

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
JOINT RURAL BROADBAND WORKING GROUP  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2012**

**MEMBERS**

- ∅ Cllr K J Baldry
- ∅ Cllr R E Baldwin
- ∅ Cllr K Ball
- \* Cllr J H Baverstock
- \* Cllr J I G Blackler
- \* Cllr A Clish-Green
- \* Cllr D W Cloke - Chairman
- ∅ Cllr J B Moody
- \* Cllr J W Squire

- \* Denotes attendance
- ∅ Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance:

Cllrs R J Carter (agenda item 5 only), P Coulson, J D Hawkins,  
P W Hitchins (for Dartmoor National Park Authority - DNPA),  
J Sheldon (Substituting for Cllr R E Baldwin)

Officers in attendance:

Robert Plumb (WD Economic Development Officer)  
Sofie Francis (DCC Economic Research Manager)  
Carol Trant (SH Economic Development Officer)  
Sue Amos (Member Services Officer – minutes)

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Having been proposed by Cllr Baverstock and seconded by Cllr Clish-Green, it was agreed that Cllr Cloke be appointed as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES**

The Chairman acknowledged the apologies forwarded to the Group.

**3. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE JOINT RURAL BROADBAND WORKING GROUP**

The draft Terms of Reference setting out the aims, key objectives and roles and responsibilities of Group members to the Joint Rural Broadband Working Group was presented for the purpose of adoption.

It was suggested that the following amendments (in bold) be made to the Terms of Reference, to which the Group agreed to:

4. Objectives - To raise the profile of this issue **to communities** across the two districts.

### **3. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE JOINT RURAL BROADBAND WORKING GROUP (cont'd)**

10. Operation of the Group – The Group will be made up from Members of SHDC, WDBC **and the DNPA** with each authority making its appointments at its respective annual council meetings.
11. Operation of the Group – It will be informed and supported by the **WD** Economic Development Officer, **an officer from the DNPA**, as well as other officers and advisors the Group shall determine.
12. Operation of the Group – **The Group will meet bi-annually with the proviso for additional meetings if important issues were to arise.**

It was then

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Terms of Reference for the Group be adopted (as attached at Appendix A to these minutes).

### **4. UPDATE REPORT FROM DCC ON THE BDUK DEVON AND SOMERSET PROJECT**

Sofie Francis, Economic Research Manager, Devon County Council (DCC), took the Group through her report (attached at Appendix B to these minutes) and following are the main points referred to:

- The Connecting Devon and Somerset programme (CD&S) was on track to complete the procurement process and to announce its preferred supplier by the end of October 2012 with roll out beginning in spring 2013.
- Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) had worked closely with the CD&S programme team as well as with the European Commission (EC). BDUK was still waiting for State Aid clearance from the EC.
- No contracts could be signed with any supplier until the state aid notification has been issued and it was hoped that this would be received in November 2012.
- Both BT and Fujitsu were invited to tender for the Devon and Somerset contract but BT was the only responder to the invitation.
- The 'Get to Speed' survey for faster broadband gleaned 25,000 responses. The survey also showed that 19% of the 3,699 businesses that took part had no broadband connection mainly because it was not necessary to run their businesses. The survey also uncovered that 27% of residents and 25% of businesses obtain speeds of less than 2Mbps.
- There was an 80% demand for a faster service.

#### **4. UPDATE REPORT FROM DCC ON THE BDUK DEVON AND SOMERSET PROJECT (cont'd)**

A Member enquired as to what support the CD&S programme gave to local businesses. Sofie Francis responded by saying that CD&S was investing in the following programme of activities for businesses and communities:

- A business ambassador programme (using professionals who advise businesses);
- Business mentoring;
- Business grants for small scale IT projects;
- Range of events for businesses and local communities; and
- Training courses for businesses.

Sofie informed that two companies had been commissioned to undertake business support across the Programme area, these being YTKO and Cosmic. YTKO were a national company who work at creating businesses within the Torbay, Plymouth and Somerset areas and Cosmic were based in Honiton and were experienced in working with companies based in a rural environment.

Sofie informed the Group that some early business and community support work would commence over the autumn period. Some members of the Working Group raised concerns about the timing of the support events and mentoring as the first community to benefit from improved broadband speeds would be in spring 2013 whilst other communities would have to wait until 2015. It was suggested that the timing of any events would need to be relevant to when the service was delivered.

#### **5. UPDATE REPORT ON THE THURLESTONE BROADBAND BID TO BDUK**

Robert Plumb took the Group through a report received from Tim Beavon on the Thurlestone Broadband Project with the following main points:

- The project area had been extended to include South Huish parish.
- South Milton had not been included because of the telephone exchange.
- Malborough and Salcombe were seen as possible phase II areas.
- An autumn fair at Thurlestone had been arranged to engage communities.
- A Broadband survey had been produced (attached to these minutes at Appendix C and D).
- An Enterprise Investment Scheme had been developed to provide private funding.
- Information from similar projects had been obtained regarding the design of the infrastructure required.
- The aim was for a combination of fibre and wireless to homes.
- The aim was to submit an application by the end of December 2012.

The Group was informed that some funding for the Thurlestone project had come from the South Devon Local Action Group (SDLAG) as well South Hams District Council (SHDC) but only for the bidding process.

## 5. UPDATE REPORT ON THE THURLESTONE BROADBAND BID TO BDUK (cont'd)

Sofie informed that Thurlestone had made it through to the first round of bids and both Dartmoor and Exmoor were successful for the second round. There would also be a third round for bidding.

The Group was informed that some areas in Devon were not under the BDUK plan and therefore there would be disappointment in some communities. It was not viable for some remote rural communities to be provided with high speed broadband and it would be helpful to inform such communities of alternative forms of provision such as satellite. Sofie said that when the contract and due diligence had both been completed then they would know in head line terms which areas would be getting the high speed broadband. It was also noted that BT were providing only 66% of UK broadband, therefore, some towns would also not receive superfast broadband.

Cllr Sheldon reported that, after many months of campaigning, Tavistock (together with Okehampton) is set to receive an upgrade to Superfast Broadband in the next round of BT investment.

## 6. AOB

A Member asked as to how the superfast 4G network, due to be launched on 30 October 2012 by mobile firm EE, would affect the project. In response, another Member informed that 4G would be viable in some communities and would be driven by the amount of users but more masts would be required. It was queried as to whether the erection of these masts would require planning permission but no one in the Group was clear on this point. (Subsequently SHDC Planning confirmed that for new masts 15m and over in height, planning permission would need to be sought through the process of Prior Notification. There is an eight week determination period and if the local authority had not dealt with the application by the end of this period, then the mast suppliers can go ahead with erecting the mast. However, 4G would most likely upgrade their existing 3G masts, in which case, it would not be necessary for them to apply for planning permission.)

Robert handed to the Group a document entitled 'Progress Update: Connecting Devon and Somerset'. It was suggested that these updates should in future be sent to the O & S Committee at West Devon and the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Panel at South Hams.

**Action: Robert Plumb to enquire who should be sent the Progress Update: connecting Devon and Somerset**

## 7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Joint Rural Broadband Working Group is to be held on **Tuesday 5 March 2013 at 2.00 pm at Kilworthy Park, Tavistock.**

(Meeting commenced at 11.00 pm and concluded at 12.35 pm)