

Information

for County Councillors

Sheet Number:
2013-17/For
Com Gov to fill in

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Date:	24 th October 2016
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To:	All Members
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Connecting Devon and Somerset Member Briefing October 2016

- **Commercial Programme**
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Commercial Programme

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) is concerned that should commercial telecoms companies not deliver their own commercial roll out programmes that this will prevent CDS from reaching the Government's 90% superfast broadband target by the end of 2016.

That said, BT has confirmed to CDS that the £94m publicly-funded CDS phase 1 programme remains on schedule to meet its original contracted target completion of the end of 2016. BT has assured CDS that it is continuing to invest across Somerset and Devon. CDS is also having discussions with other commercial operators in the area to ensure their connections are being delivered at pace.

CDS is responsible for delivering the £94m publicly funded superfast broadband programme across the two counties. The Government's 90% superfast target should have been achieved through a combination of CDS phase 1, BT and other commercial providers.

Phase 1 progress

BT has reported to CDS Board that they are confident the programme will deliver the contracted 277,878 superfast connections by the end of the deployment phase in December 2016. At the end of the July to September 2016 quarter, BT reported that around 6,000 further premises have been connected to fibre broadband, bringing the

Total Homes Passed (THP) for phase 1 premises to around 316,000, of which around 263,000 premises are capable of accessing superfast broadband.

As we approach the end of the contract, the pool of structures available for BT to build against is getting smaller and BT are working very hard to resolve issues such as wayleaves so they can achieve their target by the end of the year.

Phase 2 procurement

As reported to members over the summer, the CDS phase 2 tender opportunity was launched on 8th July 2016. The CDS partnership is offering £39.5m public investment to deliver superfast broadband at a minimum of 30Mbps to many tens of thousands of premises in predominantly rural areas of Devon and Somerset. The tender is seeking as much coverage as possible by the end of 2017.

Bidders were required to submit Expressions of Interest by 12th August and by this date we had received a good number of responses covering the entire area. The deadline for full bid submissions is 21st October. The CDS team aim to have all bids evaluated by 14th November. Contract award is expected in December.

Dartmoor and Exmoor update

The wireless network being deployed by Airband, the broadband contractor for Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, went live over the summer across parts of Dartmoor. Around 1,000 premises are now able to access a superfast wireless broadband service and the programme is on track to make the technology available to 4,000 premises before the end of the year.

On Exmoor the build has progressed well over the summer with the first premises going live at the end of September. Airband are on track to complete their build to 1,800 premises by the end of the year.

CDS Broadband Voucher Scheme update

The CDS Broadband Voucher Scheme has been live for over 6 months and BDUK have confirmed that it is the most successful in England. The scheme provides anyone with a broadband speed of less than 2 Mbps with a voucher for £500 towards the cost of a new broadband connection. To date CDS has received in excess of 3,000 applications. Of these over 2,400 have been approved and over 250 installations have been completed. There are a range of suppliers on the scheme offering Satellite, Wireless, Fibre, and 4G connections. The scheme closes on 30th November to allow enough time for the installations to be completed and invoiced by 31st March 2017.

Further details can be found on the CDS website at:
<http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/cds-broadband-voucher-scheme/>

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