



Suffolk Better Broadband Programme Public Consultation

Summary

Access to faster, more reliable broadband is increasingly becoming an essential requirement for people who live and work in Suffolk.

The Suffolk Local Broadband Plan aims to extend 'Better Broadband' beyond the reach of operators' commercial deployment plans by using public funding to leverage further private sector investment. We will be running a local procurement process (starting in April 2012) to select an operator to receive the public subsidy to implement our plan, under a national procurement framework established by UK Government¹.

Our 'Better Broadband for Suffolk' campaign has been communicated widely, and we have already invited businesses, consumers and communities to complete surveys of their own existing broadband services and future requirements.

This public consultation provides a further opportunity for the people of Suffolk to provide input to our plans, but the focus of this consultation is different from our previous surveys. This time, we are consulting on Suffolk's statement of local requirements and the priorities we will use during the local procurement process to help select an operator to implement our plan (see Annex 1).

This is a further opportunity for you to have your say on the local requirement and priorities for 'Better Broadband' in Suffolk. Your views are important to us, and will be taken into account in finalising our plans.

Instructions on how to respond to this consultation are included in Annex 2. Responses must be received no later than 31st March 2012.

This consultation with local stakeholders forms part of a wider consultation, which includes consulting operators of existing or planned broadband infrastructure within the county.

Under European Commission State Aid rules, public sector intervention in broadband infrastructure investments is limited to those areas where there is no current or planned (within the next 3 Years) commercial deployments expected. The aim of these rules is to avoid public subsidy duplicating private sector investments, and to avoid the risk of distorting an otherwise competitive market. Under the State Aid rules, we are required to publicly consult on our proposed intervention area in Suffolk (ie those areas in Suffolk, beyond the reach of existing and planned commercial deployments, where we propose to invest in extending broadband coverage) – see Figures 1 and 2.

The full public consultation document can be found at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/broadband

¹ UK Government, Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Procurement Framework.



Annex 1: Suffolk Local Requirements & Priorities

The Suffolk Local Broadband Plan aims to bring 'Better Broadband' to the whole of Suffolk by using public funding to leverage further private sector investment to extend the coverage of Superfast Broadband beyond the coverage that will otherwise be achieved under operators' own commercial deployment plans.

The Suffolk Local Broadband Plan can be found at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/broadband

The total public sector capital contribution (from UK Government and Suffolk's local authorities) is around £23.5m², which we hope to use to leverage a total investment of around £47m.

The Plan aims to extend Superfast Broadband coverage beyond commercial operators' own plans (around 33%) to meet the UK wide target of 90% of Superfast Broadband, with the remaining 10% getting a universal service commitment of at least 2Mbps. While Suffolk would like to see as wide a coverage of Superfast Broadband as possible, a priority for Suffolk is for an early uplift for those premises currently worst affected by not-spots and slow-spots, within the overall affordability envelope. Wherever possible, we will prioritise the early uplift of broadband speeds for premises currently getting less than 2Mbps, with technology solutions that offer broadband speeds significantly better than 2Mbps and an upgrade path to even better performance in future. We intend to test the market through the Suffolk Local Call-off Contract award process to get the optimum value for money in meeting our requirements.

Some parts of Suffolk will benefit from earlier deployments of Superfast Broadband because of existing network footprints or operators' own commercial deployment plans. The Suffolk Local Broadband Plan aims to extend coverage beyond commercial deployments to the rest of the county. Under the plan, and within the usual constraints of cost effective network planning and deployment, we intend that the uplift to better broadband to the rest of Suffolk will be as uniform as possible (by geography and geo-type) across the county. The aims are to ensure that all areas of the county benefit as equitably as possible from better broadband, and to minimise the risk of the chosen supplier targeting ('cherry picking') the most favourable economic areas to the exclusion of the least favourable economic areas.

Consistent with the UK Government's and Suffolk's policies of ensuring Superfast Broadband for designated Local Enterprise Zone areas (currently the four areas in the Waveney District around Lowestoft), the Suffolk Local Broadband Plan will aim to prioritise the deployment of Superfast Broadband to Local Enterprise Zones (if these areas are not already planned to be covered by operators' own commercial deployment plans).

² The total public sector capital contribution to the Suffolk Local Broadband Plan includes an indicative level of funding from BDUK of £11.68m (based on BDUK forecast of the number of premises in Suffolk within the intervention area for Superfast Broadband (226,184 premises)).



We do not propose to detail 'place-based' priorities for specific locations in Suffolk prior to award of contract with the chosen supplier, to avoid unfairly favouring one location over another, and because the detailed prioritisation within each local area is likely to be better informed and offer better value-for-money if conducted jointly with the chosen supplier post contract award during the detailed solution design stage for each area. We will work with the chosen supplier to design a roll-out plan taking into consideration the requirements as set-out above and other relevant local policy priorities such as:

- supporting the development of the local economy, particularly SMEs;
- supporting our urban centres as drivers of economic growth in Suffolk;
- having the greatest impact on raising educational attainment;
- enabling people to live independently and healthily by accessing the services they need online; and
- reducing travel and CO₂ emissions, reducing costs and improving productivity.



Annex 2: How to respond to this consultation

Local stakeholders (including businesses, public sector and voluntary groups, communities, groups, and people that live and work in Suffolk) are invited to comment on our Suffolk Local Broadband Plan and on our statement of local requirements and priorities, as set-out in Annex 1. In order to respond to this consultation, please write to:

Jonathan Chown
Business Development
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House
Russell Road
Ipswich
IP1 2BX

Alternatively, email your response to broadband@suffolk.gov.uk

Please include your name and address, and clearly mark that you are responding to the Suffolk Better Broadband Programme Public Consultation. Responses to this consultation must be received no later than close of business (5pm) on 31st March 2012.

If you wish your responses to be treated as 'Confidential' please clearly mark your responses as 'Confidential'. Confidential responses may be taken into account, but will be redacted from any published summary of the consultation responses received.

If you have not already completed our survey of demand for better broadband, please do so at the following link: www.suffolk.gov.uk/broadband

In conducting this Public Consultation, we aim to adopt the latest guidance and best practise in the conduct of public consultations. If you have any feedback on the conduct of this public consultation, your views would be welcomed by our Consultation Champion. Please write to:

Julian Brown
Business Development
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House
Russell Road
Ipswich
IP1 2BX

Alternatively, email your feedback to julian.brown@suffolk.gov.uk

Figure 1: Current/Planned Coverage of Basic Broadband (as at 09/01/2012)

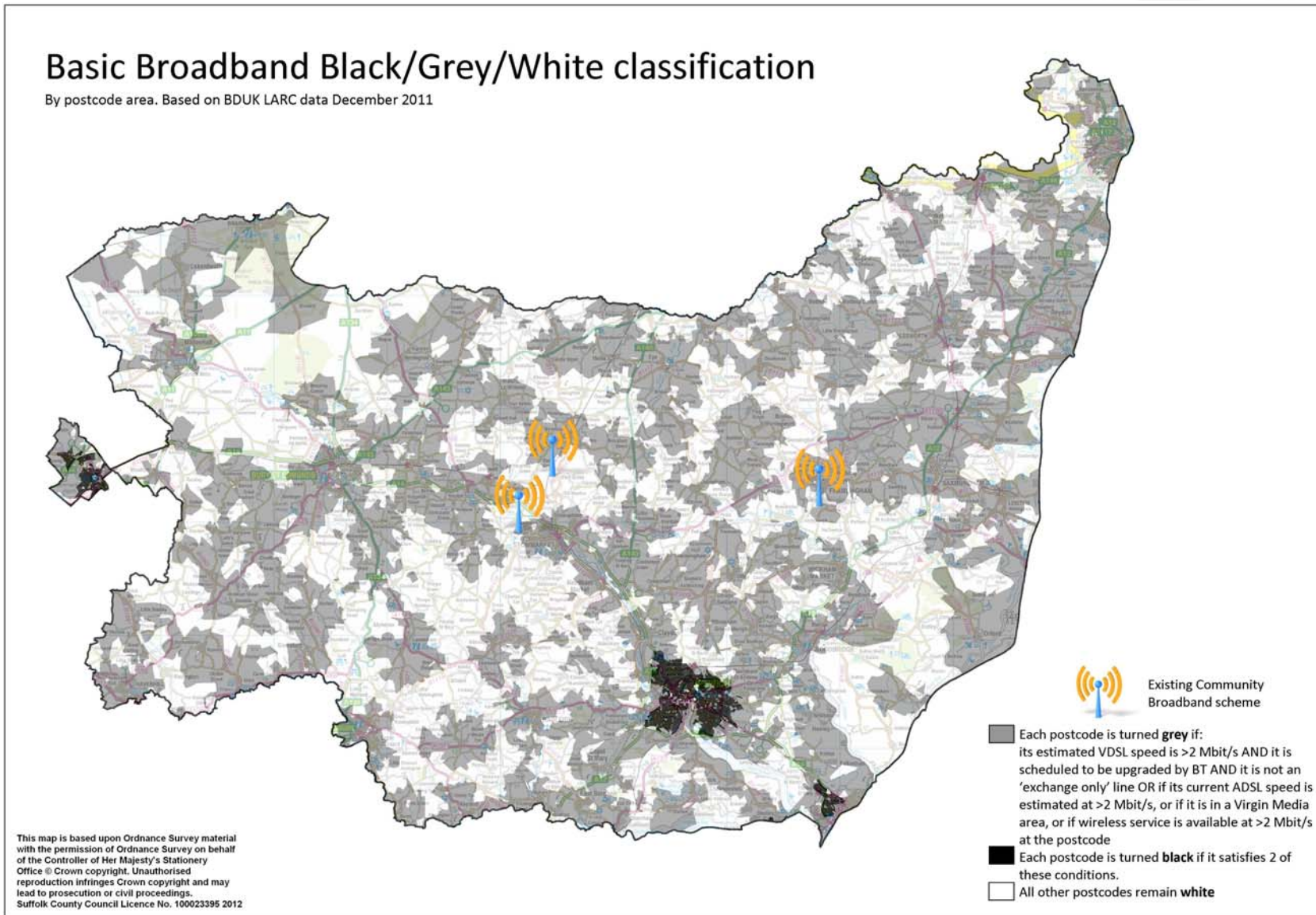




Figure 2: Current/Planned Coverage of Superfast Broadband (as at 9/01/2012)

