

Note of Meeting with BT and B&NES held on 12 March 2014 to discuss super-fast broadband prospects for Priston.

Attending: Cllr. Doug Pattison, Cllr. Peter Hopwood, Paul Coles (BT), David Wales (B&NES), Richard Bottle.

Key information provided at the meeting.:

Summary:

- a. Survey work for the Timsbury exchange area is expected to start this summer with service go-live dates dependent upon survey results. BT's solution is predominantly FTTC (fibre to the cabinet) but we are planning to deploy a small amount of FTTP in some areas.
- b. An announcement may not be made with respect to Priston until 3 months before service availability.

Detail:

1. The Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) scheme is aiming to increase the availability of super-fast broadband (>24Mbit/s) to 90.5% of all households covered by the CDS area (including urban and rural areas) by the end of 2016. It is also intended to provide a minimum of 2Mbit/s bandwidth to the remaining premises in the programme area in the same timescales. CDS is funded by a combination of BT, the local authorities involved (including B&NES), and Government funding. EU rules prevent the use of CDS funding where an area already receives or is expected to receive super-fast broadband from more than one commercial provider. The contract with BT was awarded in January 2013.
2. For FTTC to be available the local exchange needs to be fibre enabled, a new fibre cabinet installed and the two connected by a new fibre run..
3. The majority of Priston is served by the Timsbury exchange. The Priston Mill complex is served by the Bath-Kingsmead exchange. The Bath Kingsmead exchange has already been fibre-enabled, but this has not been extended to the relevant cabinet serving Priston Mill.
4. Generally super-fast broadband provision is via Fibre-to-the-Cabinet (FTTC) (ie. where the telephone cabinet is linked to the exchange via fibre) although in some areas it may be viable to provide Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) ie where additionally the cabinet is linked to user premises by fibre rather than by conventional cabling thus providing much faster speeds.
5. Where super-fast broadband is enabled, Openreach, BT's local network division, make it available to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to use on a wholesale basis. Currently circa 80 ISPs use Openreach's network, re-badge it and sell to consumers and business E.G. SKY, TALKTALK. This ensures that a range of competitive super-fast broadband services are available to users.
6. The CDS programme is being conducted in 11 phases. Each phase is broken into Survey, Design and Build stages. Priston has not yet been surveyed, but could potentially fall into the mid-range of the programme.
7. Until the Survey stage is completed, BT will not know if a particular location can be connected up to enable super-fast broadband, as this is dependent on numerous complex factors, including the state of existing cable ducting, which requires local inspection.

8. Even after Survey is complete, problems can arise to prevent implementation eg. technical planning, legal, environmental. Therefore CDS/BT are only able to announce availability 3 months ahead of the event.
9. For postcodes in the intervention/programme area it is possible that Priston will qualify under the CDS scheme for FTTC, which would enable super-fast broadband to be provided within an approx 1km (as the cables run) from the cabinet. Note the 1km threshold may be affected by the quality of the cables between the cabinet and the premises. The quality of service/broadband speed will also be affected by the quality of wiring and equipment installed within the user premises.
10. The wiring cabinet currently serving Priston village is in Priston Lane. There is a separate cabinet supplying New Farm, also connected to the Timsbury exchange. However new cabinets would be required to support super-fast broadband and it is possible these could have different locations – this would be decided in the Design phase.
11. It may be possible for communities to provide gap-funding outside the scope of the CDS programme in order to obtain FTTC. The amount of funding is dependent on specific circumstances but has been achieved by other communities for an outlay of £10-40K. However, the timescales are considerable, and it would be unlikely that this could be achieved within the current timescales of the CDS programme.
12. All of the latest information about the rollout including Timsbury exchange can be found on the Connection Devon and Somerset website (<http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/>), which is updated regularly as the programme progresses. This is supplemented with press releases and parish communications. The website includes a final coverage map (<http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/final-coverage-guide/>), a detailed build map showing where services are live or are due to go live shortly (<http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/current-infrastructure-deployment/>) and an exchange level map (<http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/where-and-when/>).