

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
JOINT RURAL BROADBAND WORKING GROUP
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL 2013**

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:

Cllr J Sheldon (Substituting for Cllr R E Baldwin)
Karen Bridgford (DCC Communities Officer)
Jo Rumble (Dartmoor National Park Authority - DNPA)

Officers in attendance:

Robert Plumb (WD Economic Development Officer)
Sue Amos (SH Member Services Officer – minutes)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

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. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting (circulated with the agenda) of the Working Group held on 3 October 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. SUPERFAST CABINETS – FUNCTIONAL ADVERTISING

Advertising on DSLAMs (Digital Subscriber Line Access Modules) or Superfast Cabinets was raised by Cllr Sheldon and discussed by the Working Group with the following points raised:

- The Government's view was that posters on Cabinets should fall into the realm of either the informing of the function of the DSLAM or to provide safety information.
- Concern was expressed that it would encourage BT and other Internet Service Providers (ISPs), who owned Cabinets, to use these spaces for commercial advertising.
- It was queried as to whether advertising on Cabinets would encourage other commercial bodies to advertise on their assets, ie Royal Mail advertising on post boxes their stamp prices.
- Further concern was raised that the appearance of any potential posters after a period of time would look scruffy especially if they were not maintained.
- It was also pointed out that once a Cabinet had an advertisement on it, it could attract graffiti.
- It was thought by several Members in the Working Group that the decision to advertise on Superfast Cabinets should be with the agreement of individual local authorities.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the attention of WD, SH and the DNPA Planning Departments should be drawn to this issue and advised that the Working Group feel it should be the individual decision of each Planning Authority.

5. GUIDELINES FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Cllr Sheldon raised this agenda item and the following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- Emphasis was placed on the importance of incorporating ducting for fibre optics at the planning stage for new housing developments.
- The infrastructure for the ducting should be done when the groundworks of a new development were being implemented.
- To put in ducting at a later stage would mean using bendable fibre which was much more expensive.

5. GUIDELINES FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (cont'd)

- In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including high speed Broadband.

Action: Robert Plumb to liaise with Planning Authorities in respect of the necessity of installing fibre optic ducting at the first stage of a new development

6. UPDATE FROM DCC ON THE CONNECTING DEVON AND SOMERSET PROJECT

Karen Bridgford (DCC Communities Officer) took the Group through her report (attached at Appendix A to these minutes) and following were the main points referred to:

- Karen informed the Group that the contracts were signed on 29 January 2013 with BT's financial contribution being the largest at £41 million.
- The aim of the contract was to deliver high speed Broadband to at least 91% of residents and businesses and 100% coverage of 2 Mbps to those areas that were deemed commercially unviable for investment in improved Broadband by the private sector.
- There would be eleven implementation phases with completion expected in late 2016.
- There were six authorities and twenty seven planning authorities involved in Broadband projects in Devon and Somerset.
- CDS held a 'Fast Start' event at Dartington Hall on 14 March 2013 to mark the start of detailed survey work for the programme and Karen handed out the presentation slides from this event (attached at Appendix B to these minutes).
- 'Get up to speed' was a business and community support programme funded by CDS which had been running since November 2012. It was designed to equip businesses and communities across Devon and Somerset with the right knowledge and skills to fully harness the improved broadband service when it was up and running. Connecting Devon and Somerset had commissioned two agents (YTKO and Cosmic) who would be running awareness events as well as enhanced business and community support activities across Devon and Somerset. It was suggested that the 'Get up to speed' campaign needed to be publicised more to engage the public.
- Comprehensive survey work would be the first step in the infrastructure roll-out but there would be a complex stage in programme phase planning involving many parties. There would be many challenges to overcome with the rural landscape.

6. UPDATE FROM DCC ON THE CONNECTING DEVON AND SOMERSET PROJECT (cont'd)

- Engineers would look to use existing infrastructure wherever possible and this would involve the installation of 1,200 green street cabinets. Fibre would run from a telephone exchange to the nearest Cabinet.
- There was a lack of progress with the Rural Communities Broadband Fund (RCBF) and CDS were working with BT, BDUK and DEFRA to see if they could assist in resolving this issue, including the impasse between BT and European funding. Funding received from the EU would have to go back to the EU if it was not spent by March 2015. DEFRA were requiring a lot of detailed information such as how many jobs would be created and/or saved. There was a requirement to get the second stage funding applications in and assistance would be welcome from Members. A Member expressed concern regarding the holdup of funding but was assured that CDS were expecting progress in a matter of weeks.
- The town of Okehampton was discussed in relation to the differing Broadband speeds available dependant on a resident's postcode and which exchange a resident or business might be connected to. It was asked as to whether or not Okehampton would be included in an early roll out but this was unclear. The Group was informed, however, that three planning applications had been submitted for Superfast Cabinets in Okehampton.
- It was asked as to whether CDS funding would be available for Cabinets that were not commercially viable but Karen could not confirm whether this would be the case. The point was made that on issues like this, there was only officer involvement and no Member input. It was suggested that Cllr Sheldon should attend relevant meetings but it was pointed out that if every local councillor wanted to be involved it would not work. The Group was informed that County Cllr William Mumford was the current representative on the project partnership.
- With regard to information sharing, Karen said that CDS were working with BT on this, and at a strategic level, CDS would be asking Chief Executives (and possibly councillors) to sign disclosure agreements to avoid leaks to the press especially where commercially sensitive information was involved.
- A Member enquired as to whether it was possible to blog and link to the CDS website.

Action: Robert to arrange a link to be made available on the WD and SH websites to the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) website

- BT provided the Broadband infrastructure that other providers could use, which was called 'Open Access'. A Member queried as to whether exchanges in Devon and Somerset were set to be evaluated. Karen said that CDS were working with BT to provide an interactive map to show information.

6. UPDATE FROM DCC ON THE CONNECTING DEVON AND SOMERSET PROJECT (cont'd)

- A Member said that it was important to come up to the public's expectations and suggested liaison with County Cllrs John Hart and William Mumford.
- With regard to a DCC survey, a Member queried as to whether those who registered would be followed up. The survey showed who had an appetite in a particular area for Superfast Broadband, ie who would want to use the service and who the end users would be which would be useful information for the roll out.

7. BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

- Robert Plumb informed the Group that he would be attending a business support event in Exeter on Monday 22 April 2013 at 1.30 pm and he encouraged Members to attend this event. The 'Superfast Business Partner Preview Event' would inform attendees that Peninsula Enterprise would be launching a Superfast Business service on 1 May 2013. Peninsula Enterprise tended to work with medium size businesses whereas EDRF target more high growth businesses.

8. AOB

- a. **Terms of Reference:** Under item 4 of the Terms of Reference under the heading 'Objectives' it was agreed to change the sentence to include planning authorities, ie to read:
 4. To raise the profile of this issue to communities and SH, WD and DNPA planning authorities across the two districts.
- b. **4G Technology:** Cllr Ball informed the Group that 90% of masts were already for 4G technology and that a pilot had been carried out in Cornwall. Cllr Ball said that he would email the information for circulation.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Joint Rural Broadband Working Group is to be held on **Wednesday 9 October 2013 at 10.30 am in Meeting Room 3 at Kilworthy Park, Tavistock.**

(Meeting commenced at 10.15 pm and concluded at 12.00 pm)