

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 December 2014



Digital Durham Programme - Update

Report of Don McLure, Corporate Director Resources

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the progress of the Digital Durham Programme.

Background

- 2 The Digital Durham Programme aims to provide superfast broadband access for an appropriate fee to all businesses, homes and communities across the County. The Programme includes Gateshead, Sunderland, the 5 Tees Valley Councils, North and South Tyneside Councils with Durham taking the lead.
- 3 Based on the outcome of the procurement process and completion of the programme, 96% of premises in Durham will have access to a superfast broadband (in excess of 24 megabits per second mbps) while 98% will have access to a fibre broadband service (sometimes known as Next Generation Access or NGA)..
- 4 Broadband Delivery UK, the Government's broadband delivery programme has now split the rollout of fast speed broadband access into three phases. Phase one, which we are in, will take access to 90% nationally. Phase 2, which we are currently bidding for, will take access to 95% nationally and phase 3 will aim to provide access to the final 5% of premises.
- 5 Delivery of the Digital Durham programme will exceed national access to superfast broadband expectations.
- 6 The superfast rollout is primarily aimed at a retail product and services will be sustainable and provided by retail Internet Service Providers (BT, Sky, Talk Talk etc.) at the same rates that are provided across the country. The infrastructure, however, will support more commercially available products.
- 7 All remaining premises in the County will have access to a minimum service of 2mbps per second and the programme will continue to try and improve this service level.

Programme update

- 8 Work continues to take place in the following BT exchange areas: Bishop Auckland; Cockfield; Consett; Durham; Sacriston; Sherburn Hill; Shildon; Spennymoor; Staindrop; Thornley; West Auckland; Willington, Beamish, Coxhoe, Crook, Meadowfield, New Brancepeth, Peterlee, Stanley, Washington, Burnopfield, Dipton, Lanchester, Wellfield, Sedgefield, Ryton, Trimdon, Witton le Wear, Rushyford, Redcar, Hylton, Greatham, Felling, Easington, Ebchester, Blaydon, Dunston, Darlington, Edmundbyers, Eston Grange, Gateshead, Middlesbrough, Piercebridge, Seaham, Sunderland North, Tow Law, Whitburn.
- 9 132 cabinets across these areas are engineering complete of which 127 are now taking orders for fibre broadband services.
- 10 In addition BT Openreach have physically installed a further 94 new fibre cabinets, however these are not fully operational as they require either power, access to a fibre spine, or have duct blockages which need clearing.
- 11 In terms of delivery; the Programme is slightly ahead of schedule and as a result of the Council's intervention over 30,000 additional premises in the County can now access improved fibre based broadband services.
- 12 The Programme Team won runner up in the Council's 'Great Staff Great Stuff' Team of the Year awards evening on 1 December 2014.
- 13 Our bid for the Phase 2 contract will be returned on 23 January 2015. The estimated date for phase 2 contract award is 2 March 2015.
- 14 Demand stimulation activities continue across the County, in areas where fibre cabinets have been installed, making owners/occupiers of premises aware of the benefits of superfast broadband and how to obtain the new service.
- 15 This activity takes many forms including:
 - a. Marketing literature: leaflets, posters, guard rail boards, banners, pull up banners, feather flags, postcards: street image flyer:
 - b. Case studies: A family from Consett, Dyer engineering.
 - c. The Digital Durham website www.digitaldurham.org
 - d. Cabinet stickers
 - e. Events: Cestria Housing Online Owls sessions, Sacriston Party in the Park, Get online week took in Millennium Place in Durham City Centre, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Consett, ICT awareness day, ICT conference, Trimdon launch.
 - f. Articles: Members newsletter (monthly article), County Durham News (quarterly article to residents), Buzz staff magazine (monthly article).
- 16 Take up of superfast broadband services, which need to be ordered by the residents and businesses is being monitored and is currently projecting to be in excess of 20%

Recommendations

17 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked:-

- (i) To note and comment upon the information provided.
- (ii) To agree to receive a further progress report on the development of the Digital Durham programme at a future meeting of the Committee.

Background papers:

Big Board 2 Programme Update Report 19 November 2014

Digital Durham Strategic Board Demand Stimulation Report 28 October 2014

Contact: Tony Thompson - Commercial Manager – 03000 261052
Author: Tony Thompson – Commercial Manager – 03000 261052

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity –None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – None

Procurement - None

Disability Discrimination Act –None

Legal Implications – None