

# PROPOSAL FORM FOR ITEMS FOR FOR CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Submitted by:

Cllr Sanders

Item for Consideration:

Improvements in Digital Connectivity across Teignbridge – particularly rural areas

**Expected outcome i.e. new policy, new action, new partnership, review and/or scrutinise the performance of other public bodies or of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas:**

Request representation from BDUK (Building Digital UK)/Connecting Devon & Somerset at a future O&S meeting to provide evidence with regard to how 99% of premises in Teignbridge will have gigabit or superfast connectivity in Teignbridge by March 2025 and to ensure they are prioritising the 3.6% of premises (approximately 3,100 properties) that do not even benefit from a basic broadband connection

**Priority for matter to be considered ✓ :**

High (up to 3 months)

Medium (3-6 months)

Low (over 9 months).

Basis on which priority has been set

There is a risk that inadequate improvements would be disadvantageous to Teignbridge residents and businesses

**The suggested item should be included in future programme(s) because: (please tick as appropriate) ✓**

- |                                                                                                    |                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (a) It is a district level function over which the district has some control                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| (b) It is a recently introduced policy, service area of activity which would be timely to review . | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| (c) It is a policy which has been running for some time and is due for review                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| (d) It is a major proposal for change                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| (e) It is an issue raised via complaints received                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| (f) It is an area of public concern                                                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (g) It is an area of poor performance                                                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (h) It would be of benefit to residents of the district                                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(i) Which of the Council's objectives does the issue address?

Investing in Prosperity, Strong Communities & Action on Climate

(j) Is there a deadline for the Council to make a decision? (If so, when and why?)

Not specifically but we must take steps now to ensure that the bodies responsible are on track to deliver adequate improvements by March 2025

**Members are requested to provide information on the following:-**

(k) What do you wish to achieve from the review?

Assurances that there will be adequate digital connectivity across the whole District

(l) Are the desired outcomes likely to be achievable?

This will depend on the responses received from this investigation

(m) Will it change/increase efficiency and cost effectiveness?

Yes for residents and businesses adversely affected.

**Additional information** – an explanatory sentence or paragraph to be provided below to support each box which has been ticked.

*According to data from Building Digital UK (BDUK), only 57.7% of premises in Teignbridge currently benefit from a gigabit internet connection. 42.3% do not.*

*Some [3.6% of premises](#) (approximately 3,100 properties) do not even benefit from a basic 'superfast' connection (30Mbps).*

*Connecting Devon and Somerset are responsible for overcome these inadequacies. They have provided a database of 7,500 premises that they say 'are not likely to have gigabit-capable' broadband within the next three years.*

*By contrast, DEFRA, on behalf of BDUK, have told us that, 'most of your local authority area (99%) will have gigabit or superfast connectivity in place or being built during the lifetime of the REPF'. This is a reference to the Rural England Prosperity Fund, which runs until March 2025.*

*In reaching this conclusion, BDUK have assumed that at least 3,750 premises will achieve a gigabit connection using the Gigabit Voucher Scheme, which is worth up to £4,500 per property but is [not currently open](#) to Teignbridge households and businesses – what are the alternative plans as Teignbridge did not receive funding from the UK Prosperity fund or the Gigabit voucher scheme?*

*Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to investigate the district's real digital connectivity prospects, with a particular focus on what solutions can be provided for the 3.6% (approximately 3,100) premises that do not even benefit from a basic broadband connection.*

Suggested witnesses/case studies etc

To be determined but could include:

- UKBD/Connecting Devon & Somerset
- Executive member
- Ward councillors with examples from their local areas
- Businesses
- Other comparable local authorities

Suggested Questions (not exhaustive)

1. Communication with TDC- why did UKBD, just prior to TDC launch, after thousands of pounds of staff time invested, decide this was now an unnecessary project? Why was this not proactively discussed months prior with TDC? How will future relations ensure this is not repeated?
2. The UKBD Open Market Review of May and September 2023 regarding the roll out for 2024-2026- was due to be ready for use January 2024- is it and what is the update?
3. 16.9% (blue on map) to be serviced by planned BDUK interventions – are these elements on track? If not what actions are being taken to bring them on track?
  - 25% (of 16.9%) superfast to complete March 2025. What is the current position/forecast?
  - Summer 2024 – awarding of contracts. Clarification required
4. Has the gigabyte voucher project been launched and what is the uptake? We understand that it is not covering our district. What action is being taken to reach these premises?
5. What assurances do we have that our rural areas (almost half of our population) will definitely gain delivery of this broadband roll-out in the 3 years proposed
6. If any of these responses suggest the project is not on target- how have TDC been notified, what actions have been put in place to realign the project and what improvements to collaboration can TDC make to ensure we are best placed to liaise and collaborate with UKBD.

*The examples above are used to illustrate potential questions that could be asked and are not exhaustive*

***Please return completed form to Democratic Services Department***