

# Minutes

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24<sup>th</sup> August 2016



### Present

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
C Bailey	No	G Maclure	Yes
Mrs M Cunningham	Apologies	R Ramage	Yes
J Goodman	Yes	F Ricci	Yes
P Horner	Yes	Miss V Santomauro	No
D Hufton-Rees	No	P Schwier	Yes
D Mann (Vice-Chairman)	Yes	C Siddall (Chairman)	Apologies

### 16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**INFORMATION:** The following interests were declared:-

Councillor G Maclure declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – ‘Second Evidence Gathering Session for the Committee’s Scrutiny Review into Broadband Provision’ as an employee of BT.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and decision when the Item was considered.

### 17 **MINUTES**

**DECISION:** That the Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 18 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**INFORMATION:** There were no questions asked or statements made.

### 19 **SECOND EVIDENCE GATHERING SESSION FOR THE COMMITTEE’S SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO BROADBAND PROVISION**

**INFORMATION:** This meeting was the second evidence gathering session of the work programme for the Scrutiny Review in to Broadband provision in the Braintree District.

The theme of the session was to provide Members with an update on the work of Superfast Essex (Essex County Council) and how they had contributed towards broadband provisions in terms of delivering superfast broadband, the mean of doing so and promoting improvements in broadband provisions across the District.

This session provided Members with a comprehensive overview of the services and the future proposals of broadband provision for the Braintree District.

Connie Kerbst, Senior Programme Manager - Superfast Essex had kindly agreed to participate in the scrutiny review and attended the meeting to present information and to answer Members' questions.

Members received presentations from the invitees; these can be viewed on the Council's website at:

[https://www.braintree.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/877/overview\\_and\\_scrutiny\\_committee](https://www.braintree.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/877/overview_and_scrutiny_committee)

The following points were made by Connie in her presentation to the Committee:

- The Superfast Essex programme was a national programme which used public subsidies to accelerate the commercial roll out and to encourage the scheme to reach areas it would not otherwise reach.
- The scheme was one of 44 projects in the UK lead by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Department for Culture Media and Sport.
- The Essex programme started in 2012/2013 and were currently expected to continue until 2019/2020.
- Superfast Essex had now successfully completed the first Phase of the delivery programme two months early at the end of June 2016, this was due to be completed in September 2016.
- The coverage target for Phase 1 had been reached with an overall 87% of Essex having superfast connectivity, however a vast majority of this was provided by commercial operators.
- Superfast Essex had a target of enabling 65,000 premises and had exceeded this target in a recent count by enabling over 67,000 premises.
- The objective for Superfast Essex had recently been updated and was now to reach at least 97% superfast coverage across Essex by 2020.
- There was an estimated 70,000 premises in the Braintree District to be served. Out of this 70,000, 37,000 were already served by commercial operators, 11,000 had been delivered by Superfast Essex under Phase 1 and Phase 2 had already commenced with cabinets going live. In total around 50,000 premises now had access to superfast broadband.
- There were around 5,600 premises that still needed some form of superfast broadband connectivity.
- In the Braintree District, Phase 1 plus early Phase 2 and Commercial Operators had achieved coverage of 71%, it was estimated that under Phase 2 and additional 21% would be achieved, bringing the total to 92% by 2019.
- In the existing coverage it was recognised that some coverage provided by County Broadband as being compliant with the NGA requirements and therefore supplying adequate superfast service.
- Superfast Essex were looking at a Phase 3 scheme with potential funding from programme savings that had been identified
- It was estimated that there would be an expected saving of around £2.5 million from the overall ECC programme for Phase 1, which would be reinvested into Phase 3. In addition, a further £1.9 million had been acquired from gainshare, which had come about from the take up of services that had been deployed had been much better than anticipated in the business model that had underpinned the project.

- The business model was expecting a 20% take up within the first two years of completion of deployment, by September 2018, however the take up had already reached nearly 30%.
- BT had recognised the high take up and under the gap funding model had agreed to owe the money at the end of the contract. It was estimated that this would amount to around £1.9million which would be earmarked to be used only for broadband investment with BT. If BT were unable to provide the additional coverage that meets all needs, Superfast Essex would be at liberty not to use the money leaving it in the investment account until the project was completed in 2023 by which time BT would refund the money back to Superfast Essex.
- ECC were considering the possibility of forward funding the money, by including it in business models and potentially contract with another supplier to complete coverage now.
- Tendering District Council were projected to reach 93% at the end of Phase 2 and had proposed that if Superfast Essex helped them achieve 95% they would fund the remaining monies to reach 100% coverage.
- In terms of delivery plan, the first option would have been to work with BT to reinvest the gainshare, however if this were to fail, this money would be added to the open procurement that was planned to be launched in October 2016.
- During the procurement period, all remaining scope would be looked at as well as technology and delivery methods that were compliant with the EU guidelines for next generation access.
- The gap funding model would be retained, and it was being considered to split the remaining scope in to smaller lots to be bid for separately to allow smaller operators in the market place the opportunity to pick lots.
- It was estimated that in order to reach 95% in the Braintree District an additional 2105 premises would need to be enabled which would cost between £600,000 and £1million.
- It was not yet known how much capital each operator who may bid for procurement would be willing to contribute themselves; this would have a great impact on the overall costs in terms of subsidy.
- In terms of moving forward in the Braintree District, Superfast Essex had committed to targeting over 2000 premises to reach 95% coverage.
- BT had advised Superfast Essex that they would be willing to bid during the open procurement period, which would enable a clear comparison of their costs and solutions against other operators.
- Superfast Essex were currently in the process of creating a new baseline map and had contacted all operators and completed an open market review to determine what services were already in existence.
- In line with BDUK's new definition of superfast, Superfast Essex were now adopting the new definition of superfast as meaning 30mb per second download speeds.
- The new baseline map would go out to public consultation following completion of the first draft being signed off by BDUK in early September 2016.
- Members were advised that there would be a change between the map that goes out during public consultation and the final map due to some of the operators submitting information that was incomplete.
- The updated map would be available by early to mid-October 2016.
- Following advice from BDUK it was decided to double the tender period to allow operators to work together with each other and to also allow time for BT to determine whether they could reutilise some of their infrastructure.
- Once Phase 3 comes into delivery it should run concurrently with Phase 2 and also finish by 2019/20.

- BT could not guarantee that they could serve all premises. BT had advised that they had a number of technology solutions for long lined cabinets and would be looking to introduce some of these solutions in to the Phase 2 programme.
- Members were advised that a list of active cabinets in the Braintree District under the Superfast Essex scheme would be made available on the BDC website.
- Superfast Essex were in the process of working with BT to put together an operational deployment plan for Phase 2 and once completed will be published on the Superfast Essex website.
- Operators were shaping their services in line with the prevailing availability of connectivity which would enable more than one person to live stream from one household.
- When Superfast Essex upgrade a Cabinet all associated copper infrastructure gets tested and upgraded if not up to scratch.
- At current the target coverage from Government was still at 95% by 2017.
- Superfast Essex had fed back comprehensively to the draft policy of the Local Plan and had not built in an increase in figures in respect of the Local Plan.
- It was important to collectively put mechanisms in place that compel developers to include this technology as part of development plans.
- It was thought that the number of premises to be served by the developer when building new houses should be as low as possible, it was suggested by Superfast Essex that this number be 25 premises.
- There was currently a study being commissioned by Essex County Council with regard to future planning until 2036 in respect of infrastructure, housing needs and projections for each District.
- BT's commercial rollout was very slow in Essex with the majority of their work in Essex coming under the BDUK scheme, Superfast Essex could assist in the performance of this rollout by identifying areas not covered on the baseline map once it is completed.
- For the Phase 2 rollout, currently the average deployment cost per cabinet had not increased compared to Phase 1.
- Satellite technology had moved on significantly and could now serve up to 30mb per second speeds, it was very good for data streaming, and was also easily applied to hard to reach areas. Satellite connection was a key solution on the better broadband scheme that was offered by ECC. The biggest issue with Satellite connection was data limits and high costs of data.
- 5G technology was already being implemented in Asia. It was not yet known how to define the standard for 5G, however all mobile operators were currently monitoring this and would effectively be an upgrade to the existing technology that is on their masts. It would also more than likely require wall masts as 5G would be the true equivalent to fixed wireless broadband with speeds of up to 1000mb.

Connie directed Members to the contact form on the Superfast Essex website to assist with any queries they may have, and encouraged Members to pass on this information to residents.

The Chairman passed on his thanks to Connie for her attendance and expressed his gratitude for her contribution to the Scrutiny Review.

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## **MEMBERSHIP OF TASK AND FINISH GROUPS FOR 2016-17**

**INFORMATION:** Members were invited to note the membership of the Task and Finish Group. Members were also reminded that the Chairman for the Task and Finish Group will be determined by the Group themselves.

**DECISION:** To note that the membership of the Task and Finish Group reviewing Obesity in the Braintree District comprises of the following Members:

Councillors: Mrs Julia Allen, Stephen Canning, Andrew Hensman, Mrs Iona Parker, Mrs Jackie Pell, Ron Ramage, Mrs Lyn Walters and Mrs Sue Wilson. (8 Members)

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To note the Membership of the Task and Finish Groups for 2016/17.

21 **UPDATE ON TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

**INFORMATION:** Members were advised that the report of the Task and Finish Group Review of Buses and Community Transport had now been finalised and would be brought to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016.

The report of the Task and Finish Group Review of Apprenticeships in the Braintree District had been amended following comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and would be presented to Full Council on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

With regard to the current Task and Finish Group Review in to Obesity, membership of the group had now been agreed and they were due to hold their first meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 where the Chairman would be appointed.

**DECISION:** To note the progress of the Task and Finish Groups.

22 **DECISION PLANNER**

**DECISION:** That the Decision Planner for the period 1st September 2016 to 31st December 2016 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.46pm.

Councillor D Mann  
(Vice Chairman in the Chair)