

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2018  
title: BROADBAND UPDATE  
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
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## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To receive an update on Broadband services and future opportunities for further rollout in the Ribble Valley.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions - In addition to Ribble Valley Borough Council striving to meet its three ambitions, it also recognises the importance of securing a diverse, sustainable economic base for the Borough.
- Community Objectives – Delivery of services to all.
- Corporate Priorities - The implementation of superfast broadband and improved speeds for broadband in areas where it is currently not available will assist in sustaining a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
- Other Considerations – A competitive and sustainable economy will assist in the provision of local employment opportunities and business development.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Superfast Broadband (SFBB) refers to a range of measures to ensure businesses and consumers are best able to access the benefits of high speed broadband internet connections. It is an ongoing programme of activity aimed at connecting the county's businesses where digital connectivity speeds remain a constraint, helping businesses to work more efficiently. Faster upload and download speeds also reduces the need for smaller businesses to travel – saving time, money and carbon emissions.

2.2 Lancashire's county and district councils, working with Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) made the programme happen by accessing finance from Broadband Delivery UK and the European Regional Development Fund, to deliver superfast broadband in partnership with BT. Through Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), the government has defined SFBB as a speed of not less than 24Mbps (Megabits per second - the expression used to measure broadband speeds).

## 3 INFORMATION

3.1 At the previous Economic Development Committee on 16 November 2017, officers from Lancashire County Council attended the meeting to provide an update on the works being carried out in Lancashire, and gave Committee some statistics with regard to commercial and public investment in the Ribble Valley and the number of

premises that had been broadband enabled. It was also recommended that individual householders check their line speed on Think Broadband and then register any problems with the Superfast Lancashire website. He gave details about the initial contract and the extension programme that was currently taking place as well as the future programme with the aspiration of 100% broadband in Lancashire.

- 3.2 The previous Lancashire Superfast Broadband programme began in 2013, which aimed to deliver High speed fibre broadband is being rolled out and giving access to 130,000+ premises, across Lancashire between 2013 and the end of 2015. Superfast broadband enables businesses to make their marketing digital, with the ability to reach customers through new, faster and easier-to-track social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, which many are increasingly using for promoting their products. Superfast Fibre Broadband works at quicker speeds than standard broadband reducing the time taken to download and send files.
- 3.3 Whilst many areas in Ribble Valley have now seen the arrival of high-speed fibre broadband into their villages, there are still many constraints and although connections had been made to cabinets throughout the borough, this does not necessarily mean that all householders will have access to superfast broadband. Currently, the new Superfast Extension programme is now underway and deliver Superfast access to another 12,000+ premises. These programmes will run in parallel to commercial activity delivered by BT and other providers, such as B4RN, and should result in 99% of Lancashire premises having access to Superfast Broadband by the end of 2017.
- 3.4 Following on from the last Economic Development Committee meeting the U.K. government announced on 22 November 2017 that funding was being made available from the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Challenge Fund. The aim of the fund is to help locally led projects across the UK leverage local and commercial investment in full fibre connectivity. The LFFN Challenge Fund will provide £190 million in funding to help facilitate the rollout of ultra-fast fibre optic networks across the country and discussions are currently taking place with Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and Local Authorities across Lancashire for a joint proposal to be put forward to the scheme.
- 3.5 Whilst these discussions take place the Council will continue to lobby for broadband issues to be included as part of the Lancashire Growth Programme and support to be offered to existing businesses who require a better broadband connection with which to run their businesses.

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