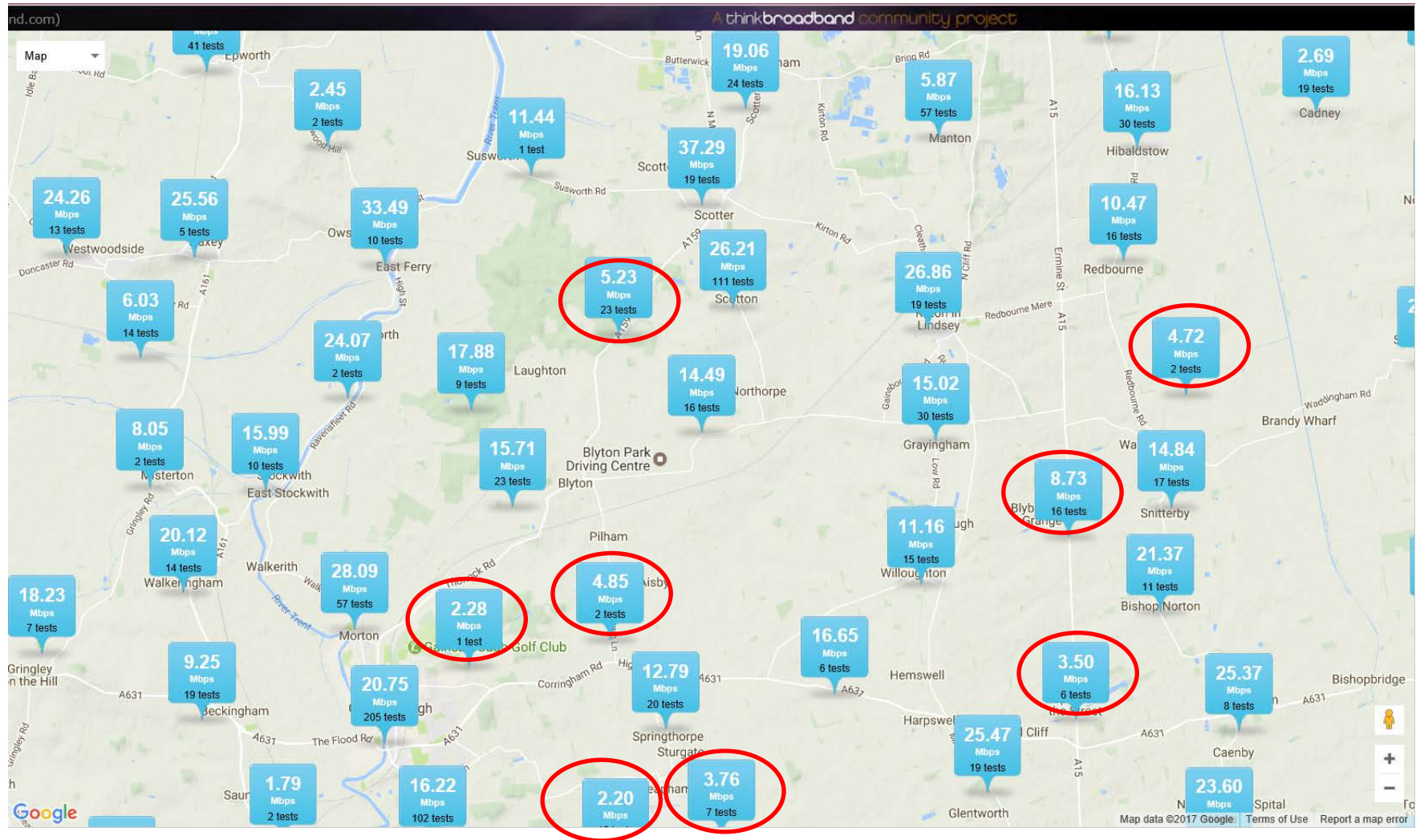
Map 4: Speed test locations through WLDC website



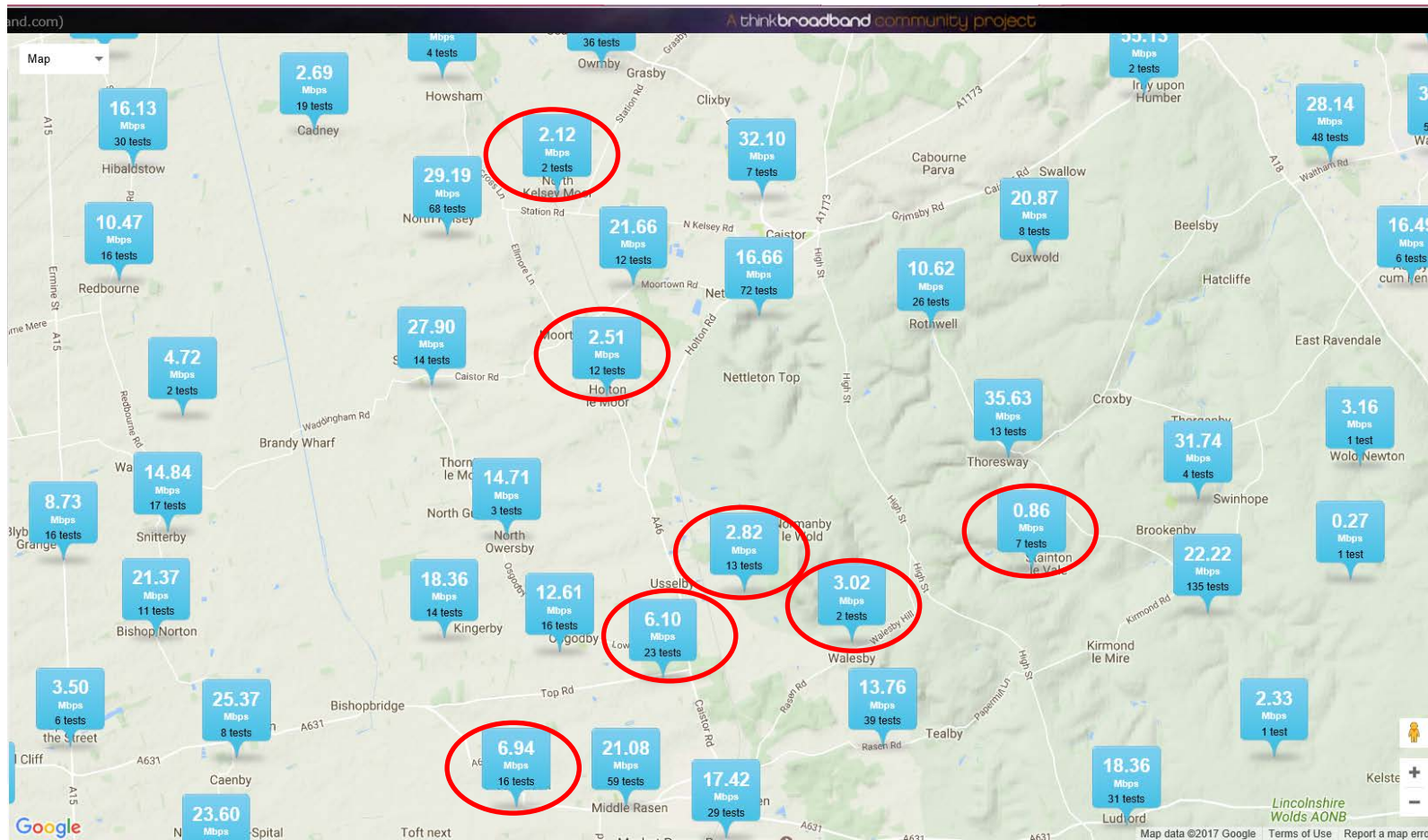
Map 5: Speed test locations through all routes

The following 4 maps show the speeds gained from the speed test in locations. These have been averaged and show the number of speed tests making up that average. To try to get a reasonable picture of the district this has been split into 5 sections with the A15 and A631 giving the natural split and Bardney and Southrey being section 4. More information on any specific location can be found at <http://maps.thinkbroadband.com/#!lat=53.319583214727665&lng=-0.6391574685159163&zoom=11&type=terrain&speed-cluster>.

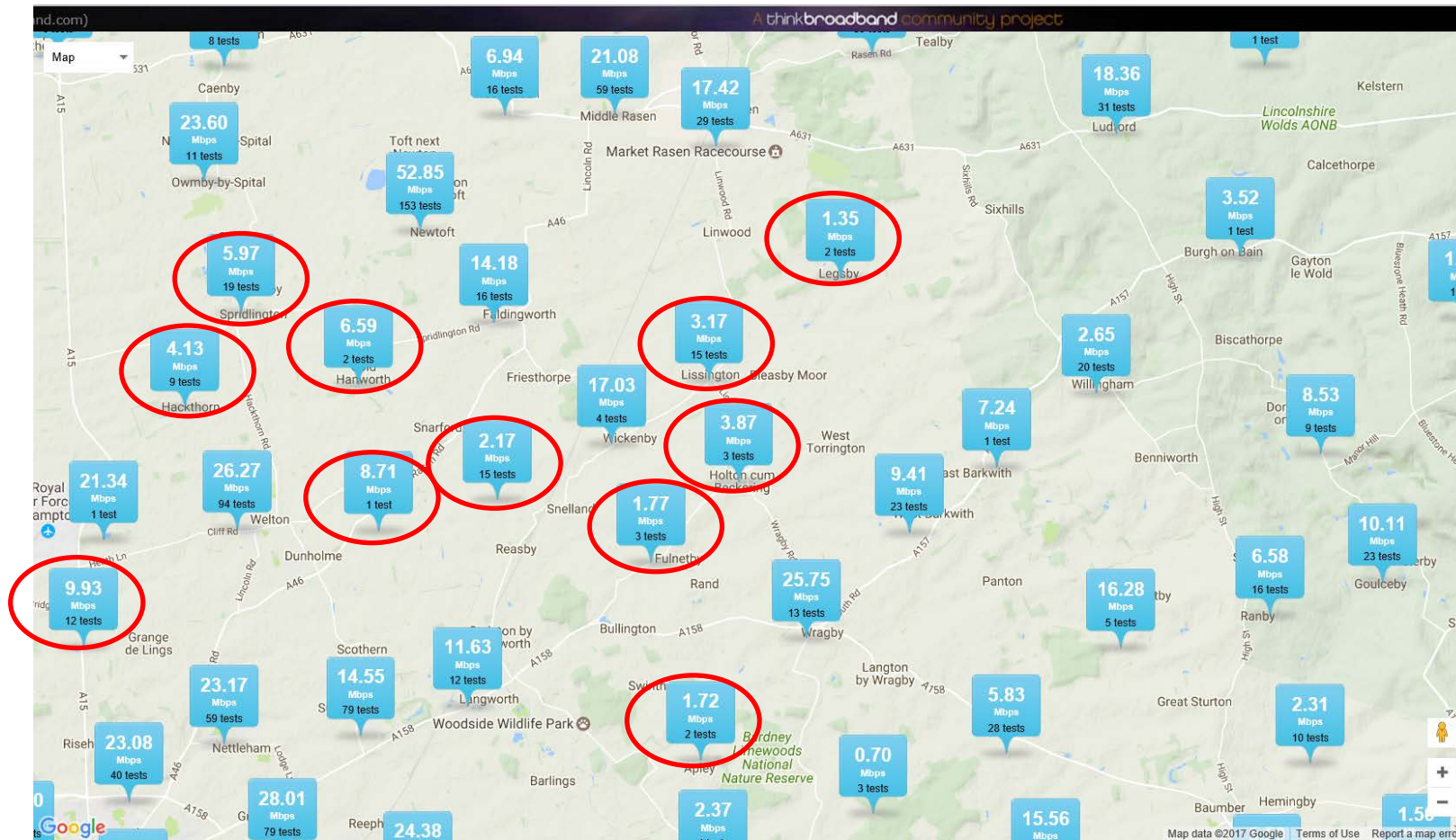
Looking at these maps the areas within West Lindsey which are highlighted as being below 10mbps on speeds are circled in red. It is worth noting that this only shows the locations where speed tests have been undertaken and it also highlights the number of tests taken in those areas to get an average speed. There are 34 locations in the district which are noted as being below the 10 Mbps.



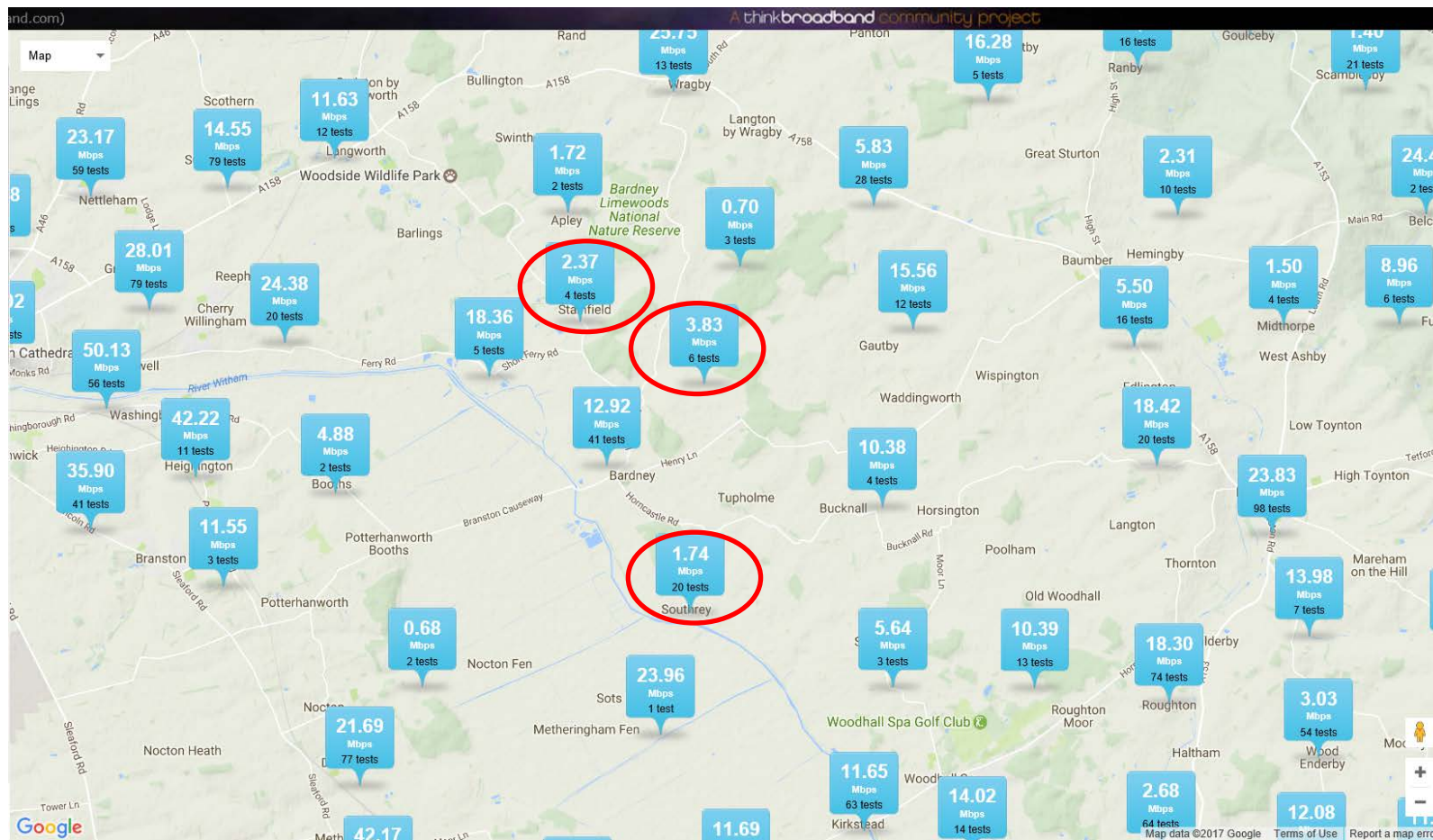
Map 6: District split 1



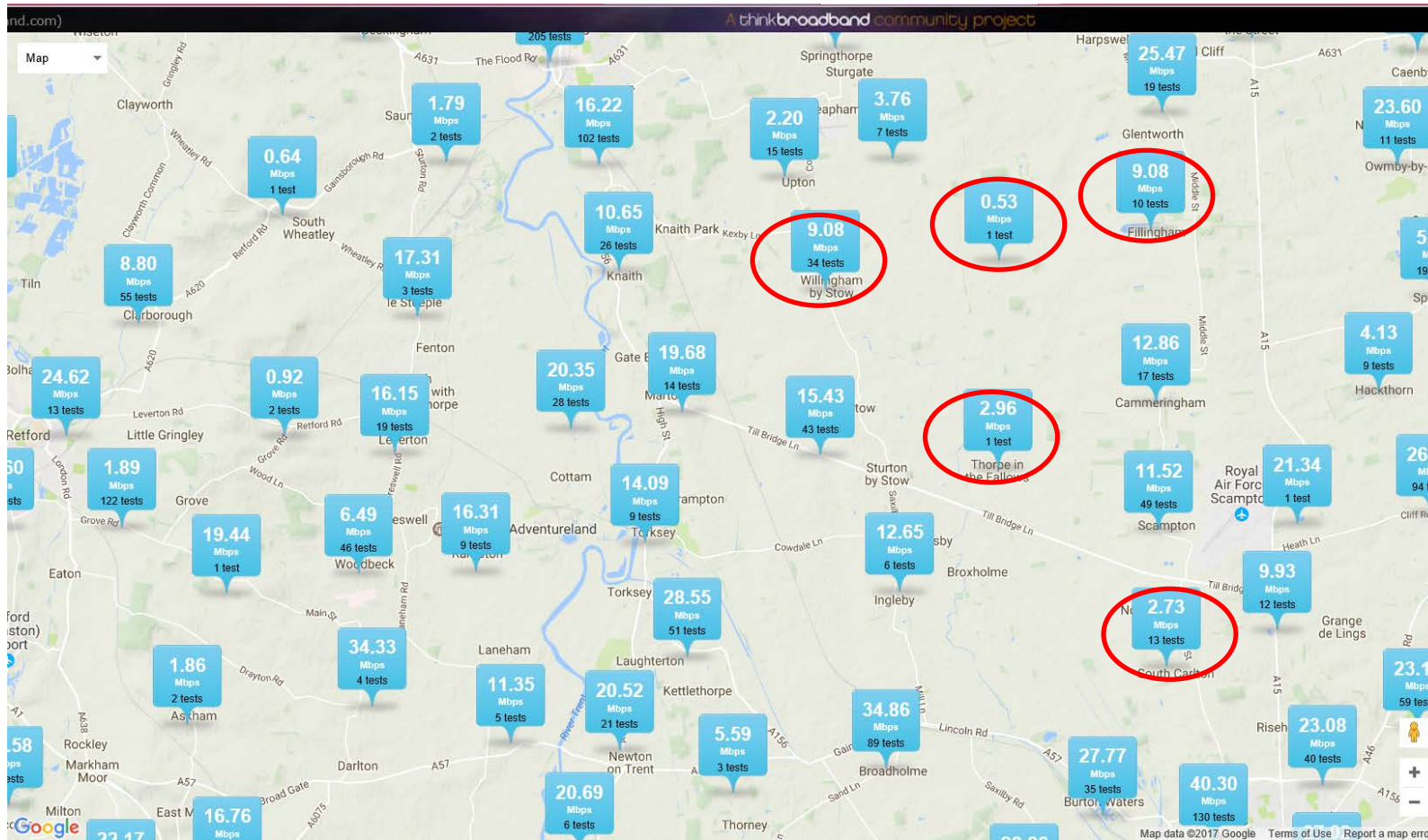
Map 7: District split 2



Map 8: District split 3



Map 9: District split 4



Map 10: District split 5

4 Next Steps

4.1 BT Community Partnership

BT have set up a dedicated team which focus on helping communities understand what can be done to support bringing faster broadband to parts of the UK not covered by existing rollout plans.

This co-funded model helps with hard-to-reach communities and smaller business parks. BT would work with the community to see if a community project could be best and provide them with the tools to understand and establish local demand.

A number of factors can impact the price of the infrastructure upgrades needed to provide the superfast broadband including if there is an existing infrastructure (the cabinet) in place, who owns the land, how long the lengths of fibre needed are, the geographical area and the number of premises being included.

There are 8 steps to this process which are:

- Checking the current and planned availability using the line checker
- Registering an interest in the community fibre partnership
- Assign a single point of contact
- Indicative costing
- Engage community support
- Detailed quote
- Generation of funding (50% due by community)
- Plan and build of the infrastructure

To aid the community in finding the 50% funding there is a Community Fibre Partnership Grant Scheme where BT have dedicated £2 million to support the communities which have an eligible school in the community. To be eligible to apply for the grant the proposal for the new co-funded infrastructure must serve a school that has no access to broadband or low broadband speed (typically <10Mbps). This grant would be up to £20,000 and must be match funded and the contract must be signed within 3 months of the date of the offer letter. This funding is available on a first come first served basis.

4.2 Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme

The Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme has been developed by the Department for Culture Media and Sport to provide access to a subsidised broadband installation to homes and businesses that are unable to access a broadband service with a download speed of at least 2 Mb per second and who will not benefit from the superfast broadband roll out.

Applications for the voucher can be made until the end of 2017 and will not prevent premises from being considered for a superfast broadband upgrade in the future.

The scheme gives help with the cost of installation and any equipment needed to supply a basic broadband service at an affordable price but will not cover the monthly subscriptions costs. This voucher will pay up to the first £350 of the costs and will go towards a satellite, wireless or fibre broadband service and must be for a contract of 12 months or more.

4.3 Quickline Commercial Offer

Quickline have subscribed to the better broadband subsidy scheme which can be used in areas where they can build the infrastructure to enable a broadband provision.

Where Quickline can put a repeater in a village to enable broadband they will if there is a commercial business case to do so. This is on a case by case basis however as it depends on the landscape, where the repeater needs to link to and how many properties sign up.

4.4 The Rural Broadband Partnership

The Rural Broadband Partnership (RBP) was created by Lloyd Felton, founder of County Broadband Ltd, following nearly ten years experience in the delivery of rural broadband networks. The aim was to provide a national resource for individuals, communities, suppliers and government bodies that would encourage and promote the roll-out of broadband in areas of traditional market failure and in so doing bring to an end the “digital divide”.

While many organisations were willing to support the project, none were prepared to underwrite the cost. Unperturbed and convinced by the need for such a resource to exist, the decision was made to develop the resource independently.

Some 18 months later BDUK, the Department of Media, Culture and Sport responsible for the roll-out of broadband in the UK recognised the potential for RBP to support its deployment strategy and provided a grant to assist in the further development of the website, processes and collateral material. This was following recognition from BDUK that a means to communicate, co-ordinate and support the activities of all stake-holders was integral to the roll-out of broadband in the hard-to-reach rural areas previously considered uneconomical to service. In so doing, the site is now closely aligned to Government policy and designed to integrate with the funding criteria required from Local Authorities and LEPs by BDUK.

Beyond this initial grant, the RBP has not received any external funding and must determine its sustainability on standard commercial terms.

The partnerships aim is to support rural broadband projects.

RBP want to:

- Help individuals connect to community broadband projects in their area.
- Help communities create, fund, manage and run their own broadband projects.

- Help suppliers and funding sources connect with the projects that need them.
- Provide information and resources that help you get the community broadband service you want.

The Rural Broadband Partnership website is a signposting agency to those broadband projects already completed or under way. As well as providing a comprehensive database of Community Broadband Projects, they aim to help Individuals, Communities, Businesses and Local Authorities with a process of joined-up thinking.

By ensuring the needs of residents, commerce and Government are aligned the Rural Broadband Partnership are able to considerably increase the Government's chances of meeting the target of universal coverage throughout the country.

4.5 Next steps

Options might include:

1 – Work with Onlincolnshire and BDUK to remove the barrier to providing funding in West Lindsey

Members and Officers have attempted to engage with the officers and Members with this portfolio at the County without success. The potential to use this option would depend entirely on being able to change the view of BDUK with regards their ability and hence the ability of Onlincolnshire to provide funding in the West Lindsey district.

2 – Direct support by the Authority

Whilst there is no allocated funding for this purpose, it maybe an option if members wished, subject to appropriate legal advice.

As there is an underspend within the BDUK Phase 1 members may wish to consider withholding the West Lindsey share of the underspend for use within West Lindsey should it be legally possible. A higher level of withholding amount maybe justifiable given the current assessment of coverage is below the target 90%.

3 – Provide Broadband expertise to support local neighbourhoods

One of the issues for localities is obtaining appropriate advice on the options available to them, given their individual and specific difficulties. Each neighbourhood is likely to have different challenges where broadband is concerned and will need a tailored solution.

The Authority may wish to consider providing specialist support using tools such as The Rural Broadband Partnership to localities in a similar way that we support Neighbourhood plans. This would require additional funding.

5 Appendices

Appendix A



West Lindsey District Council Broadband availability

HELPFUL HINTS FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

- Please read each question carefully. In most cases you will only have to tick one box but please read the questions carefully as sometimes you will need to tick more than one box, or write in a response.
- Once you have finished please take a minute to check you have answered all the questions that you should have answered.
- If you have any questions about this survey please email Katy Allen on katy.allen@west-lindsey.gov.uk or ring on 01427 675149.

Section 1: Location

1. Full postcode:

Section 2: Current availability

2. Do you currently have broadband in your home?

- Yes
 No

3. If not, why not?

- Not available
 Use it at other location i.e. work and therefore don't need it at home
 Speed too slow
 Do not want it
 Too expensive

4. If yes, who is your supplier?

- BT
 Virginmedia
 TalkTalk
 Sky
 Plusnet
 EE
 Vodafone
 NowTV

Other - please specify

Section 3: Issues

5. Have you had any issues with availability of the broadband? **Please tick one box only**

- Yes
- No

6. If yes, what are these?

- Too slow
- Keep losing connection
- No available phone line
- No available supplier in my location
- Too expensive

Other, please specify

7. Are there any comments you wish to make about broadband in your area?

Section 4: Speed test

We are interested in finding out data on the speed of your broadband if you have it. If you are happy to complete the speed test please go to www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/speedtest

Thank you very much for your time completing this survey.

Please return your completed survey in the prepaid envelope by Friday 28th April 2017.



**If you would like a copy of this
in large, clear print, audio,
Braille or in another language,
please telephone
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