



**Prosperous Communities
Committee**

24 October 2017

Subject: Broadband Provision Across the District – Update

Report by:

Director of Resources

Contact Officer:

Ian Knowles
Director of Resources
01427 675183
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) That the Director of Resources is delegated to sign the partnership agreement with Onlincolnshire and pay the amount of £555k
- b) Officers work with BDUK and Onlincolnshire as part of phase 3
- c) Officers lobby Central Government to deliver 100% coverage of West Lindsey

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Signing the partnership agreement will commit WLDC to paying the agreed amount without guarantees on the work to be undertaken. However without the agreement and payment no work will be undertaken. It is therefore in the interests of West Lindsey residents that payment is made to Onlincolnshire.

Financial Implications: FIN/93/18

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. To be funded from Capital Receipts.

Staffing :

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :n/a

Risk Assessment :

Key Risk: Payment to BDUK may be made and no postcodes fall within the acceptable value for money criteria to be accepted as part of Phase 3.

Mitigation: Work is being undertaken with BDUK and Onlincolnshire to ensure that West Lindsey are included as part of phase 3 and as many of the post codes are covered as possible.

Key Risk: West Lindsey is included in the works programme of phase 3 but timescales may change due to the increased work plan. Current plan scheduled to be completed by December 2019.

Mitigation: Updates given once available on postcodes to be included in Phase 3 and timescales involved to ensure visibility to all involved.

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 speed test <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-council/have-your-say/consultations/previous-consultation->

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.
- 1.2 The superfast (UK) coverage across West Lindsey at that time (Nov 2016) was 85.4% based on the website ThinkBroadband.com. The equivalent figure at October 2017 is 86.74%.

2. Current position

- 2.1 West Lindsey was excluded from BDUK Phase 2, based on BDUK's interpretation of a commercial loan to Quickline. However, this situation has now been resolved and West Lindsey is to be included in Phase 3.

The proposed postcodes for this phase are currently confidential due to the commercial sensitivity. However, the postcodes to be passed to BT by Onlincolnshire for modelling equate to approximately 8.5% of the total premises count for West Lindsey.

This figure will change once the modelling has taken place and realistically more like 70% of the postcodes submitted may get accepted. If any postcodes are accepted onto the programme then a change request will need to be implemented to establish the timescales.

If 70% of the proposed post codes are covered by BDUK Phase 3 then the coverage shown above as 86.74% should be expected to increase to something approaching 92% to 93%.

- 2.2 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. This was to be funded from Capital Receipts and has yet to be paid. To be able to move forward in phase 3 this money would need to be paid in addition to signing the partnership agreement. However, there is no certainty that paying this money and will increase the possibility of postcodes being accepted onto phase 3, there is a small chance that no postcodes may be accepted but this is extremely unlikely.
- 2.3 Officers have been discussing the options available to residents of a number of villages across the District which are known to suffer from issues relating to the lack of provision and/or speed of broadband services. These locations are not the only areas in West Lindsey with broadband issues but have been highlighted as areas of concern. These areas are:
 - Owmbly
 - Snitterby
 - Spridlington
 - Walesby

Scrutiny of the over 1530 survey responses from the April survey work has established the following in respect of these locations:

	No of Respondents	Total households	% of Households	Complaints
Owmbly	2	100	2.00%	No superfast (1)
Snitterby	34	105	32.38%	No superfast (c. 10), lack of competition (2), slow/unreliable (7), dropout (1)
Spridlington	11	87	12.64%	No superfast (3), existing means fail (3), BT don't fix (1), too slow
Walesby	2	108	1.85%	Too slow/unreliable (2)
Overall	49	400	12.25%	
	1,536			
% of responses	3.19%			

Across these settlements, there were a total of 49 responses. This represents 12.25% of the total number of households within these locations and 3.19% of the total number of overall respondents to the survey. The main issues identified across the cross-section of respondents were:

- Lack of superfast provision
- Speed/reliability of provision
- Lack of competition

2.4 In addition our MP Sir Edward Leigh met with both residents and a Director of BT in order to understand the situation and promote the cause of West Lindsey residents.

3. Future work

3.1 BDUK and Onlincolnshire

Work will continue to take place with Onlincolnshire and BDUK to move phase 3 forward. It is recommended that the payment to BDUK is progressed and the agreement signed to ensure that the process moves forward.

3.2 Lobbying strategy

Whilst the work is continuing with BDUK and Onlincolnshire to move the situation forward, it is recommended that lobbying continues to take

place comprising of letters to MP's and networks such as the Rural Services Network and the Local Government Association.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that members agree the following:
That the Director of Resources is delegated to sign the partnership agreement with Onlincolnshire and pay the amount of £555k

Officers work with BDUK and Onlincolnshire as part of phase 3

Officers lobby Central Government to deliver 100% broadband coverage across West Lindsey