

7 Matters Arising

7.1 SGC/BT BDUK Broadband update

The Chair called the Town Clerk to speak on the item. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the following update on BDUK Broadband contract has been received from SGC.

“The aim of the council’s superfast broadband project is to bring all residents and businesses in South Gloucestershire up to the Universal Service Commitment, which is a minimum access line speed of 2Mbps, by March 2016. The Council’s project will target areas that have not been included in commercial providers’ plans. Due to state aid law, the council can only invest public money in areas where there are no commercial plans to install fibre broadband. As a result of the project, 94% of South Gloucestershire will have access to superfast broadband by March 2015.

Bradley Stoke is a priority for the Council. The deployment in Bradley Stoke makes up a third of the deployment in South Gloucestershire’s intervention area. It will be the biggest area of fibre deployment, and is the most complex from a ‘fibre network design’ perspective. The rollout of the new fibre network is influenced by a number of factors, including geography, planning requirements and the location of the existing telecoms infrastructure. As you can imagine, designing the fibre network in an area of this size and complexity takes time.

Wick and Pucklechurch, the first communities announced as part of the rollout, were much smaller areas in comparison and the existing telecoms infrastructure meant that the new fibre network required less planning and design work.

As part of the council’s Superfast Broadband Project, BT will be bringing a range of technologies to Bradley Stoke, including deploying FTTC and FTTP, and designing the solution for exchange-only (EO) telephone lines. A streamlined process is in place that is being deployed on a smaller scale in our first communities, so that when BT upgrade the more complex network in Bradley Stoke, it is as efficient an upgrade as possible.

South Gloucestershire Council are fully aware of the poor speeds in Bradley Stoke and the importance of, and demand for, superfast fibre broadband. We also understand the need for high speed broadband for all of our residents and local businesses, and we are working closely with BT to ensure the rollout of superfast broadband across South Gloucestershire is delivered on time and within budget.

We understand that everyone would like to be first in the rollout. However, to ensure we get the maximum benefit from the project for all our residents and businesses, BT have designed and will deliver, the new network in a structured and planned way to ensure the rollout does not lead to time or budget over runs, which would ultimately reduce the number of premises we are able to deliver superfast broadband to. It is not possible with a programme of this size and complexity to plan every area at the same time, so some areas will inevitably be enabled before others.

South Gloucestershire remains one of first areas in the country to benefit from this substantial infrastructure project, and as a result of our early and proactive work, will be one of the few areas to meet the Government’s delivery target.

The Superfast Broadband Project is a priority for all of us. As we progress through the project, we will make quarterly announcements of the next communities to benefit from the rollout of the new fibre network, and we will provide regular updates on our website. We are making our second communities announcement in September and we will give specific updates on Bradley Stoke at this time.

The latest information about the project, as well as a list of some FAQ’s which you may find helpful, can be found at: www.southglos.gov.uk/broadband”