

## NBG Report for KCC Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016

Progress is still being made on the Digital Scotland roll-out programme however, as ever, no detail information is made available. We continue to hope that this will improve in the next few months due to our continued lobbying.

- Some further properties have now been connected to the ADSL2+ service (without any specific notification from their ISP). This detectable by the previous speed doubling, typically to above 8Mbps if you are fairly near the exchange or one of the 2 cabinets. If this has not happened it may be because your ISP has not taken up the improved service from BT Openreach (from DS/CBS meeting below);
- Stirling Council have indeed appointed Douglas Baillie to provide improved liaison with the Digital Scotland programme;
- KBG indicated last month that once the new Stirling Council appointee was in place, he would be invited to attend KCC. This is yet to be arranged;
- Stuart Thomson (Kippen Broadband) has met with Councillor Neil Benny who confirmed the intention to relaunch the BAG with a remit to focus on collating queries and problems with Digital Scotland/BT Openreach (and hopefully improve communication), clarify the actual situation on the ground, investigate improvements to mobile coverage, investigate “not-spots” and broader co-operative ventures in rural communities. Douglas Baillie would be the lead on this. There is no date yet for the initial BAG re-launch meeting;
- Cabinet E3 on Station Road is shown on the Digital Scotland website as now taking orders, however enquiries to both BT website and on the BT order phone line are met with “not available yet”. Stephen Chambers (Digital Scotland) has been queried about this discrepancy and says he will investigate why this should be the case (prior to Christmas we were told the delay to E3 going live had been the lack of power to the digital cabinet). In other areas, there has been a leaflet drop has accompanied a cabinet going live to make people aware of the service availability;
- Thus far there is no further detail information about the new “Onesy” cabinet proposed opposite 1 Crosshead Road (Planning Request at last month’s KCC meeting) and requests for further clarification of which premises this would serve have also not produced any information. It is expected that this will provide some coverage of the many EO lines;
- A further cabinet is apparently also proposed, but again no further details were made available. One of these 2 cabinets would apparently support connections to 400 premises;
- The meeting on 18th Dec, through MSP Bruce Crawford, with Shaun Marley of CBS (Community Broadband Scotland) and Duncan Nisbet of Digital Scotland went through the situation in Killearn specifically but also the wider situation across Stirlingshire. UK MP Steven Patterson attended this latter discussion. Topics discussed included:
  - ADSL2+ provision throughout the village;
  - Proposed cabinets in Crosshead Road, and somewhere else, and premises served;
  - BT Openreach options to make connections, one of which was to re-route the connection to a different cabinet;
  - FTTRN was indeed being trialled but that results were not yet available;
  - New technology was becoming available (Ultra DSLAM cards) that would double cabinet capacity;
  - DN (DS) accepted that at the end of the programme there would still be premises not covered and that CBS would be expected to cover these gaps, with subsidised provision of a satellite connection if necessary;
  - DN (DS) confirmed that a minimum of 2Mbps was to be made available to all by March 2018;
  - Most organisations now consider “Super-fast” to be 30+Mbps although perhaps Openreach might still quote the official 24Mbps. SM (CBS) believe they are allowed to provide speed improvements upto “half Super-fast” ie 15Mbps without compromising any future connectivity by the DS programme;
  - DS Where&When site is being revamped (question raised about currency). DN (DS) suggested that BT Wholesale’s website or BT Openreach’s version might provide a more accurate up-to-date view;
  - DN (DS) stated that Mobile (3G/4G) Broadband was not considered part of the NGB programme. SM (CBS) expect that Mobile coverage is expected to improve over the next 6 months but is unclear exactly how;
  - Briskona (commercial wireless provider) are extending their footprint in the western part of Stirlingshire reaching Kippen and Arnprior and putting a mast near Callander to serve Gartmore (Aberfoyle and Kinlochard) in response to businesses in Gartmore, and are also talking about a service in Balmaha;
  - Balquidder are setting up their own (commercial) network based on their own wholesale connection that they believe will provide speeds well in excess of that available from the NGB programme;

- KCFC sub-group created to progress the Community Action Plan met on 7<sup>th</sup> Jan to discuss how this might move forward and a further meeting to finalise a proposal to the KCFC Board in early February is due to take place on 21<sup>st</sup> Jan. Fast Broadband provision remains a key outcome of the CAP;
- Euan Shaw (at East Duilt on Stockiemuir Road) has experimented with a VDSL (fibre broadband) connection, through Plusnet, that initially proved to be more stable when compared with the previous ADSL2+ connection and provided a faster upload speed (1.2Mbps compared with 0.4Mbps). However, it also had a slightly slower download speed than before. It must be noted that this is on a very long line (about 3.35km from the E1 cabinet) so further than the advised fibre connection distance;
- It appears that pending work on the Balfron exchange may include an FTTC cabinet possibly sited near Parkhall in Boquhan and serving several properties there and potentially live by June 2016. A 2<sup>nd</sup> FTTC cabinet, undergoing a Field Survey, appears to be located near Ballochruin and anticipated to be live by October 2016.

Doug Ashworth

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