

Broadband briefing note: BDUK and links to Bucks CC PSN

This note should clarify the relationship between several strands of work, namely:

- The BDUK broadband project (Bucks CC, EU/Government subsidy)
- The ongoing demand stimulation work with BT
- The Bucks CC PSN procurement process

Context

Buckinghamshire Business First is working hard to deliver high quality broadband connectivity to communities and businesses across the county. This work has been ongoing for a substantial period of time with a particular focus on:

- Detailed research, mapping and analysis of existing broadband provision – technologies employed, identification of ‘not spots’ etc
- Survey work linked to demand stimulation and commercial awareness – understanding the appetite for superfast broadband from a business and consumer perspective
- Liaison with BT Openreach to facilitate the acceleration of their programme of exchange upgrades (superfast/fibre)
- Development of a wireless ‘pilot’ project in Aylesbury Vale serving a number of surrounding communities (can provide more info – project underway focused on Wingrave Business Park)
- Liaison with wholesale broadband suppliers – a better understanding of their future infrastructure investment proposals

BDUK

Whilst much of this work continues apace, we are pursuing another substantial opportunity in the form of the BDUK project – please see the attached BBF briefing note which provides more detail on this and relevant progress. Set against the existing work with BT and local wireless providers, the BDUK project is a complimentary piece, looking at providing high quality broadband to areas where the commercial market will not deliver. These are primarily rural in nature, many with speeds of less than 2 mbps; some with no broadband at all. In line with the EU directive/Government mandate, we are looking to provide superfast broadband to at least 90% of premises by 2015 – the focus here will be on fibre-to-cabinet technology. This will see some additional 46,000 premises served with an improved broadband service, vital for the needs of 21st century businesses, service delivery, embracing new ways of working as well as ensuring that Local Authorities are well-placed to capitalise on online service integration. Moreover, NGA connectivity will ensure the county remains a competitive place from which to do business. The combined Bucks/Herts Local Broadband Plan (LBP) is the culmination of this, setting out a vision for expectation and delivery up to 2015.

Public Sector Networks (PSN)

From the outset, BDUK made it clear that they would welcome LBPs which were able to make the case for accessing local assets; namely Local Authority PSNs. In many cases, the associated infrastructure permeates into areas which are poorly served by commercial broadband providers, serving local sites such as schools etc – BDUK envisage that this could be used as an additional incentive to ensure a competitive procurement and ultimately, maximise the extent of superfast coverage (dependant on technology etc). However, unfortunately the BDUK procurement timetable does not align with the Bucks CC PSN procurement process, hence we were not able to ‘build’ this into the BDUK bid. Following an agreement with Bucks CC, the Bucks LBP now proposes that the selected bidder will have

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the option to enter into discussions as to accessing the PSN if applicable/commercially beneficial. BDUK are happy with this condition and this was recently ratified within the PSN procurement process – that contract is due to be awarded by May 2012.