



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**12 September 2017**

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

Report by:

Director of Resources

Contact Officer:

Ian Knowles  
Director of Resources  
01427 675183  
[ian.knowles@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:ian.knowles@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Purpose / Summary:

To provide Members with an up to date position  
with regard to Broadband provision across the  
District.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Member agree that:

- a) Officers work with BDUK and Onlincolnshire to remove the barriers to include West Lindsey as part of phase 3.
- b) Officers lobby Central Government
- c) Direct support is provided to local neighbourhoods for a period of 2 years.
- d) Recommend to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee the use of the General Fund Balance for funding of the direct support.

## IMPLICATIONS

### Legal:

### Financial Implications: FIN/61/18

A Capital Budget of £555k was approved as part of the 2013/14 Capital Programme as our contribution 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.

Costs for the broadband expertise could cost up to £80k depending on the option taken. This will be funded from the General Fund Balance. This would be subject to approval by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

### Staffing :

Proposed that a possible additional officer may be recruited subject to internal approval and evaluation process.

### Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :n/a

### Risk Assessment :

**Key Risk:** BDUK using the expertise resource as a reason to not support in the future.

**Mitigation:** It is to be made clear that the expertise resource is to support those communities not able to receive the BDUK support to look at possible solutions and help get quotes.

**Key Risk:** BDUK to not support WLDC in enabling work on phase 3 to include West Lindsey.

**Mitigation:** Work is being undertaken with Onlincolnshire and Quickline to supply the evidence that WL should be included and work will continue until this is agreed.

**Key Risk:** Resource not available to support communities

**Mitigation:** Work with communities would be scaled down and minimum support given only to those communities in most need.

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :n/a**

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

Results from Broadband survey and speedtest <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-council/have-your-say/consultations/previous-consultation-results/high-speed-broadband/>

**Call in and Urgency:**

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

Yes

No

**Key Decision:**

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 the extent of the issue of broadband connectivity throughout West Lindsey. The results of this survey were brought to this Committee in June 2017 with 3 high level options for the future.

## 2. Current position

- 2.1 West Lindsey were not part of the BDUK Phase 2 and we are still not part of Phase 3. The Council therefore need to consider how to support residents in delivering the last 10-15% of coverage across West Lindsey. Quickline (who have been bought out by Satellite Solutions Worldwide Group (SSW), global provider of rural and last-mile broadband has since the last report in June) have supplied Onlincolnshire with the house level data and we are hopeful that the BDUK embargo will be lifted. However this has not happened as yet.
- 2.2 Since the survey closed in April there have been a few more responses received although overall this does not change the results from the previous report. This new information will be gathered together for a yearly review in 2018. The survey and speed test is still available on the consultation pages of the WLDC website and hardcopies of the survey are available upon request.
- 2.3 The data from the April report showed 34 locations where the broadband was below 10mbps with 6 being below 2mbps. The locations below 2mbps were the villages of Stainton le vale and Southrey, the small village of Legsby, and the hamlets of Fulnetby and, Apley, and 1 location which is an isolated dwelling. It is worth noting that this information was from speedtests and therefore additional locations may be below 2mbps.
- 2.4 A visit to Spridlington has been undertaken which highlighted the issues which are not untypical of other villages in West Lindsey outlining some of the problems with getting broadband including difficulty in line of sight signal and the distance from cabinets.

## 3. Possible actions

- 3.1 Three possible options were raised as part of the June Committee report. These were to work with Onlincolnshire and BDUK to remove the barrier, to provide direct support by the authority or to provide 3<sup>rd</sup> party expertise to support local authorities. As work has now progressed these options have changed into the following actions.
- 3.2 **Work with Onlincolnshire and BDUK to remove the barrier to providing funding in West Lindsey**  
As mentioned in 2.1 we currently are not in Phase 3 of the BDUK rollout. However, as we are hopeful this might be overturned we would continue to work with Onlincolnshire and BDUK. Currently the partnership

agreement has not been signed and the £555k is still in the capital reserves. It is also worth noting that since the last report Satellite Solutions Worldwide Group (SSW), global provider of rural and last-mile broadband has bought out Quickline.

### **3.3 Lobbying strategy**

Whilst the work is continuing with BDUK, Onlincolnshire and Quickline to move the situation forward it is recommended that lobbying takes place comprising of letters to MP's and networks such as the Rural Services Network and the Local Government Association.

### **3.4 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.

There are a number of ways this could be undertaken which include commissioning a community organisation (such as Community Lincs) or by employing a member of staff directly. This work would liaise with the neighbourhoods, seeking quotes where appropriate for fibre broadband, engaging with the relevant businesses such as BT or Quickline for example and look at possible alternative providers for West Lindsey residents. It is anticipated that this proposal could cost up to £80k.

## **5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 It is recommended to the Prosperous Communities Committee that WLDC move forward with all 3 actions.
- 5.2 The Committee recommend to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee the funding for action of supporting local neighbourhoods through providing broadband expertise.