

Digital access

Business Impact Assessment

July 2017



Digital access - Business impact assessment

Ref No: OA2017

Proposal: Transforming business to deliver services digitally

Business Impact Assessment

Conducted by: Housing services

Date: June 2017

1. Aims of the proposal

The proposal

We currently provide an digital option for a number of services and the range and sophistication of our offer continues to increase. We also make available the more traditional ways of getting a service, such as in-person phone calls and visits or filling out paper forms.

The council is proposing to make the digital option one of the principal means of doing business and to move away from these more traditional alternatives. Increasingly, customers expect us to keep abreast of technology, yet as an organisation we cannot continue to foster multiple channels of doing business. The council is facing severe financial pressure and moving more interactions/transactions online is a key, sustainable way forward.

There is no desire to completely remove alternative channels of access but to drive down the need for them.

For the vast majority of customers, who already use online options, this change will have no impact. For customers who currently don't use the online option it will require a change of practice. The ability of some groups to make that change may be challenging and this assessment seeks to identify these difficulties and suggest solutions.

This assessment is particularly concerned with groups who share certain protected characteristics, but also highlights other groups, such as people living in rural areas and those living in poverty.

Overview

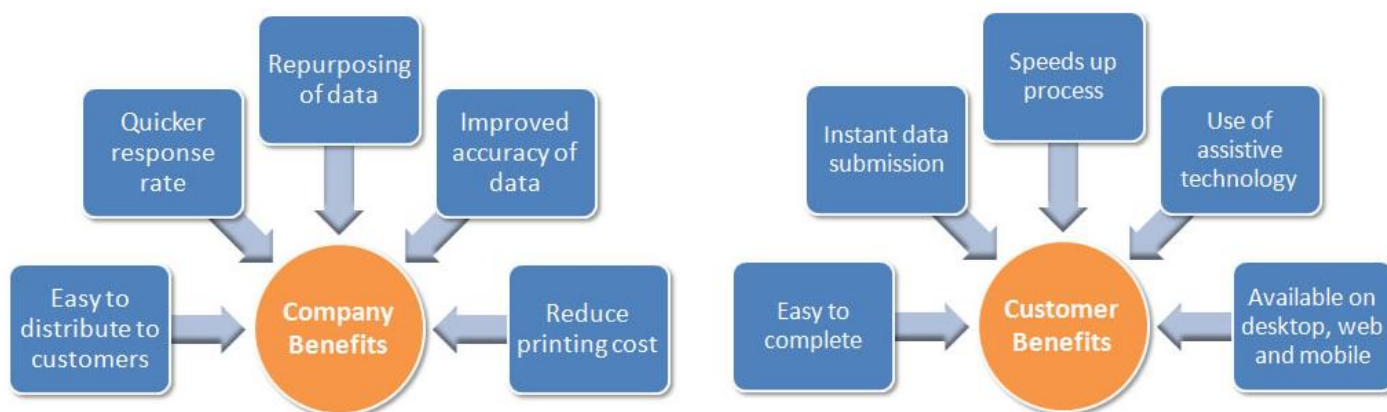
An increasing number of commercial and public services are now either all, or in part online. In the commercial sphere, insurance, banking, hotels/travel agents and utility companies all operate online and even basic grocery shopping is available from household names, alongside smaller niche suppliers. An online option has moved from being at the margins to the centre and is increasingly seen as the usual way to carry out many transactions.

In the public sector, passports, driving licences, tax returns and a whole host of local and national government services can be accessed online. Some options, such as the filing of corporation tax returns with HMRC are only available online, with more mainstream services, such as Universal Credit making the move in the near future.

The benefits of self service

A move to digital services has a number of benefits for the customer, the council and the environment. Digital technology can help deliver local services more efficiently, tailor services better to user needs and provide services to customers around the clock. By prioritising online access to services over the more traditional paper forms the council hopes to continue to increase customer self-service, thereby reducing the amount to time and cost of staff to manually enter data. It will save on expensive resources and help to meet the constraints of reduced funding for local government.

Digital benefits for customers and company



If we successfully transform our services so they are digital by default, we can earn a reputation for offering high-quality, responsive, convenient and up-to-date services that are more efficient and convenient for users.

2. Digital assistance and equality

Digital assistance: In 2017, around 1 in 10 adults had never used the internet. Whilst we appreciate that not everyone wants to use computers, mobile devices, or the internet, as an organisation we must move with the times and offer products and services as others do. Where customers do have access we already harness this potential by actively encouraging them and promoting services: our job is to increase the supply of online tools, making them easy, efficient, trustworthy and accessible round the clock and at no additional cost.

Where customers need help to get online we will adopt a more supportive approach. The skills needed to master computer and online skills are not going to be learned overnight, but we must take steps to actively promote online services to those who could potentially make the transition.

The council has to ensure fair access to services. We recognise that not everyone is online and that not everyone will be able to use digital services independently.

What we provide for people who aren't online will depend on their needs. Many people who are offline will keep using the services in non-digital ways, such as face to face, by phone and through intermediaries.

To help people access the internet, self help computers and wifi have been installed in the Reception at Forde House, Newton Abbot. If customers are unable to use a computer, or the internet, they will be offered help and support appropriate to their needs. Staff will be able to print our webpages to signpost residents to places where they can find computers, an internet connection, or even help and advice. Organisations such as Devon libraries and voluntary services, such as Citizens' Advice can also offer free access to computers and the internet.

Through our digital inclusion and assisted digital programmes, we will help more people to use online services. To persuade people to use our digital services, we need to improve the quality of online services to make them clearly preferable to the alternatives.

We also need to make people aware of the services that are available. A number of techniques can be used to raise awareness and encourage people to use digital channels. As we continue to roll out more online services we will consider which methods are most appropriate to the context of the service and the needs of our clients and customers.

Get Connected

Get online with Teignbridge: teignbridge.gov.uk/getonline

Equality issues

To better understand issues and support the organisational transition to digital services the council has taken into account a range of data and research findings from within the organisation and from other government departments and statistical bodies.

Our research so far has not identified any negative impacts in terms of gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or on carers. However, we have identified some possible issues and impacts with regards to communication, whether it is related to English not being a first language, illiteracy, or other communication difficulties relating to disability, culture and age.

There are also issues around an individual's ownership of, or access to, technology, for example an individual may not be able to access, afford or use the internet because they do not own a computer, or don't know how to use a computer, or the internet.

Age has been flagged up as a particular issue here, with the internet seen as more of a challenge to older users. There is also a suggestion that age, combined with other factors, such as low income, poor transport in rural communities and lack of broadband facilities makes it more difficult for some people to use online services. Whilst there is little difference in the rates of internet use between men and women in all age groups under 65 years of age, a higher proportion of men aged 65 and over are regular internet users.

Evidence suggests there is little difference in internet usage across ethnic groups, though some claimants may encounter problems accessing digital services because of language issues, whilst others may prefer face-to-face contact. Anyone who has language difficulty will still be able to access our services as they do now and translation services will continue to be offered where necessary.

Online services will generally use similar language used on the more traditional paper documents, so there would be no additional impact for those unable to read. In fact, online assistive tools can now read text aloud. Again, the nature of public sector, or charitable work, will mean that staff can help complete an online form, or explain a procedure, just as they currently do.

3. Environment impacts

The proposal indicates the following impacts on the environment.	<i>Please score</i> +3 ← 0 → -3
a. Natural environment (wildlife, landscape, trees)	+2
b. Built environment (townscape, design, archaeology, conservation)	0
c. Climate change (adaptation, mitigation)	+1
d. Resource use (land, energy, water, minerals)	+1

3a. Natural environment (wildlife, landscape, trees) +2

By reducing printing and disposal there will be less impact on the environment.

3c. Climate change (adaptation, mitigation) +1

By reducing printing and disposal there will be less impact on the environment.

3d. Resource use (land, energy, water, minerals) +1

By reducing printing and disposal

4. Value and financial impacts

The proposal indicates the following financial impacts.	Please score
	+3 ← 0 → -3
a. Jobs, or training opportunities	0
b. Business investment within the area	+1
c. Tourism	0
d. The supply, or quality of housing	0
e. Access to services and benefits	+1
f. Reduce cost, or increase income	+2
g. Increase capital receipts/funding	0

4b. Business investment within the area

Improved broadband coverage will allow more business to get online and promote their good and services. Upskilled residents through learning/access programmes at school/college will help business recruit skilled staff and create a larger online market.

4e. Access to services and benefits +1

By offering services digitally people can access information and services at times and in ways that are convenient to them.

4f. Reduce cost, or increase income +2

Reduced printing, storage and disposal costs. An online application is more efficient and cost-effective to run as customers will fill in forms, not staff.

5. Social impacts and duties

The proposal indicates the following social impacts.	%	Please score
		3 ← 0 → -3
a. Age Children (Under 16)	16.3%	0
Young (16-24)	9%	+1
Working age (25-59)	42.8%	+2
Older (60+)	32%	0
b. Women	48.4%	0
c. Men	51.6%	0
d. Transgender	0.01%	0
e. BAME (Black, Asian, minority ethnic)	3%	0
f. LGB (lesbian, gay, bisexual)	5%	0
g. Marriage and Civil Partnership	52%	0
h. Religion and belief (or none)		0
i. Disability	21%	-1
j. Pregnancy and Maternity		0
k. Rural	27%	-2
l. Economic Deprivation	21.8%	-1

* **Bold** = 'Protected characteristics'

Characteristics most affected by the proposal

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Low income (economic deprivation) – the ability to afford a computer, or mobile device
4. Rural location – a lack of broadband coverage, poor transport

5a. Age

Evidence shows that virtually all adults aged 16 to 34 years were recent internet users (99%), in contrast with 41% of adults aged 75 years and over. Young people will benefit more because they are already accustomed to using digital media. Working age couples will benefit from 24/7 digital access because of their busy lives.

Evidence suggests that this gap is closing, with recent internet use by retired adults increasing by almost 22% since 2011 to 61% in 2017. The 65 to 74 age group increased from 52% to 78% respectively. Increasing numbers see it as a way of expanding their ability to participate and we must be ready to meet their expectations.

Teignbridge population estimates suggest that 26% of the district is over 65 years old. This means that the retirement age population is already 8% ahead of England.

Some older customers have raised concerns about both access to technology and a lack of computer skills, or familiarity with the internet. It would also be fair to say that some older residents continue to embrace more traditional forms of communication.

Mitigation

We recognise that there will continue to be some residents who cannot use on-line services, however there are a number of remedies available to the older, less experienced user who is not online. As with all access issues, the nature of public sector, or charitable work will mean that staff can help complete an online form, or help explain a procedure, just as they currently do if asked to assist with completing a paper form.

For those unable to self-serve, staff will provide a service appropriate to the client's needs, whether it be advice over the telephone, in person at the council offices, or even a home visit if deemed necessary. Where appropriate, we will signpost customers to the most appropriate organisation, or channel for their needs.

There are a number of initiatives, specifically aimed at our older and inexperienced users. As of 2018 Teignbridge Council will provide a 'floor walking service' at Forde House. A team will be on hand to assist customers get on line, giving customers access to four self-help terminals, providing appropriate advice and support.

Teign Housing, the largest housing association in the area, supports its tenants by holding a weekly advice hub in Newton Abbot. Every Wednesday trained staff are on hand to help tenants surf the web, set up email and social media accounts, as well as assist with more complicated issues such as maximising benefits and setting up online banking.

5c. Men (predominantly) +1

Men are more likely to use the internet than women – so they will benefit more.

5i. Disability -1

Approximately 21% of Teignbridge residents have their activities limited by long term health issues, or disability. This is 3% higher than the national average and is likely to be a reflection of our older population, which is predicted to grow.

Internet use by disabled adults

In 2017 22% of disabled adults had never used the internet, but this is 3% fewer than in the previous year.

Of those disabled adults aged 16 to 24 years, 97.1% were recent internet users, compared with 99.5% who were not disabled. Of disabled adults aged 75 years and over, 34% were recent internet users, compared with 50% who were not disabled. Across all age groups, the proportion of adults who were recent internet users was lower for those that were disabled, compared with those that were not.

Some disabilities, depending on their nature and severity, will have little, or no impact on the customer's ability to access a service, whether it be online, or otherwise. However, some individuals may have issues accessing our services, particularly individuals with:

- A visual impairment, which could impact on the ability to understand, or complete forms easily and accurately
- Arthritis, which could affect an individual's ability to use a pen or computer
- Learning disability, which could impact on the ability to understand guidelines and use computers
- Dyslexia, or dyspraxia, which could impact on the ability to easily understand information

Online services will generally use similar language to that used on the more traditional paper documents, so there would be no additional impact by moving services online. In fact, some disabled customers welcome the internet as it is a means to their independence, particularly for those with mobility problems, who use it as their lifeline to the outside world. Additionally, online assistive tools can increase the font size of webpages and even read text aloud. Feedback suggests that issues for disabled customers are about making the internet easy to use, with the service provided being as accessible as possible and customised to meet their needs.

Mitigation

We recognise that there will continue to be some residents who cannot use on-line services, however there are a number of remedies available.

To mitigate the risk that some disabled people may not be able to access services online, alternative access routes will be offered. Where claimants have particular needs, or their claims are complex, processes will be put in place to identify this and where appropriate, they will be referred to an agent. This may include contact by phone, face to face at the council offices, or even a home visit where necessary.

The Forde House 'floor walking service' at Forde House will be on hand to assist customers get on line, giving customers access to self-help terminals, providing appropriate advice and support.

5k Rural Communities -1

Around 24% of Teignbridge residents live in rural towns with a populations of between 3,000 to 8,000 people. A further 16% live in smaller settlements, ranging from rural villages and hamlets to more isolated dwellings.

Poor transport links and lack of broadband in rural areas can make it more difficult for some people to use online services. When considering channel shift, there is a real issue that many Teignbridge residents don't yet have useable broadband, and in some areas, particularly Dartmoor, rurality means lack of mobile signal as well.

Mitigation

Teignbridge Council assisted internet accessibility through a £5,000 grant from the Welfare Support Fund enabling internet access in Moretonhampstead, Ipplepen, Buckfastleigh, Ashburton and Teignmouth. This helped provide internet access in the community.

For more information on broadband provision across the district see Appendix A.

5l. Economic deprivation -1

While there has been a rise in internet use, the poorest households remain much more likely to lack what is today considered a basic need and the gap does not seem to be narrowing. In practice, this means missing out on the many benefits that accompany internet use such as higher pupil attainment rates, claiming benefits online, an increased likelihood of securing a job and opportunities to save money on household bills through 'switching', or paying online.

Missing out on such opportunities is a huge disadvantage for anyone today, but particularly so for those on low incomes who are already disadvantaged.

Clearly it is impossible to access an online service without access to a computer, or the internet. However, access does not mean ownership and it is not necessary to purchase equipment to access a service. Many residents will be able to turn to friends, colleagues, or relatives to access digital equipment.

In September 2018 all access to welfare benefits will have to be online. Claimants will have to verify a personal account on the GOV.uk portal to register with the Department of Work and Pensions.

Mitigation

Increasingly, public bodies and charitable organisations are providing computer and internet access, for example, in libraries, community centres, charities, local authorities and places of worship. Many of these organisations provide additional support at no extra cost. There are also commercial providers, such as cafes and restaurants who offer free internet connection via wifi.

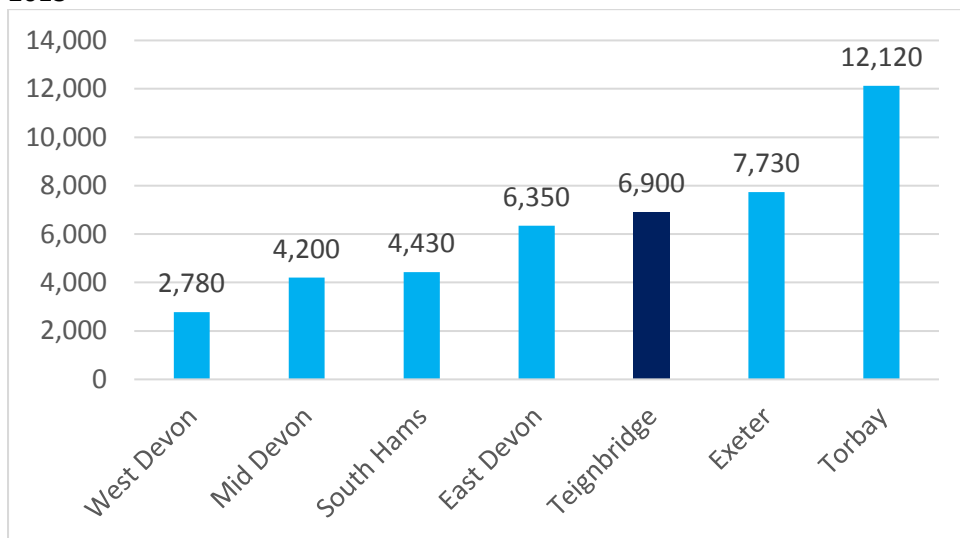
When dealing with customers who do not own a computer, staff can encourage client self-help by printing our 'Get Online' webpage to give clients. This page provides information about where to get online teignbridge.gov.uk/getonline

The Teign Housing, weekly advice hub in Newton Abbot will help their tenants on Wednesdays. Libraries can provide digital access and some, limited assistance in logging in... and signpost to other organisations for training. CAB are providing digital training to voluntary community groups specifically for Universal Credit.

Internet use by adults on a low income

Recent internet use by adults who were economically inactive, increased by 16% to 86% from 2011 to 2017.

Total number of recipients claiming both Housing Benefits and Council Tax Benefits in Teignbridge 2013



7. Summarise potential impacts and planned mitigations:

Have representatives of those likely to be affected by the proposal been consulted ?	No
Are there ongoing plans to monitor the impact of the proposals	Yes
Are there any relevant Human Rights considerations?	No

8. Duties

Under the Equality Act 2010 s.149 the Council must annually publish what actions we have taken in response to our three equality duties. This proposal contributes to the duties in the following ways:

a) The elimination of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct

We recognise that not everyone who uses government services is online, and that not everyone will be able to use digital services independently. The council has to ensure fair access to services for those who are entitled to them.

What we provide for people who aren't online will depend on the service and the needs of the user. Many people who are offline will keep using the services in non-digital ways, such as face to face, by phone and through intermediaries. In some cases, people may be offered help to use the digital channel.

We call this 'assisted digital'. This is an integral part of providing digital by default services. We will consider how we will provide this assistance to ensure those users who need this help receive a consistent service across the multiple services they use.

b] The advancement of equality of opportunity by:

Digital by default means digital services which are so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use digital services will choose to do so, while those who can't are not excluded. We want those who are able to use our digital services to access information and services at times and in ways that are convenient to them, but that are more efficient and cost-effective to run.

c] The fostering of good relations between people by:

We will provide training for partnership agencies on how to complete online applications to further increase community based support. www.teignbridge.gov.uk/equalityduties



9. Managers' evaluation

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No major change required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adjustments have been made to better advance equality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue despite having identified some potential for adverse impacts.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cease the proposal. It shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination.

10. Recommended actions

1. To make the online option the principal means of doing business and to move away from the more traditional methods, particularly online forms and payments
2. To promote computer access and the use of online services to those who have the potential to move to digital channels
3. To support those who cannot use computers, or the internet, making reasonable adjustments, depending on their needs

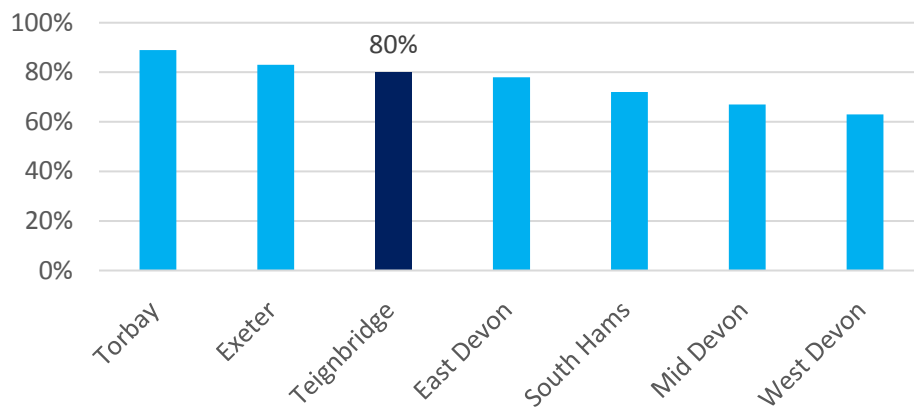
11. Sign off

		Business Manager		BID
		Amanda Pujol		Kay O'Flaherty
Signed			Signed	
Date		5 January 2017	Date	09 September 2017
Review date		April 2018	Review date	April 2018

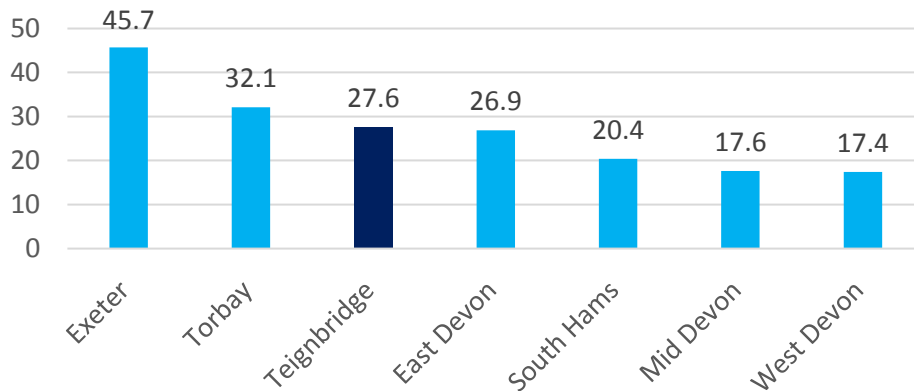
Appendix

Broadband

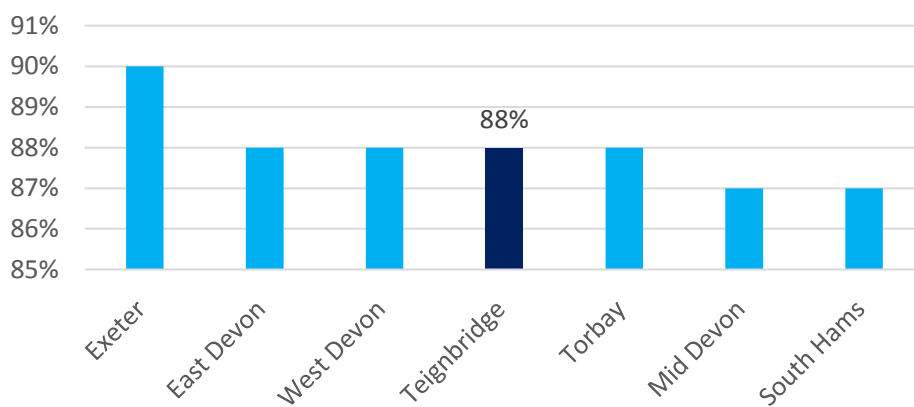
Percentage of addresses with superfast broadband availability (%) (2016)



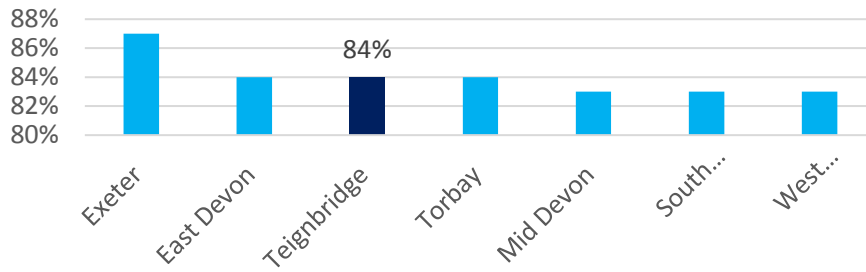
Average maximum broadband speed (Mbit/s) (2016)



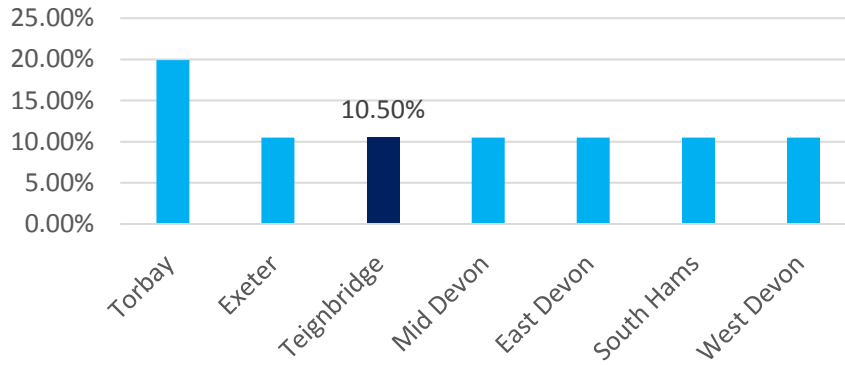
Percentage of people who said they could use a search engine to look for information online if asked to (%) (2016)



Percentage of people who said they could complete online application forms which include personal details if asked to (%) (2016)



Percentage of the adult population that had never used the internet (%) (2017)



[Source LG Inform, Ofcom, Ipsos Connect](#)

Internet use by age

Virtually all adults aged 16 to 34 years were recent internet users (99%), in contrast with 41% of adults aged 75 years and over.

Since the survey began in 2011, adults aged 75 years and over have consistently been the lowest users of the internet. In 2011, of adults aged 75 and over, 20% were recent internet users.

Of the 4.8 million adults who had never used the internet in 2017, just over half (2.6 million) were aged 75 years and over. This age group made up 9.6% of the population aged 16 years and over.

Adults aged 75 years and over had the highest rate of lapsed internet users at 7%, up from 5% in 2016. This suggests that, although more adults aged 75 years and over started using the internet, they are not necessarily continuing to use it.

The difference in recent internet use between men and women was larger in the oldest age groups. Recent internet use by men aged 65 to 74 years was 79% and by men aged 75 years and over was 47%. This compares with recent internet use by women in these age groups at 76% and 35% respectively.

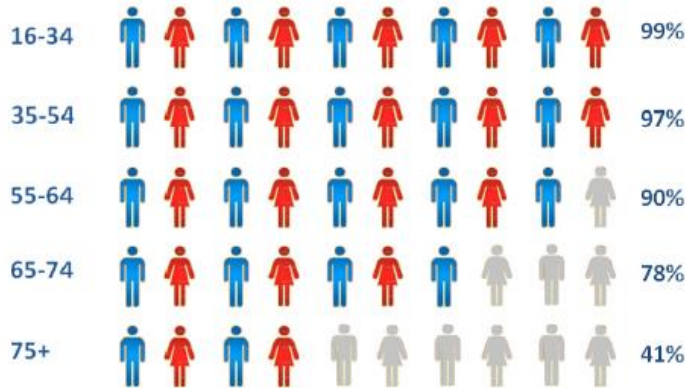
The largest increase in the number of recent internet users was in women aged 75 years and over, which trebled from 0.3 million in 2011 to just over 1 million in 2017.

Recent internet users by age group, UK, 2017



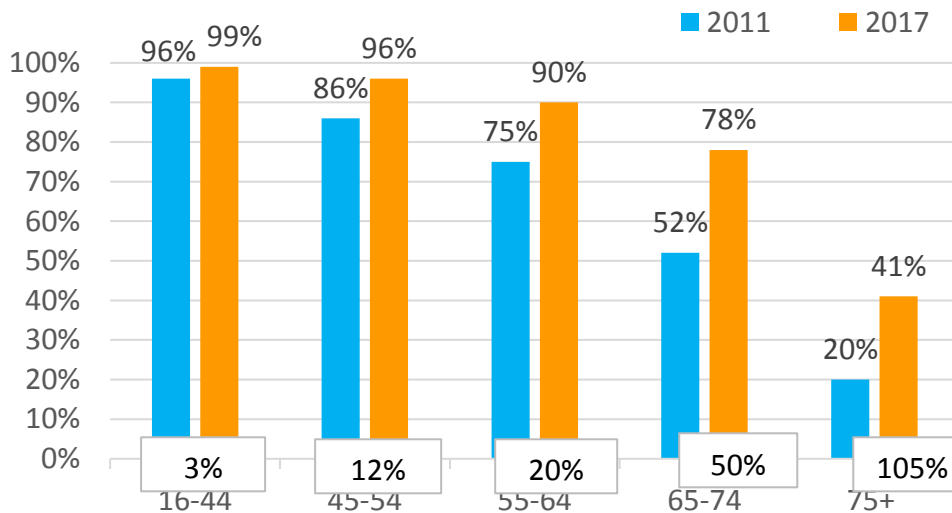
Almost 9 in 10 adults in the UK have recently used the internet (89%)

Almost all adults aged 16 – 54 years have recently used the internet ...



... but just 4 in 10 adults aged 75+ years have used the internet in the last 3 months

Recent internet use in 2011 and 2017 by age group, UK



% increase of internet use from 2011 to 2017, by age group

Age and gender

There is still a higher proportion of women who had never used the internet at 10.5% compared with men at 7.8%.

The gap between men and women who had recently used the internet has been closing in all age groups since 2011, with the percentage rising to 90% for men and 88% for women in 2017. This compared with 82% for men and 77% for women in 2011.

The difference in recent internet use between men and women was larger in the oldest age groups. Recent internet use by men aged 65 to 74 years was 79% and by men aged 75 years and over was 47%. This compares with recent internet use by women in these age groups at 76% and 35% respectively.

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Digital access

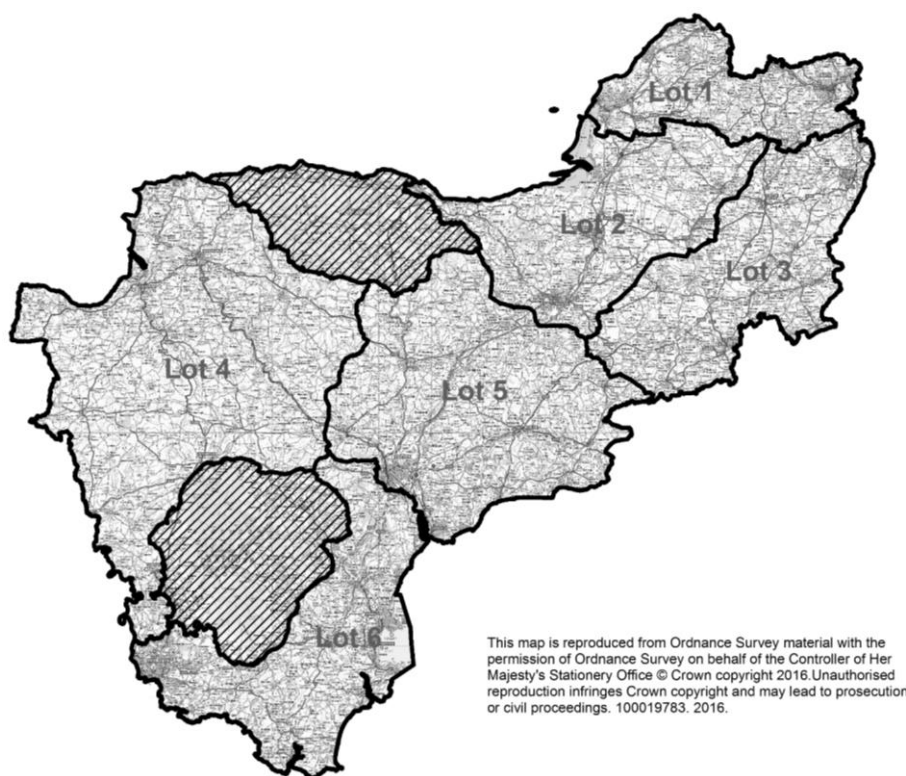
Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) has been set up to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the market has failed to invest. CDS have created a new public-private partnership to address broadband coverage across hard to reach areas.

After being awarded State Aid approval from the EU in May, the agreed Phase Two intervention area has been divided up into six lots, to enable a more competitive tender process. The 6 lot areas are shown in the map below. The hashed areas represent the two regions covered by the separate national park contract with Airband Community Internet Ltd, with the roll out already underway.

As part of CDS' commitment to provide superfast broadband to residents, businesses and communities, they have signed contracts with broadband provider Gigaclear for Lots 2, 3, 5 & 6, the latter covering the Teignbridge area.

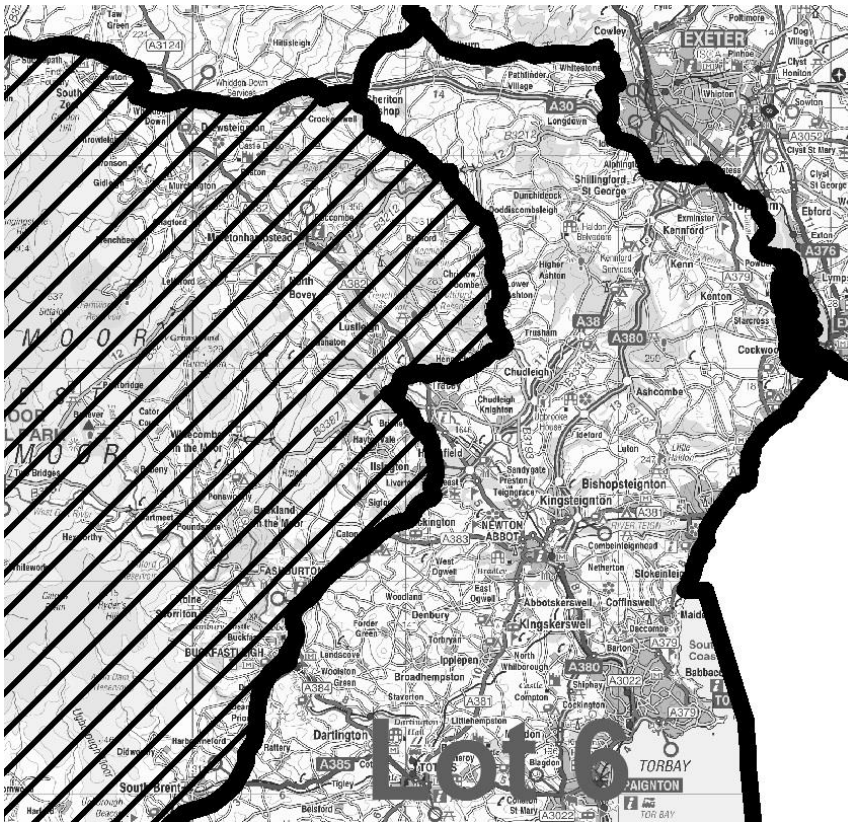
Combined, the Gigaclear contracts will deliver a £62.25m investment, bringing ultrafast services to an additional 35,225 of the hardest to reach homes and businesses across the region.

The broadband Phase Two intervention area has been divided up into six lots

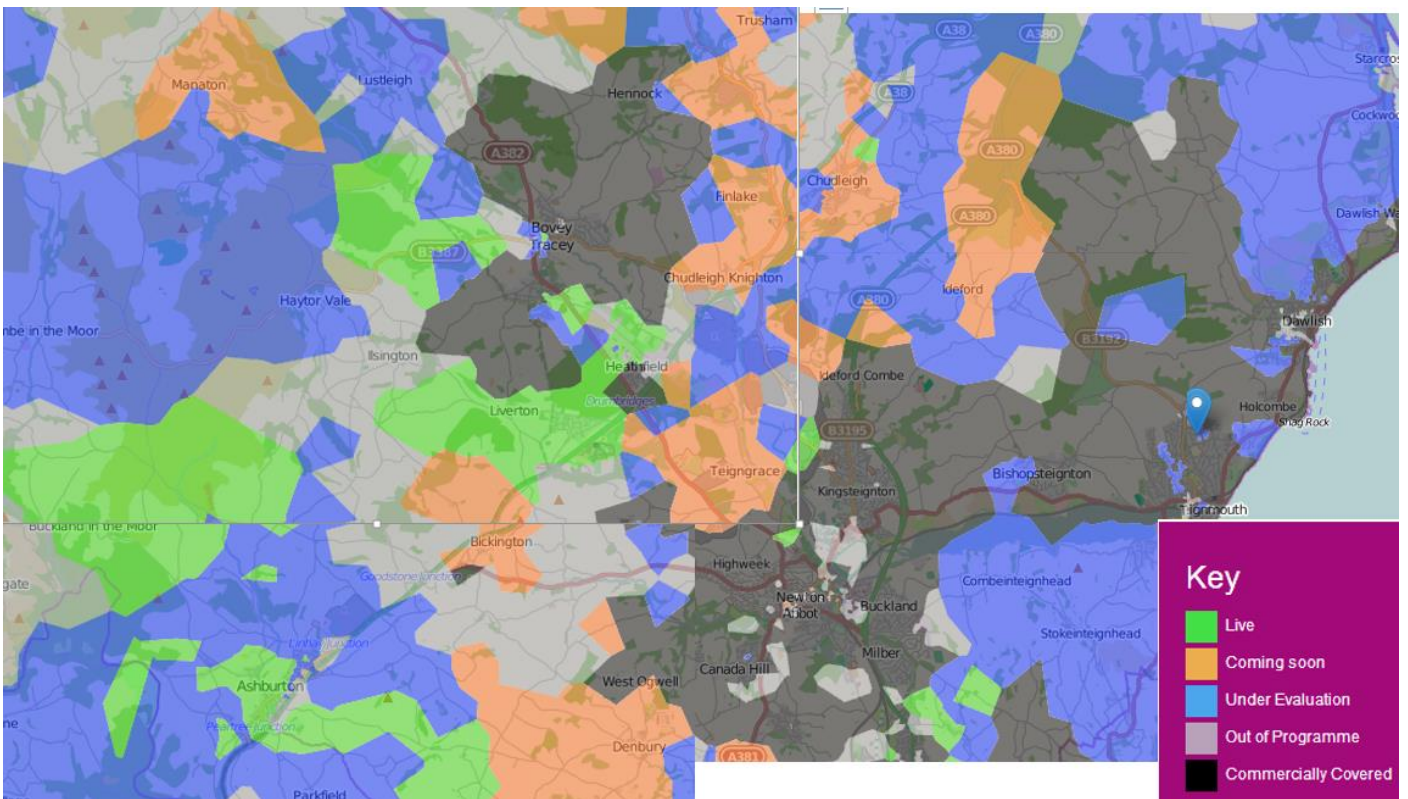


Internet use by adults in rural areas

Awaiting statistics from Connecting Devon and Somerset regarding broadband coverage of Teignbridge in 2017 [Connecting Devon and Somerset](#)

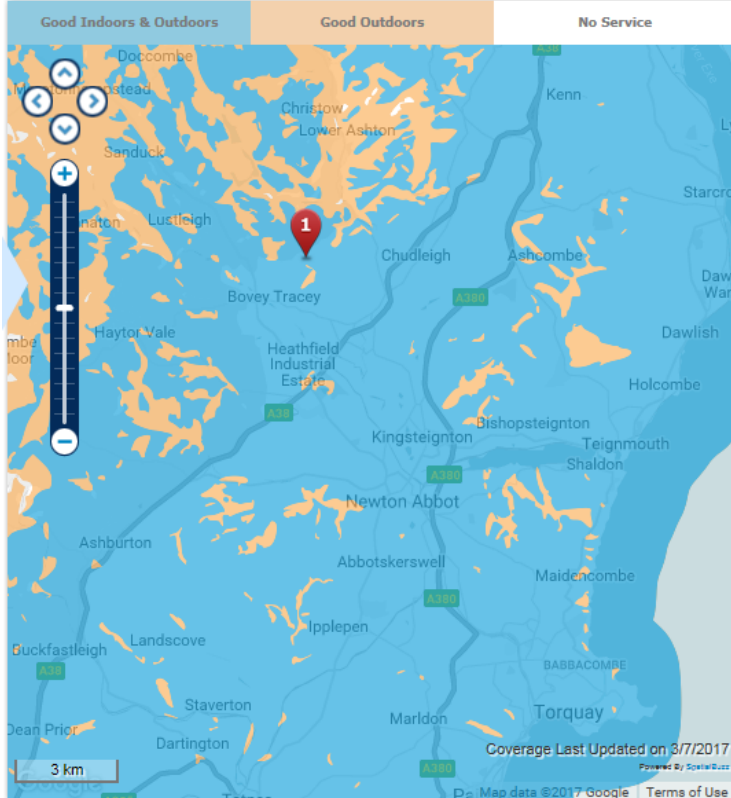


Broadband connectivity in Teignbridge 2014 Awaiting update from Connecting Devon and Somerset
[Connecting Devon and Somerset](#)



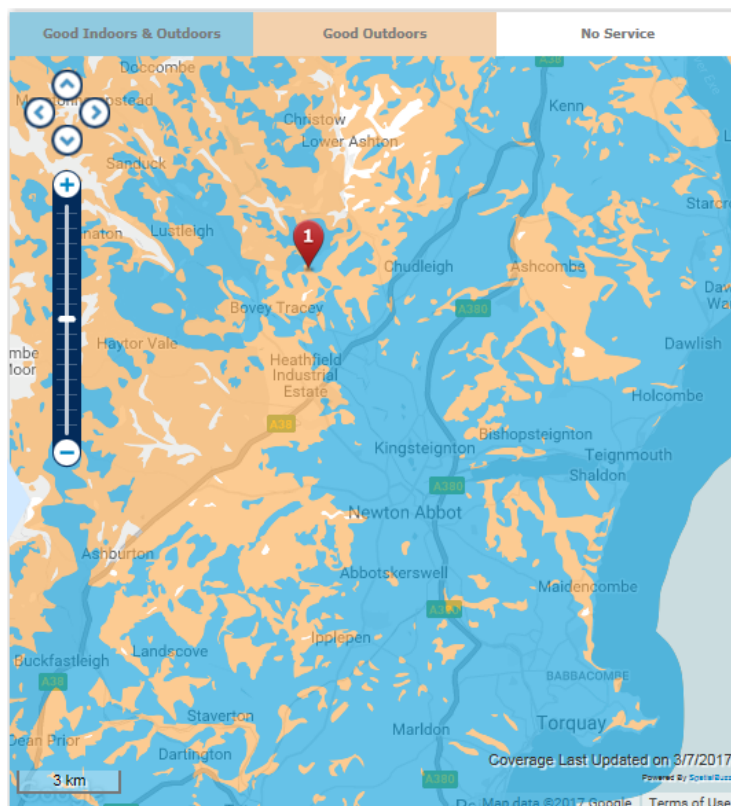
Mobile connectivity in Teignbridge

2G coverage - voice, text and email, making calls, sending texts, using email on your phone.



3G coverage

Mobile internet and voice - this frequency works on most phones and is good for fast networking on smartphones, dongles and tablets.



4G coverage - Mobile Internet - Seamless connectivity and mobile internet

<http://www.tescomobile.com/about-us/coverage-checker>



Government Digital Inclusion Strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-inclusion-strategy/government-digital-inclusion-strategy>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2017>

Government Digital Strategy: December 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy/government-digital-strategy>

Internet users in the UK Statistical bulletins : Office of National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/previousReleases>