

<b>SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 5</b>
<b>16 MARCH 2016</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Executive Director of Strategic Resources**

**Contact Officer(s) – Richard Godfrey, Assistant Director: Digital Peterborough**  
**Contact Details – richard.godfrey@peterborough.gov.uk / tel: 01733 317989**

### **UPDATE ON SUPERFAST BROADBAND IN RURAL AREAS**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities with an update on Superfast Broadband in Rural Areas, following a request made by the Commission.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Commission is requested to endorse the work undertaken as part of Connecting Cambridgeshire to deliver Superfast broadband and to acknowledge the investment made by Gigaclear in providing a number of villages with fibre broadband connectivity.

#### **3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The link to the Sustainable Community Strategy is by helping in ‘delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth’.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are the lead authorities responsible for delivering the Connecting Cambridgeshire project.
- 4.2 Following a competitive procurement process Connecting Cambridgeshire signed a contract with BT in March 2013. The contract means that Peterborough and Cambridgeshire will have some of the best fibre broadband in the country by the end of 2015.
- 4.3 Connecting Cambridgeshire is working closely with BT to ensure that the roll-out of better broadband is undertaken in the most cost effective manner to ensure best use of public money.
- 4.4 Over 30% of the Peterborough Intervention Area premises are now live with 2695 premises passed out of 8347. The delivery of the remaining 5652 premises will be throughout phases 5, 6 and 7.
- 4.5 Phase 5 is now underway, with phases 6 and 7 due to start in April and July respectively.
- 4.6 In terms of cabinets, 16 out of a total of 78 structures are now live, with a further 38 expected by mid-summer.
- 4.7 Take-up of superfast broadband in those areas now live is close to 20% as an average, which is in line with expectations.
- 4.8 Combined with existing commercial broadband provision, 98 per cent of homes and businesses across the county can expect to have access to fibre-based broadband by the end of the contract.

#### 4.9 Gigaclear

4.10 Gigaclear is one of the fastest and most reliable broadband networks in the UK delivered only to rural areas of England. They deliver better broadband than is available to most towns and cities. With ultrafast, pure fibre broadband, available to every one of their customers, rural communities will be ready to meet the demands of Internet services of the future.

4.11 In June 2014 Gigaclear announced its intention to undertake a demand registration process for the majority of villages between Peterborough and Stamford. Subject to a 30% pre-order level Gigaclear would then invest in building a fibre connection to these villages. The council has not invested in this network and has no contract with Gigaclear.

4.12 In January 2015 Gigaclear announced that they had reached the 30% target and work has now started in installing the network with the first villages expected to be live in June 2015. Gigaclear will lay fibre past all premises in the villages allowing those residents who haven't pre-registered to take a service should they wish to in due course.

4.13 Unfortunately Marholm had a particularly low take-up of only 17% (12 out of 71 properties) and so the decision has been made to exclude Marholm from the first round. If demand should increase then this will be re-assessed.

4.14 The introduction of Gigaclear into these villages should be seen as good for competition and has prompted activity increase from BT and now gives residents a wider range of options than they have had before.

#### **5. KEY ISSUES**

5.1 Superfast broadband will help to boost growth and create jobs, improve our health and make life easier, learn new skills for success and support people who need it.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Connecting Cambridgeshire is a city-wide project and as such there are no implications for any individual Ward.

#### **7. NEXT STEPS**

7.1 A further update report can be presented to the Commission for Rural Communities Committee at an agreed date in the future. Monitoring of the Connecting Cambridgeshire project will continue through the Member Officer Working Board.

#### **8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

8.1 There were no background documents used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.