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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>25 JUNE 2008</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES</b>	<b>OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>CHARLES JONES NIGEL GLOSSOP (EXT. 5703)</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>REVIEW OF BROADBAND IN SOUTH DERBYSHIRE</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: N/A</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the Committee notes the work carried out on the review of broadband in South Derbyshire.
- 1.2 That the Committee notes the feedback resulting from the press releases "Broadband Blues" and "Information Superhighway".

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To advise Members of the progress on the review of broadband in South Derbyshire.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **Background**

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have concerns that the broadband infrastructure in South Derbyshire is inadequate, especially in rural areas, compared to other areas of the Country. The Committee wanted to investigate what plans British Telecom (BT) have in place to upgrade and develop the broadband infrastructure and how existing problems can be solved in South Derbyshire.
- 3.2 The report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008 updated the committee on the progress of the review of broadband in South Derbyshire. The report and associated press release are attached as appendices A and B.

### **Progress Since 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

- 3.3 A further press release, entitled "Information Superhighway" was issued by the Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May (see Appendix C or [http://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/news/information\\_superhighway.htm](http://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/news/information_superhighway.htm)). The press release again asked for the public and businesses contact the Council, by the end of May 2008, to describe the problems they are experiencing with broadband.

- 3.4 The Council's press release coincided with Ofcom releasing figures to show that rural households are more likely to have a broadband connection than residents of towns, see [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2008/05/nr\\_20080522](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2008/05/nr_20080522). It should be noted that:
- Across the UK as a whole, 59 per cent of households in rural areas now have broadband compared to 57 per cent of urban areas.
  - The East Midlands has the lowest overall broadband take-up percentage of only 37% compared to other regions.
  - The speed of the rural/urban connections was not mentioned.
- 3.5 The target of the press releases was to highlight as many case studies as possible so that these can be raised and discussed with BT. The more case studies available means the more impact that can be had with BT on improving the broadband infrastructure.
- 3.6 It should be noted that each press release has clearly stated that the Council can't help fix any problems already raised with a provider.
- 3.7 The Parish Councils in South Derbyshire have actively promoted the broadband issue, this has increased the number of case studies received.
- 3.8 Up to the 13<sup>th</sup> of June the Council received 121 case studies/comments on the broadband infrastructure in South Derbyshire, all of a negative nature.
- 3.9 Further work is required on the case studies to clarify and provide specific information before it is presented to BT. This will be carried out in June 2008. The following areas will be covered:
- The broadband provider confirmed.
  - The broadband phone number.
  - Address details for properties confirmed.
  - If the case study concerned has broadband, then what speed is achieved.
- 3.10 Once this information is available, it will enable details of the broadband speed available for the location concerned to be reviewed against information available against a broadband speed checker, such as [www.kitz.co.uk](http://www.kitz.co.uk).
- 3.11 When the information is presented to BT, all the individuals and businesses that supplied information will be informed of this and thanked for their contribution. A further press release will be issue stating this has been done.
- 3.12 Feedback on the response from BT will then be given to all individuals and businesses that have supplied information to the Council.

#### **Related information**

- 3.13 The BBC is investigating and highlighting similar problems across the Country <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/7431336.stm> and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/7115850.stm>
- 3.14 The broadband issue is being debated in Central Government. This may lead to resolutions to infrastructure issues.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 The review of broadband in South Derbyshire clearly fits in with two of the Themes in the corporate plan.
- Theme 5 Rural South Derbyshire
  - Theme 6 Strong in the Region, Lobbying on issues affecting South Derbyshire.

## **6.0 Background Papers**

- 6.1 Previous Committee discussions.