

7 July 2015**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE****BROADBAND PETITION****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to propose a response from Economic Development Committee to the petition regarding broadband services to Lilley Close in Selston. A petition of 50 signatures, organised by the residents, was presented to Full Council on 14 May 2015 seeking local government help to provide superfast coverage to Lilley Close.

Information and Advice

2. The existing Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire (BBfN) programme is well on track to delivering its ambitions to provide close to 95% of premises in the county (when combined with planned commercial coverage) with access to superfast broadband (24Mbps and above) by 2016 and 100% coverage of basic broadband (at least 2Mbps) by the end of 2015.
3. Nottinghamshire County Council is the lead Authority for the programme in Nottinghamshire but improved broadband speeds are not something which the Council has a statutory responsibility for. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that the money available under the programme is used to maximum effect and that the works undertaken: (a) supply a network capable of delivering superfast broadband speeds to the optimum number of properties and (b) is of high quality.
4. All 28 premises on Lilley Close can currently access basic broadband, with speeds ranging from 2-6 Mbps. Although not superfast (24Mbps), this should be sufficient for ordinary web browsing, shopping and video streaming/calls (e.g. iPlayer or Skype).
5. The petitioners recognise that the remainder of Selston can already connect to a fibre network. In fact, in addition to the existing BT and Virgin Media presence, there have been three new fibre cabinets installed in Selston as part of the BBfN programme. These cabinets are now 'live' and ready for homes and businesses to make the switch to fibre broadband via their chosen Internet Service Provider.
6. The Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire Project Sponsor, Broadband Officer and BT Project Manager met with one of the residents and her local County Councillor in February. It was confirmed then that we are unable to amend the existing contract and that Lilley Close is not included in our current rollout plans (Contract 1) and has not been covered through Virgin, BT or any other provider's commercial deployments.

7. We very much appreciate the residents' frustration. In fact since the February meeting, the BBfN programme team have been contacted by another resident who expressed his concerns in relation to their exclusion. On 1 June 2015 Gloria De Piero MP wrote to the County Council outlining her concerns and requesting a clear timetable of when residents can expect to receive superfast broadband (see Appendix A). A holding letter was issued (see Appendix B). Ms De Piero sent the same letter to Ed Vaizey MP, the Minister of State at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, with responsibility for digital industries.
8. It is important to restate the position on the existing Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire (BBfN) rollout. In Contract 1 a finite sum of money was made available to the programme. The contract we originally entered into with BT was for them to achieve maximum coverage across the County with the money available. The rollout plan BT produced and are working to is to achieve exactly that. Maximum coverage with the money available. Clearly to ensure maximum coverage their rollout plan is based on several factors ranging from the cost of the civil engineering work required, as well as the number of properties passed.
9. However, there is a potential solution for Lilley Close. The funds secured under Contract 2 will enable BBfN to extend the reach of fibre further. The intention is to increase coverage in the priority areas of Bassetlaw, Newark & Sherwood and Rushcliffe, as these three districts will receive below the government's target of 95% coverage by the end of the existing contract. That said, flexibilities to the contractual arrangements in contract 2 (set up by Broadband Delivery UK), mean that it may be possible to include Lilley Close for coverage.
10. We understand that there now may be some capacity left in the fibre cabinet that is closest to Lilley Close. This means that through a process of network rearrangement, we should be able to link the residents of Lilley Close to this cabinet. We are unable to confirm with any certainty at this stage whether this will be possible but we remain cautiously optimistic. We should know more by October 2015, once BT has concluded their feasibility and planning work.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. It is a requirement of the Council that petitions presented to Council are considered by the relevant Committee(s) and that a response to the lead petitioners is discussed and prepared accordingly.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described within the report.

Financial Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

14. That the Economic Development Committee:

- a. notes the receipt of the petition
- b. agrees that a response as set out in the report be sent by officers to the petitioners

Report of the Chair of Economic Development Committee

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Nicola M^cCoy-Brown, 72580

Constitutional Comments [SLB 23.06.2015]

Economic Development Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments [SES 23.06.2015]

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- [Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire Contract 2](#) – report to Policy Committee, 07-01-2015

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Selston, Councillor Gail Turner