
REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	17 SEPTEMBER 2008	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	CHARLES JONES NIGEL GLOSSOP (EXT. 5703)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF BROADBAND IN SOUTH DERBYSHIRE	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: N/A

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Committee notes the work carried out on the review of broadband in South Derbyshire.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To advise Members of the progress on the review of broadband in South Derbyshire.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have concerns that the broadband infrastructure in South Derbyshire is inadequate, especially in rural areas, compared to other areas of the Country. The Committee wanted to investigate what plans British Telecom (BT) have in place to upgrade and develop the broadband infrastructure and how existing problems can be solved in South Derbyshire.
- 3.2 Two press releases have been issued (see http://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/news/information_superhighway.htm and <http://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/news/Broadband+blues.htm>) asking the public to inform the Council of issues being experienced in South Derbyshire.
- 3.3 The target of the press releases was to highlight as many case studies as possible so that these can be raised and discussed with BT. The more case studies available means the more impact that can be had with BT on improving the broadband infrastructure.
- 3.4 It should be noted that each press release has clearly stated that the Council can't help fix any problems already raised with a provider.
- 3.5 The reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7th May 2008 and the 25th June 2008 updated the committee on the progress of the review of broadband in

South Derbyshire.

Progress Since 25th June 2008

- 3.6 Up to the 31st of August the Council received 129 case studies/comments on the broadband infrastructure in South Derbyshire, all of a negative nature.
- 3.7 Further work has been carried out on the case studies to clarify and provide specific information before it is presented to BT. The following areas were covered:
- The broadband provider confirmed.
 - The broadband phone number.
 - Address details for properties confirmed.
 - If the case study concerned has broadband, then what speed is achieved.
- 3.8 On the 5th August 2008 the 129 case studies were sent to Tom Hamilton the BT Regional Manager for the East Midlands. Tom Hamilton then reviewed the case studies sent.
- 3.9 Subsequently, at a meeting on the 27th August 2008 Tom Hamilton presented to Councillor Charles Jones, Councillor Gill Farrington and the Head of IT and Business Improvement Nigel Glossop what actions BT would take in relation to the case studies raised. This included:
- The future plans that BT has to improve broadband across the Country (e.g. introduction of fibre from exchanges to cabinets, the continued roll out of ADSL2+) and how this would impact South Derbyshire.
 - Confirmation that some areas of South Derbyshire will continue to have broadband issues, even with these infrastructure improvements.
 - That the appropriate parts of BT will look into the issues raised with a view to addressing any problems highlighted, the results of these investigations and any actions identified will be communicated as soon as we have detail, with an update expected by early October.
 - Agree to send to the Council a response from BT that can then be sent to the 129 people who have raised an issue/case study.
- 3.10 The email, see Appendix A, has been sent to the 129 people who raised broadband case studies with the Council. The email has thanked people for their contribution to our broadband campaign
- 3.11 A further press release will be made to highlight the impact that the lobbying carried out by South Derbyshire District Council has had with BT.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None arising directly from this report.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The review of broadband in South Derbyshire clearly fits in with two of the Themes in the corporate plan.
- Theme 5 Rural South Derbyshire
 - Theme 6 Strong in the Region, Lobbying on issues affecting South Derbyshire.

6.0 Background Papers

- 6.1 Previous Committee discussions.

Appendix A – email sent to 129 people who raised issues around broadband.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for taking the time to reply to our request for information relating to the issues being experienced with broadband in South Derbyshire. We have now received over 120 replies and all the details have now been passed onto BT. BT's initial reply is as follows:

"BT have taken note of the responses provided by citizens to South Derbyshire Council and the appropriate parts of the business are now looking into the issues raised with a view to addressing any problems which they highlight, the results of these investigations and any actions identified will be communicated as soon as we have detail, with an update expected by early October. Unfortunately many of you are receiving slower speeds than you would like as a result of the distance from the local telephone exchange and whilst BT are exploring alternative technologies there are no prospects of improvement in the near future although in the longer term many of you should see significant benefits. There are however a number of known causes for slow broadband speeds which are a result of the equipment or wiring at the customer's premises and it may well be that by following some of the guidance to be found on the attached web sites a useful improvement can be gained".

<http://www.thinkbroadband.com/> Very useful site, lots of info

<http://www.Thinkbroadband.com/faq/sections/radsl.html#235> Good set of FAQs

<http://www.pcpro.co.uk/features/205881/double-your-broadband-for-free.html> Specifically addresses speed issues

<http://www.thinkbroadband.com/files/broadband-max-myths-and-legends.pdf> this has a particularly useful section on how to repair home wiring

(Please note that the above websites are for information purposes only. If you decide to follow any guidance on the websites then we cannot be held accountable for any problems that may arise.)

As stated previously we can't help fix your specific problems but it certainly has demonstrated to BT that problems are being experienced in our area. It will be hard to define the impact that our lobbying has had but it certainly has raised the profile of South Derbyshire within BT.

I will email you again when BT have given us a further update in October.

If you have any further questions please contact me.

Regards

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