

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of the **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PLACES** held on Wednesday, 18 May 2022 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Matlock.

PRESENT

Councillor S Bull (in the Chair)

Councillors J Siddle, D Collins, N Gourlay, J Nelson, P Niblock, R Redfern and C Dale.

Also in attendance was Councillor C Renwick .

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor D Greenhalgh.

7/22 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

There were no declarations of interest.

8/22 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (30 MINUTE MAXIMUM IN TOTAL)

There were no public questions.

9/22 TO CONFIRM THE NON-EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

10/22 THRIVING COMMUNITIES UPDATE

Sarah Eaton, Assistant Director – Strategy and Policy, and Becky Lomas, Principal Policy Officer attended the meeting to present an update on the progress on the development and roll out of the Thriving Communities approach.

The Committee had previously received reports on the work that had taken place in the five existing local communities – Cotmanhay, Danesmoor, Shirebrook, Gamesley and Newhall.

To roll out the approach across a wider number of areas the Council had established a new Thriving Communities Board in early 2021 which had been successful in driving forward activity. New local communities had

been identified at Ashbourne, Langley Mill and Staveley. Work had recently recommenced across all seven areas following the removal of Covid restrictions.

The Committee received a presentation which provided an update on progress, outlined the planned activity and explored opportunities for further involvement from elected members.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Sarah Eaton and Becky Lomas for their presentation.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Committee notes the latest position in respect of the Thriving Communities approach and proposal to take forward activity over the forthcoming period; and
- (ii) that the officers return to provide an update to the Committee later in the year.

11/19 UPDATE ON THE BROADBAND PROGRAMME IN DERBYSHIRE

Councillor Carolyn Renwick, the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Environment and Nathalie Silkstone, Broadband Project Officer, attended the meeting to update the Committee on the progress made under the Digital Derbyshire Superfast Programme and plans for the roll-out of Gigabit-capable broadband across the County.

The Digital Derbyshire Superfast Programme had commenced in 2013 and had finally concluded in November 2021. During this time, broadband access had improved for over 120,000 residential and business premises across Derbyshire.

The Committee was presented with details of the current level of broadband coverage across Derbyshire. A total of 97% of all premises now had access to Superfast broadband and 41.84% had access to an Ultrafast service. However, around 4,000 premises did not have access to broadband speeds above 10Mbps; the majority of these were in rural, hard to reach locations in the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak.

There were significant challenges in delivering full fibre to more remote premises and as a result, a number of schemes had been developed recently to help these more remote locations access reliable and speedy connections. These schemes were as follows, and a detailed summary was provided:

- Project Gigabit – Derbyshire had been allocated Government funding from this project to help close the gap;
- Gigabit Voucher and Derbyshire ‘Top Up’. In March 2021, DCC had

agreed to contribute a 'Top Up' fund of £500,000 to match Building Digital UK's original voucher contribution;

- GigaHubs Programme; and
- Supplier Commercial Plans.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Councillor Carolyn Renwick and Nathalie Silkstone for their presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes:

- (i) The strong progress that has been secured through the early Digital Derbyshire contracts in providing 97% of all premises with access to Superfast broadband (>24Mbps) and 41.84% with access to an Ultrafast service (>100Mbps);
- (ii) The challenges that remained in delivering full fibre connection to hard to reach premises in the County;
- (iii) The £500,000 funding commitment made to Rural Gigabit and the top up voucher scheme in bridging the gap on rural connectivity;
- (iv) Plans to develop and deliver a coherent communications campaign targeted at hard to reach communities and ramp up communication strategy;
- (v) The work that was being actively pursued to ensure full connectivity, including the recent investment by the County Council in Top Up provision, the drive to secure additional external funding to support programme delivery and lobbying of Government; and
- (vi) That the officers return later in the year to provide an update on progress along with more specific information.

12/19 WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

The Chairman asked the members of the Committee if they had any particular areas they would like to see in the work programme for 2022-23 and also confirmed items that had previously been brought to Committee and required further updates:

- Key cycle networks (the Chairman would be having a discussion with the Executive Director – Place in due course)
- Future Highways Model
- Enhanced Bus Strategy
- Library Service
- Flood Risk Management
- Countryside Service
- Minerals Plan
- Community Safety
- and updates for the items covered at this meeting

The meeting finished at 3.35pm