

**Report to:** Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 14 March 2018

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** Superfast Broadband project update

**Purpose:** To update the ETE Scrutiny Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Board on the Superfast Broadband project agreed at County Council in July 2017

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**RECOMMENDATION:** The committee is asked to note progress on the implementation of the recommendations made in the Scrutiny Review Board report on the Superfast Broadband Project in March 2017

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## **1. Financial**

1.1 In 2012, Cabinet agreed a Broadband Plan to invest £15m from the Council's capital programme alongside £10.64m of funding from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) to provide the infrastructure necessary to enable access to superfast broadband across the county. A three year contract was signed with British Telecom (BT) Group in May 2013 to deliver this infrastructure (Contract 1). This completed deployment in June 2016.

1.2 A second contract was signed with British Telecom (BT) Group in June 2015 using £3m from the County Council together with £3m from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK). Contract 2 is due to complete in December 2018.

1.3 As at the date of writing, procurement for Contract 3 is in the process of concluding with contract award expected early March. An update for Scrutiny Committee will be provided at the meeting

## **2. Background**

2.1 In July 2017 Full Council considered a report by the Scrutiny Review Board of the ETE Scrutiny Committee on the superfast broadband project (Appendix 2) and approved the response and action plan set out by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport (Appendix 1)

2.2 In summarising the report it is clearly recognised that significant investment and excellent progress has been made in increasing coverage of superfast broadband to help meet the Government's target of 95% coverage by end 2017 (from a baseline of 3% in East Sussex in 2012). The Scrutiny Review examined what has been delivered so far under Contract 1 with BT Group, and whether the roll out of Contract 2 will address residents' concerns about broadband speeds and coverage. It also looked at the future provision planned under the Broadband Project, whether residents' expectations of the project were realistic, and wider project communications.

### **3. Supporting information**

3.1 The Scrutiny Review Board set out a number of recommendations around: the provision of information; coverage maps; costs of reaching uncovered premises; options for the future (including community match); and wider communications.

3.2 The recommendations are listed in Appendix 1, together with an update in the response and action plan set out by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

3.3 The ETE Scrutiny Committee may wish to be aware of the latest figures in relation to superfast (24Mbps+) delivery across East Sussex:

- As at February 2018, superfast coverage across East Sussex is 96%, compared to a baseline of 3% in 2012
- This compares to a figure of 93.1% in February 2017, and 91.5% in February 2016
- Take up of superfast broadband services is 42% against a national benchmark of 20%

### **4. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 Significant investment and excellent progress has been made in increasing coverage of superfast broadband across East Sussex. Members are asked to note progress on the implementation of the recommendations made in the Scrutiny Review Board report on the Superfast Broadband Project in March 2017

### **RUPERT CLUBB**

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### **LOCAL MEMBERS**

All

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None