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| **REPORT TO:** | **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** | **AGENDA ITEM: 6** |
| **DATE OF MEETING:** | **9 DECEMBER 2009** | **CATEGORY: DELEGATED** |
| **REPORT FROM:** | **DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES** | **OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A** |
| **MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:** | **CHARLES JONES NIGEL GLOSSOP (EXT. 5703)** | **DOC: O&S Dec 2009 Broadband.doc** |
| **SUBJECT:** | **BROADBAND IN SOUTH DERBYSHIRE** | **REF:** |
| **WARD(S) AFFECTED:** | **ALL** | **TERMS OF REFERENCE: N/A** |

## 1.0  Recommendations

1.1  That the Committee notes the work carried out on broadband in South Derbyshire.

## 2.0  Purpose of Report

2.1  The Committee has decided to re-visit the subject of broadband in South Derbyshire to determine what developments (if any) have been made by BT and Openreach. This report is given for information purposes, detailing the background to the presentation that will be made by BT and Openreach at the meeting.
Note:  Openreach are a stand alone company (separate from BT) that provide the infrastructure for Telecoms.

## 3.0  Detail

**Background**
3.1  In 2008 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out a review in relation to the broadband infrastructure in South Derbyshire.

3.2  The reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7th May 2008, 25th June 2008, 17th September 2008 and the 10th December 2008 detail the findings and outcomes of the 2008 review.

3.3  In summary the review of broadband in 2008 in South Derbyshire achieved the following:
- Raised the profile of South Derbyshire within BT relating to the Customers view that the broadband service in the area is poor.
- The number of case studies/comments clearly demonstrated to BT that a problem exists in South Derbyshire.  The number was sufficient to get BT to review the exchanges and line plant in our area, although no issues were found.
- Potentially moved the exchanges serving South Derbyshire higher up the priority list for upgrade to fibre.

- Enabled South Derbyshire residents, who raised case studies/comments, to discuss their individual problems, with Tom Hamilton the Regional Sales Manager for the East Midlands.

**Presentation from BT/Openreach**

3.4   Paul Bimson from BT (the Regional Partnership Director for the East Midlands) and Carl Gange from Openreach will give a presentation on the current situation and future plans for broadband in South Derbyshire.

3.5   BT/Openreach have been asked to answer the following questions in their presentation.

1. What progress has been made since BT/Openreach last presented to South Derbyshire District Council in February 2008?

2. Why is broadband still so poor in some areas (especially rural) in South Derbyshire?

   This relates to factors such as:
   - Distance from the exchange
   - Contention Ration (the number of people sharing the same connection)
   - Time of day (peak time is 18:00 to 23:00)
   - Quality of modem and internal cables
   - Quality of external cables
   - Capacity of a website that is being looked at

   Then additionally:
   - What can be done about these
   - Are their other factors

3. What plans are in place to improve the telecoms infrastructure in South Derbyshire?
   Please break this down to an exchange level across South Derbyshire.

   - When is fibre to the cabinet going to be in place at each South Derbyshire Exchange?
   - Are the Swadlincote and Mickleover exchanges still going to be converted to fibre by 2012?
   - What about the smaller exchanges e.g. Etwall, Repton, Overseal, Melbourne, etc.
   - Has anything been done to the Etwall exchange in relation to connection to Hilton? Have cables been put to both ends of the village?
   - With the growth of Hilton Village would BT consider creation of a new telephone exchange to serve the village, considerably shortening the loop length for subscribers in Hilton?

   Then additionally:
   - When will these plans be carried out in South Derbyshire?
   - What is the cost involved in improving the network.

4. How are businesses supposed to operate effectively in South Derbyshire with poor broadband provision?
What can BT/Openreach do to help?  Do you proactively enable aggregation? e.g. if 3 or 4 businesses are working out of one building, then buying fibre becomes more possible.

5. How is BT/Openreach going to meet the Governments pledge of every home having at least 2MB connection by 2012, especially in South Derbyshire? Improving speeds already within "normal" distance of the exchange is just adding luxury to the already good.  What about those beyond the "normal" distance? How many people and businesses are more than 5km from an exchange in South Derbyshire and what provision is being made to get them a 2Mbps minimum?

6. What is BT/Openreach doing to maintain the twisted copper loop up to the standard that it was inherited at and how is it being kept up to the Universal Services Obligation?

7. Would BT/Openreach consider doing something with the Council around providing advice on how individuals can improve their broadband?  Such as showing people what they can try to do to improve their broadband speeds, a lot of people (including businesses) are confused by the jargon of the industry and put up with sub standard connections when a few simple changes such as fitting an iPlate, removing old unused phone extensions, changing filters for a better filter can often get their connection running better. The oft quoted figure for the iPlate is an average 1.5Meg improvement on around 60% of lines.  Is this something that you have done else where.

3.6 These questions have been determined through consultation with all Members (not just Overview and Scrutiny) and by requesting input from the members of the public who have previously corresponded with the Council around broadband.

3.7 After the presentation a further question and answer session will take place, enabling Members to raise any further concerns.

3.8 All Members (not just Overview and Scrutiny) have been invited to attend the presentation by BT/Openreach.

**4.0  Financial Implications**

4.1 None arising directly from this report.

**5.0  Background Papers**

5.1 The reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7th May 2008, 25th June 2008, 17th September 2008 and the 10th December 2008 detail the findings and outcomes of the 2008 review.