

NBG Report for KCC Meeting 19 Sept 2018

Some more good news! Just recently another cabinet has appeared down Drumbeg Loan in Killlearn. Hopefully, as well as supplying premises in Drumbeg Loan, other premises in The Branziert will also be near enough to the cabinet to gain benefit from it. It's not clear when this will go live but it should be within 6-8 weeks although another source suggests it may not be until March 2019. Unfortunately, both the Openreach website and the Digital Scotland website that should provide a more accurate picture based on individual premises has been faulty for several months, so it has not been possible to obtain better information.

I have also been aware of several people making use of the improved 4G mobile-broadband capability to get much improved connection speeds, especially up, for a reasonable cost. The volunteer team creating the Dualt network continue to make progress and the project is nearing completion despite on-going difficulties with weather and the availability of workers.

Fintry has also had its first cabinet installed, hopefully going live by Dec 2018. Due to the upgrade of local mobile masts to 4G however, a solution for individual premises using this method now seems viable and offers very good speeds especially for those outside the village itself.

Otherwise in the other villages, the main update is that some further cabinets that appeared to be potentially being planned have been deleted from the listings. Balfron, Buchlyvie and Drymen have had 1 removed, while Fintry has had 2 deleted. Otherwise the predicted dates for the remaining cabinets don't seem to have changed from the last report.

Shortly following the last Broadband Delivery Group (BDG) meeting in June, Stirling Council decided suddenly to discontinue the group and also terminated Douglas Baillie's contract as Broadband Project Manager. Shaun Marley who was recently appointed as Community Broadband Officer remains in post. Whilst the group struggled to deliver much apart from the major project for Balquidder, and seemed hindered by bureaucracy and an unwillingness to subsidise actual equipment, the meetings were a useful conduit between the rural communities and the BT Openreach and Digital Scotland programmes for what information was allowed to be shared. A proposal is apparently on the agenda for the next Finance & Economy committee to revive the BDG again in the form of a Rural Broadband Forum.

The significant funding that Stirling Council had ear-marked to support rural broadband has hardly been touched in consequence. However, apparently linked to the demise of the BDG, there has been the proposal of a Rural Broadband Award kick-start scheme, to provide some money to help communities investigate how better internet could be delivered to their area. About 13 applications apparently have been received and the evaluation process should again be part of the agenda for the Finance & Economy committee meeting mentioned above. I know Gartness and Buchanan were interested parties. Proposals are apparently also to be put to the F&E committee that support should be provided to a number of other project areas, outside our local area, that have already been initiated through CBS (Community Broadband Scotland), a scheme that has now been closed.

As well as the Better Broadband Subsidy scheme that has been running for some time, a new Gigabyte scheme has become available, geared to assist business premises to achieve a full-fibre connection but which can also help neighbouring residential premises as part of the same scheme. Subsidies of upto £3000 for the business and £500 for each residential property may be available. I don't know if we in Killlearn have a suitable combination of properties to make a project of this format viable on costs.

The latest status of cabinets in each of the villages is shown overleaf:

- **Cabinet status summary:**

- Balfroon cabinets: 2 live (P1 at G63 0LH & P3 at G63 0NA) plus a further 3 planned (reduced from 4) supposedly to be live between July 2018 and April 2019 but locations unknown. Planned cabinet E7 has been deleted;
- Balmaha cabinets: there are still no cabinets shown as being planned;
- Blane/Strathblane cabinets: 3 live (P1 cabinet at Netherblane; P2 cabinet at G63 9BY, and P3 cabinet showing as Field Survey, location unknown, but now supposedly live);
- Buchlyvie cabinets: P2 cabinet at FK8 3LP is live and services most of the village. Only 1 additional cabinet (P4) is now showing, but location unknown, in Field Survey and apparently planned for Mar 2019. Planned cabinet visible previously (E2) has been deleted;
- Croftamie cabinets: P2 live (at G63 0EP between village and A811 junction to Balloch). Cabinet P5, on the corner of Buchanan Cres and the A809, is apparently live and been available since Dec 2017;
- Drymen cabinets: 3 live (P1 at G63 0BY, and P3 at G63 0BD). Additional premises are shown as Accepting Orders (within G63 0NH) using a cabinet number P3 at G63 0AA. P4 is at Buchanan Castle Gdns in the Castle Estate at G63 0HT with premises being Connected. This should have gone live in Feb 2018. Cabinet E10, previously in Field Survey and supposedly going live in July 2018 but location unknown, has been deleted. Planning permission has been sought for a cabinet at G63 0BH that is possibly a cabinet listed as P6 (but location unknown) which is in Field Survey and supposedly to be live in March 2019;
- Fintry cabinets: 2 cabinets are now listed (down from 4), E1 & E2 previously listed (locations unknown) have been deleted. One unmarked cabinet has been erected opposite the church on the Crow Road and will therefore be either cabinet P2 or P3 both of which are shown as to be live by Dec 2018. Locations for these 2 cabinets are not shown however. Work has still not started on the cabinet for which Planning Permission was sought approximately opposite the Garage in Main St). Meanwhile 4G now available from the mobile masts may provide an immediate solution for many premises, especially those furthest outside the village itself;
- Killearn cabinets: 4 cabinets are live (E1 at Blane Smithy), E3 (at jn of Station Rd and Gartness Rd) and P1 (beside Exchange) and P2 (at the junction of The Square and Crosshead Rd. A further cabinet has appeared halfway down Drumbeg Loan over the summer recess. A proposed cabinet now labelled P3 (location unknown) may be this same cabinet, however it is only listed as 'Field Survey' and to be live by March 2019;
- Milton of Buchanan – see Balmaha above.

Note that the reliability of dates shown is uncertain, as are the specific locations, which refer to the often large areas within a single rural postcode. You can check your own situation using the BT Openreach WhereandWhen website.

Note: the stages in “the Fibre Journey” are:

Exploring Solutions, In scope, Design, Field Survey, Build, Connect, Activate, Accepting Orders.

The timescale for “the journey” is likely to be about 12-18 months.

Status ‘refinements’:

Exploring Solutions: We're working with government and industry to explore ways to bring Superfast fibre to as many people as possible but don't have a plan for your area yet. You might consider co-funding fibre access in your community. Knowing there's a healthy demand in your area can also really help.

In Scope: You're in a plan to get Superfast fibre but we haven't started work yet. It'll be built either as part of our fibre programme or through a partnership with your local authority.

In scope – FTTP: Your area is currently in our plans to be upgraded with Fibre to the Premises (FTTP), however we follow a different design and build process for FTTP so you won't see updates at each stage. Once the engineering work is completed there is a commissioning period of up to eight weeks before an order can be placed. When you are able to place an order you will see the Accepting Orders message.

Accepting Orders but line Too Long: Your cabinet is enabled for Superfast fibre however you're not able to order fibre just yet. This might be because the length of the line is too long to get Superfast speeds. We're actively looking at other options.

Doug Ashworth

Chair, Killearn Broadband Group