APPENDIX 1

Draft

Fastershire Broadband Strategy

Revision 2015-2018

Gloucestershire County Council

Herefordshire Council

Foreword

Joint statement from Cllr Mark Hawthorne Leader of Gloucestershire County Council and Cllr Graham Powell Cabinet Member Herefordshire Council

As the Fastershire broadband project approaches 50% completion across the project area, we now set our sights on the next phase of the fibre broadband deployment within the two counties.

The current contract with BT is due to complete in Gloucestershire at the end of 2015. By which time approximately 88% of premises will have access Next Generation Access (NGA) providing download speeds of over 30Mbps, with Herefordshire reaching a similar point by the end of 2016.

The emphasis of the Fastershire project has always been on rural reach. The creation of 14 milestone across the two counties was designed specifically to ensure that both the difficult to reach rural areas, and the easier to reach more populated areas, were delivered in tandem. However, we recognise that the current deployment only goes so far and we are committed to bringing faster broadband to more homes and business across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

Since the publication of the last strategy many factors have changed and it is only right that we now revisit the document. Additional funding from National Government has been secured and that will see superfast broadband reach even deeper into rural areas. We now have a greater understanding of the premises that still require an increase in broadband speeds and some of the areas that were previously planned for commercial deployment could now become eligible for public funding. New providers have also entered the marketplace, offering new technologies and greater information, providing rollout data by individual premise rather than across a postcode area.

This revised strategy outlines the intended approach of Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council to tackle the areas where the commercial market will failure to deliver NGA Broadband. It also provides a roadmap to achieve greater NGA coverage and ultimately the Authorities' stated vision.

Finally, as funding, coverage, level of demand and technology options are expected to change, the strategy will need to remain flexible. The strategy will however, at any given time, provide the Fastershire project's current view of the solutions available to bring greater levels of NGA Broadband to Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne Leader
Gloucestershire County Council

Cllr Graham Powell Cabinet Member
Herefordshire Council

Chapter 1: Introduction

What is Fastershire?

Fastershire is the project established by a partnership between Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council to overcome the market's failure to provide High Speed Broadband in hard to reach areas of both counties. It uses funding from a range of european, central and local government funding sources to match private sector funds and deliver the infrastructure required to increase the availability of high speed broadband.

The Fastershire Broadband Strategy

The first iteration of the Fastershire Broadband Strategy 2014-18 was adopted by Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council in June and September 2014 respectively. It identified a 5 stage plan to satisfy 100% of the need for superfast broadband.

The 5 stage plan included:

Stage 1 – The provision of superfast broadband connectivity by commercial providers; primarily British Telecom (BT) and Virgin Media. At the time of writing the understanding was that commercial deployment had reached its limits and that no further commercial investment was likely to take place without the stimulus of public subsidy.

Stage 2 – Essentially the continuing £35m contract between Fastershire and BT to achieve close to 90% coverage of both counties.

Stage 3 – The potential to extend the BT contract where it made economic sense to do so, based on enabling cabinets not previously planned to be upgraded.

Stage 4 – Procuring new solutions within distinct geographical areas. This stage focused on the residual areas remaining following the completion of stages 1, 2 and 3. These would be based on areas where there appeared at the time of writing to be a consolidated mass of premises which were not planned to benefit from fibre build but that might make an alternative solution viable. Based on the intelligence at that point, 3 such areas were identified; the Cotswolds, the Golden Valley and western Herefordshire. The exact geographical extent of these areas would be confirmed once BT had completed delivery in those areas.

Stage 5 – Providing bespoke grants to individuals and communities through a range of funding sources including European Structural funds.

Why does the Strategy need to be reviewed?

A number of parameters have changed since 2014, some as a result of external factors during the intervening year and others resulting from the successful implementation of the early stages of the strategy. These changes are as summarised as follows:

- Some of the planned commercial deployment identified under Stage 1 has not materialised, making 'the problem' bigger in some areas than had been expected
- The welcome announcement of significant new investment in purely commercial infrastructure provision by Virgin Media has also changed the scope of Stage 1
- BT decision not to participate in Stage 3
- The successful procurement of a supplier to deliver Lot 1 of Stage 4 in the Cotswolds. This was the first contract of its kind and validated the approach outlined in the strategy. The appetite of bidders during that exercise confirmed that the need to define consolidated areas was not as important as had been expected

- The existence of a more competitive market became evident via the Lot 1 procurement
- The announcement of additional BDUK funding for Ultra-Fast Broadband in the South West region and greater clarity on the ways European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) funding can be harnessed has also had an impact on the potential to expand the scope of Stage 4
- The widening remit of the project to increase the emphasis on benefits realisation as well as the physical infrastructure delivery.

It was therefore seen to be timely to revisit and refine the strategy to adapt to the changing environment.

Headline Principles

The vision for the Fastershire Broadband Strategy 2014-18 has been amended to:

"By the end of 2018 everyone in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire will be able to access the broadband services they need".

This updated version of the strategy aligns to three core principles regarding the deployment of broadband infrastructure in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire:

1. That the Fastershire definition of superfast broadband remains at the EU 2020 standard of 30Mbps not the lower standard of 24Mbps adopted across much of the rest of the UK to date
2. While the Government's Universal Service Commitment (USC) remains at 2Mbps; for premises which fall below the EU 2020 standard of 30Mbps, Fastershire will invest in solutions which deliver the greatest possible broadband speeds and services with the resources at its disposal. To demonstrate this, Fastershire will strive to achieve a Minimum Service Ambition of 10Mbps[1] across the intervention area by the end of 2018
3. Wherever possible, and within the state aid regulations, the deployment of fixed broadband infrastructure will be designed in ways which make the provision of mobile and wireless connectivity to not spot areas more viable.

In order to achieve these commitments:

1. Significant efforts will be focused on removing any barriers to commercial investment before public subsidies are used as a fund of last resort
2. Public subsidy will not be targeted at residential premises which are capable of achieving greater than 15Mbps[2], funds instead will be focused on areas with the lowest levels of capability – but some businesses between 15Mbps and 30Mbps could access stage 4
3. To achieve these aims with the resources at its disposal Fastershire accepts the risks involved with being the first to test emerging solutions, models and / or technologies. On balance, given the scale of the remaining challenge it is deemed vital to test the market and to stretch the innovative capacity of broadband providers.

[1] At the time of writing there was no clarity on the Government's announcement regarding a new Universal Service Obligation
[2] This threshold will be judged on line capability which will not always match user's experience

Chapter 2: The 4 Stage Plan

The first iteration of the Fastershire Broadband Strategy identified the 5 stage plan outlined in Chapter 1.

Given the changes highlighted, there is no need for a wholesale revision of the strategy and therefore (with the exception of Stage 3) the main stages of that plan remain largely unchanged. With the headline principles in mind, the detailed approach to each stage has been varied to account for the changing conditions highlighted in Chapter 1.

Stage 1 Commercial Delivery

It has become apparent that despite engagement with commercial operators using the standard Open Market Review (OMR) process, many areas originally identified as covered by private sector suppliers have not been delivered as stated. This has resulted in some postcode areas being outside the current Fastershire intervention area and of revised commercial plans. Added to the persistent problem of information regarding capability being identified by private providers at a postcode and not a premise level, the true picture of availability makes it difficult to fully evaluate the remaining challenge.

While this has been problematic for those affected areas, to date at least one supplier (Virgin Media) has announced an additional commercial phase (“Project Lightening” a £3-7Bn investment to expand their network). This news heralds significant potential particularly for Gloucester and Cheltenham where some of the residual issues of poor connectivity may be resolved through the expansion of Virgin Media’s existing network. Indeed there has already been some early evidence of this happening in parts of Cheltenham.

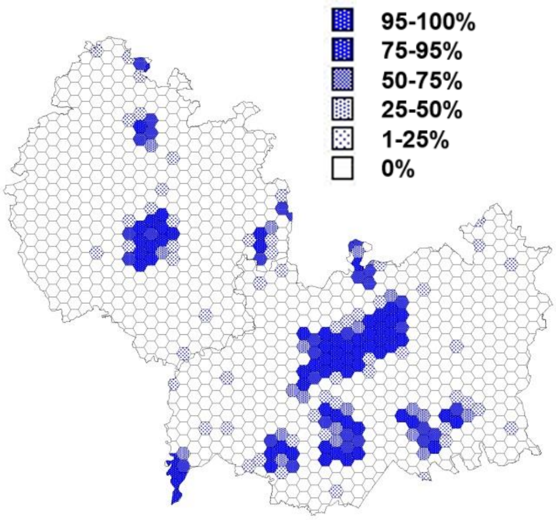
In line with the core principles of this strategy and since for regulatory reasons Virgin Media cannot be funded with state aid, alternative inducements may be appropriate including community lobbying, strategic engagement, demand stimulation, noticing and process simplification, information sharing and policy refinement to negate the need for public investment and focus investment where it is essential.

Gigaclear has also announced their own plans for wholly commercially funded delivery within the area: for example the villages of Duntisborne Leer, Brimpsfield, Badgeworth and Shurdington in Gloucestershire.

Areas which do not benefit from this new investment from commercial providers will remain eligible for later stages of this strategy.

The Plan

- The areas which have fallen out of commercial plans will be identified through a third open market review and state aid consultation and be made eligible for publically funded investment in later stages.
- A taskforce will be established including senior politicians and officers from Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester City Council and Cheltenham Borough Council to ensure any barriers to investment in our urban areas are reduced and that the environment for commercial expansion is as favourable as possible.



Stage 1 Forecast Coverage by 2018

Stage 2 Existing Contract with BT

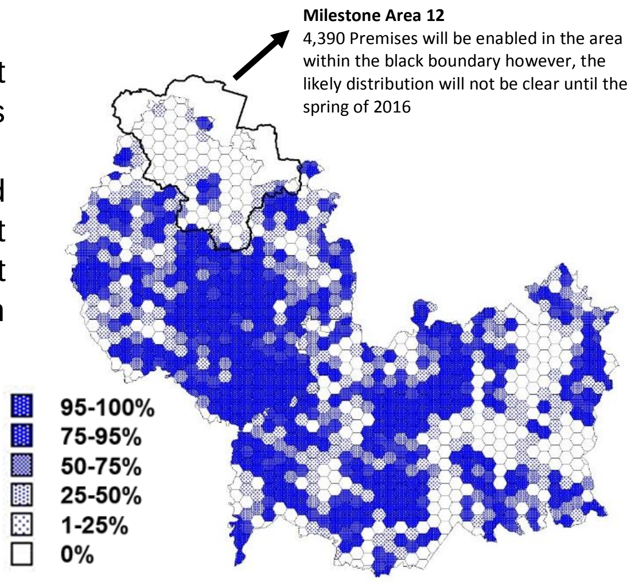
The £35m contract between Fastershire and BT signed at the end of 2012 will deliver close to 107,000 superfast premises across the two counties by the end of 2016.

A significant difference between this contract and others nationally is the concept of milestone areas which have the effect of closing localities down sequentially, before the final contract completion date. This means that new strategies can be deployed in distinct areas in advance of the completion of stage 2 (a major advantage over the national program).

It is becoming increasingly clear that FTTC technology will have a diminishing role to play in the areas which are more sparsely populated. This is demonstrated by the large number of FTTP connections being deployed under the contract, stated by BT to be more than any other area of the UK.

The Plan

- Continue the partnership with BT and support them to deliver their contractual targets in as efficient a manner as possible.
- Retain the option to incorporate non-enabled cabinets into the contract by exception where it is economic to do so subject to BT's agreement and dependent on a new State Aid Derogation negotiated by BDUK.



Stage 2 Forecast Incremental Coverage by 2018

Stage 3 Market Testing

The potential to consolidate intervention areas from those premises which had not been enabled by stages 1 and 2 was identified in the first iteration of this strategy. The successful implementation of Lot 1 in the Cotswolds has given this approach additional credibility and as such this version of the strategy has expanded the concept.

It is now proposed that 5 Lot areas rather than the original 3 should be instigated.

To recap, because Fastershire milestone areas are contractually deliverable in advance of a final completion date Fastershire are able to test the market in distinct areas sequentially.

By law, public bodies can only subsidise the provision of broadband infrastructure where the market has or will fail to, and only then within the parameters of a state aid regulation. Lot 1 in the Cotswolds was contracted at the end of June 2015 and as such was covered by the now lapsed UK state aid provision. It is intended that until any relaunch of this scheme is achieved, future procurements will conform to the General Block Exception State Aid Regulation (GBER). In terms of proving market failure, each future lot will be preceded by its own public consultation.

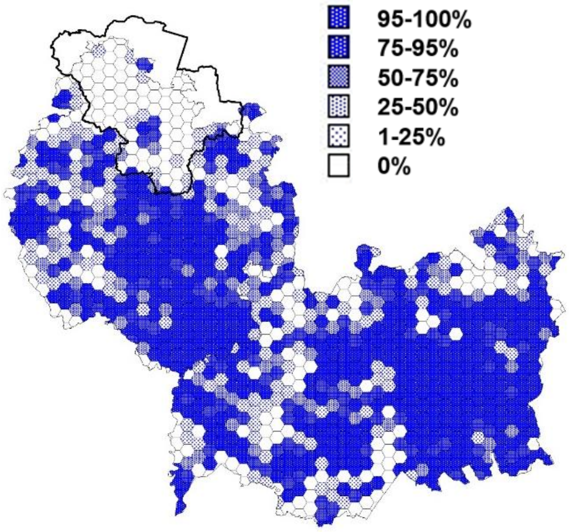
Lot 1

Lot 1 was created by identifying the premises within Milestone Area 5 which had not been enabled by Stage 2 and which had not been identified by private providers as targets for commercial investment during an Open Market Review in 2014 and a Public Consultation in early 2015.

With the closure of Milestone Area 5, the path was clear to open these premises up to the open market. Following a five month procurement process, Gigaclear were awarded a £3m contract to provide a brand new FTTP network to 100% of the 6,495 premises within the Lot area. This is a significant achievement in view of those premises representing some of the most remote places in Gloucestershire. It is intended to complete the Lot area by mid 2017.

The Plan

- Continue to support the partnership with Gigaclear to deliver their contractual targets in as efficient a manner as possible.



Stage 3 Lot 1 Forecast Coverage

Lot 2

During the summer of 2015 the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced the availability of a new £10m fund exclusively for the South West of England for the provision of Ultrafast broadband[3].

It is intended to focus this funding on Milestone Area 2 because, as with Lot 1, the Stage 2 contract has completed its planned delivery in that area and therefore we are able to identify exactly which premises remain unable to receive a superfast service. Milestone Area 2 covers the bulk of the Forest of Dean and was one of Fastershire's original target areas. This new funding gives the opportunity to reach 100% of the premises in Area 2 with high speed broadband. There is also opportunity to build in to this lot area parts of the Golden Valley in south west Herefordshire which was originally identified for Rural Community Broadband Funding (RCBF). It is estimated that the total number of premises covered by these areas is in the region of 3,800.

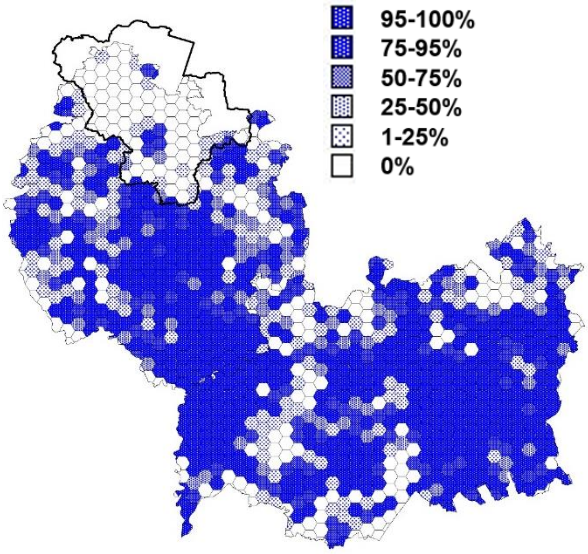
Like the previous procurements, a solution will be selected primarily on a £ per premise best value basis. The total funding available is estimated at £4.5m and it is envisaged that for such a budget 100% of the eligible area could be achieved.

Fastershire will also use this new lot to pilot the provision of delivery points (subject to land owner approval) to elevated locations including potential mobile mast sites which were identified by the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) but not delivered and to locations which would improve the capability of private wireless providers to deliver higher quality services to any remaining white spots.

Therefore, as part of the state aid consultation process wireless internet service providers (WISPs) will be offered the opportunity to identify prime sites for wireless access points which will then be identified as essential delivery targets during the procurement process. The successful bidder for Lot 2 will be bound to offer high speed backhaul to any provider as part of the open access requirement. It is hoped that such a provision would reduce the costs for and increase the capability of WISPs to offer services with low levels of contention helping make the minimum service ambition achievable in the most remote of areas.

The Plan

- Initiate a public consultation for the Lot 2 Area.
- Identify any discontinued MIP sites as required delivery points.
- Work with interested WISPs to identify the most beneficial locations for new mast sites.
- Procure a solution for Lot 2.
- Support the selected supplier to deliver their contractual targets in as efficient a manner as possible.



Stage 3 Lot 2 Forecast Coverage

[3] Download speed in excess of 100Mbps

Lot 3

Lot 3 will tackle the residual areas of Gloucestershire as well as those in central and south Herefordshire (which are located in Milestone Areas 1 and 11).

As with earlier lots, the accurate view of which premises will be included will be determined following the closure of affected Milestone Areas under Stage 2. This assessment process will take place from April 2016. At the time of writing, it is estimated that this Lot area could include some 16,000 premises in Gloucestershire and 8,800 premises in Herefordshire, though it may prove beneficial to release it as simultaneous sub lots rather than as one large lot.

The state aid consultation will begin in April 2016 to formalise the area and, subject to the experience of mast delivery points piloted in Lot 2, this approach will also be adopted for Lot 3. The procurement of this lot is likely to begin in June 2016.

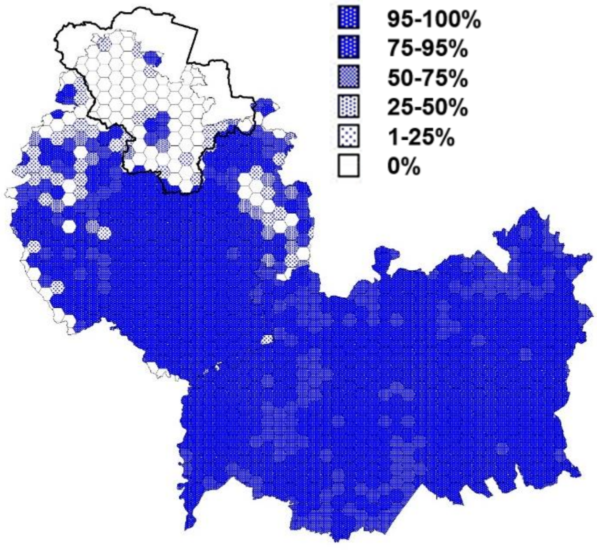
As with previous lots, a solution will be selected primarily on a £ per premise best value basis. The total funding available is estimated at £11.75m and it is envisaged that for such a budget c. 65% of the eligible premises could be reached with Superfast services[4].

In order for suppliers to identify hot spots of demand, figures showing where the greatest number of premises in the eligible area that have registered an interest on Fastershire.com will be provided within the procurement documentation.

Again, unless BDUK succeed in negotiating a new derogation GBER will be used as the basis for the aid.

The Plan

- Initiate a Public Consultation for the Lot 3 Area.
- Identify any discontinued MIP sites as required delivery points.
- Work with interested WISPs to identify the most beneficial locations for new mast sites.
- Procure a solution for Lot 3.
- Support the selected supplier to deliver their contractual targets in as efficient a manner as possible.



Stage 3 Lot 3 Forecast Coverage

[4] This assumes an average subsidy per premise passed of £1,000 for Herefordshire and £750 for Gloucestershire.

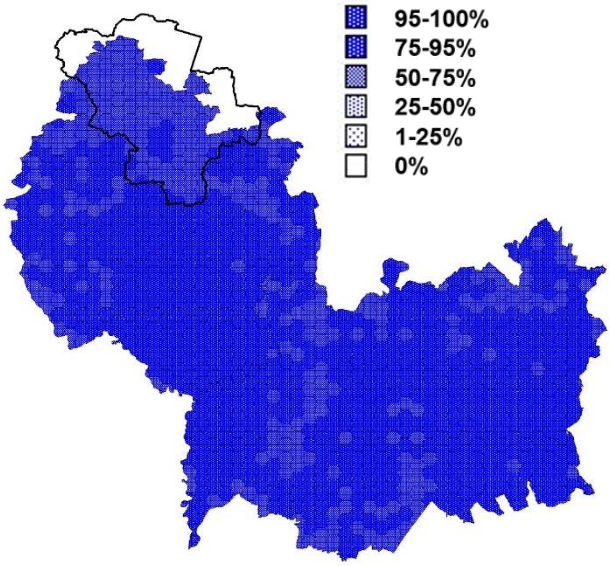
Lot 4

Lot 4 will follow the principles of Lot 3 but will be delivered in the residual areas of Herefordshire. It is estimated that some 7,000 premises would be included in this Lot area though again the full list of eligible premises will only be defined following the closure of the affected Milestone Areas. It is likely that this process will start in January 2017 with the procurement beginning in March 2017.

As the general trend shows that the fringes of Herefordshire are more difficult to access, with a possible budget of £4.2m, around 60% of those eligible premises might be reached with superfast services[5].

The Plan

- Initiate a Public Consultation for the Lot 4 Area.
- Identify any discontinued MIP sites as required delivery points.
- Work with interested WISPs to identify the most beneficial locations for new mast sites.
- Procure a solution for Lot 4.
- Support the selected supplier to deliver their contractual targets in as efficient a manner as possible.



Stage 3 Lot 4 Forecast Coverage

[5] This assumes an average subsidy per premise passed of £1,250

Lot 5

Lot 5 will be the final attempt at procuring a single supplier to deliver extensive coverage on behalf of the remaining communities. It will target EAFRD funding and as a result will be the first attempt to move away from a purely premise passed based measure of value. EAFRD aims to improve the economic prospects of rural areas and therefore, a demand registration exercise will be launched to rank the remaining localities in order of the latent economic potential which could be released through the provision of superfast broadband.

It is intended to deliver this lot as part of a wider project in partnership with Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin, securing the EAFRD funding through a joint bid between the Marches and Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) with each county given a ring-fenced budget. Bidders will be required to identify which communities in order of rank can be enabled for the subsidy available per county.

Under this lot, residential premises will also be connected but as a consequence of reaching premises which can drive the economy rather than as the primary focus of the investment.

The full extent of the areas that would be eligible for Lot 5 will not be clear in Gloucestershire until the conclusion of the Lot 3 procurement in the autumn of 2016 and in Herefordshire until the Lot 4 procurement ends in the autumn of 2017. Therefore, this demand registration exercise will not begin until the summers of 2016 and 2017 in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire respectively. Beginning this process in advance will be unfair on areas which may not know they are eligible for Lot 5 and give an unfair advantage to some areas over others in securing the county based allocations.

As this procurement will be based on a different measure of value to purely the numbers of premises passed, the subsidy required per NGA premise is likely to be far greater than any other Lot. Therefore for the c. £2.1m that could be secured from EAFRD, an estimated 2,000 premises could be reached with a superfast service.

Again, unless BDUK succeed in negotiating a new derogation GBER will be used as the basis for the aid.

The Plan

- Initiate a demand registration exercise in Gloucestershire following the conclusion of the Lot 3 procurement.
- Initiate a demand registration exercise in Herefordshire following the conclusion of the Lot 4 Procurement.
- Work with partners in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin to secure EAFRD funding.
- Generate an intervention area ranked in order of priority.
- Initiate a Public Consultation for the Lot 5 Area.
- Procure a solution for Lot 5.
- Support the selected supplier to deliver their contractual targets in as efficient manner as possible.

Stage 4

The final stage of the strategy, Stage 4 will target grant funding at individual beneficiaries where a return on investment can be measured in terms of either economic or social benefit. This stage will seek external funding through European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as well as other sources to enable individuals to access bespoke high grade broadband services.

These grants will be provided over and above any minimum service ambition and only available to individuals or small groups where a clear need for superfast services can be demonstrated.

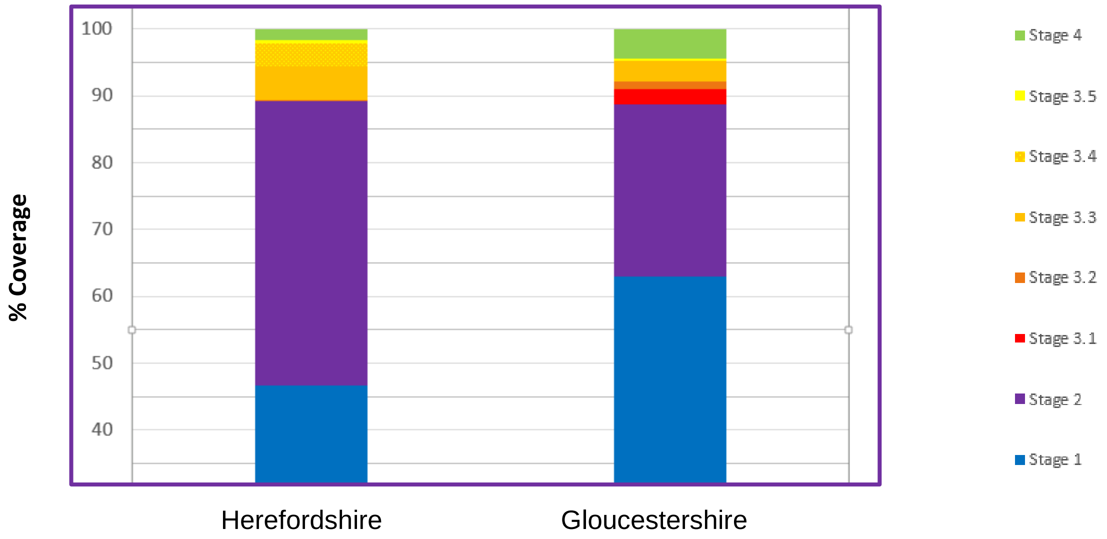
The value of ERDF funding that will be available for broadband intervention is relatively small therefore it is best to use it as the fund of last resort, picking up where the connection vouchers scheme has left off and enabling a contractual relationship between the funder and beneficiary to aid reporting and track impact.

The Plan

- Source external funding.
- Use the Passport 2 Fastershire process to identify prospective beneficiaries.
- Assist prospective beneficiaries to source costs for bespoke provision.

Incremental Coverage

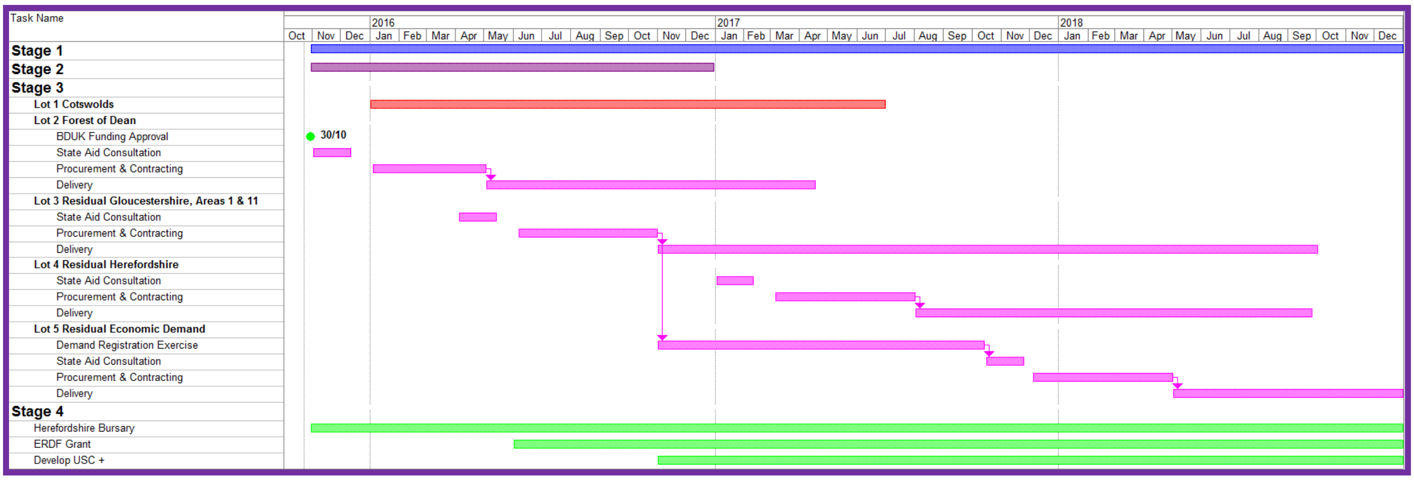
The graph below illustrates how each stage of the strategy is intended to contribute toward the ultimate coverage ambition.



There is clearly a high dependency upon commercial providers (Stage 1) which Fastershire cannot control - therefore there is a risk the overall delivery could be less than anticipated. The coverage targets in this strategy are based on the total numbers of premises recognised by address base + (July 2015)[6]. It is acknowledged that by the end of this strategy period, the total number of premises in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire will have increased which may have a marginal impact on the coverage assumptions being made.

Timescales

The chart below highlights the estimated timetable for the delivery of this strategy. Completion by the end of 2018 remains an ambitious timeframe and there are a number of dependencies within the strategy which may restrict elements from being delivered on time.



6 The provision of information by commercial providers and through the Stage 2 contract may not use this dataset therefore there may be some misalignment.

Chapter 3 Funding and Resources

BDUK have made up to £5.46m available for the next phase of delivery in Gloucestershire plus funds from their Ultra-Fast funding for the South West. £5.52m has been made available to Herefordshire. These funds must be matched 50:50 to release the allocation.

The tables below set out the funding sources which have either been secured or which will be targeted to fund the Fastershire Broadband Strategy. Herefordshire and Gloucestershire are set out separately due to there being different programmes across the two regions and to ensure separation between local authority funds. Clearly the strategy itself is highly sensitive to the level of funding which will be available and there is little margin for error if the strategy's coverage objectives are to be achieved.

Any funds that are contracted but remain unspent at the end of the contract as well as any funds generated through contractual clawback mechanisms will also add to the funding available.

The funding requirements will be fully realised once procurements have taken place and the allocated funding by the local authorities will be subject to separate decision making process in accordance with governance requirements, including a value for money test.

Gloucestershire

Public Investment		Stage 2	Stage 3.1	Stage 3.2	Stage 3.3	Stage 3.4	Stage 3.5	Stage 4
LA Phase 1	7,500,000	7,500,000						
BDUK Phase 1	8,006,000	8,006,000						
LA Phase 2	4,200,000		1,500,000		2,700,000			
BDUK Phase 2 SEP	5,460,000		1,500,000		3,700,000			260,000
BDUK Ultrafast	2,000,000			2,000,000				
LA Ultrafast Match	2,000,000			2,000,000				
ERDF	260,000							260,000
EAFRD	1,293,000						1,293,000	
Total	30,719,000	15,506,000	3,000,000	4,000,000	6,400,000		1,293,000	520,000

Herefordshire

Public Investment		~~Stage 1~~	Stage 2	~~Stage 3.1~~	Stage 3.2	Stage 3.3	Stage 3.4	Stage 3.5	Stage 4
LA Phase 1	9,750,000		9,750,000						
BDUK Phase 1	10,100,000		10,100,000						
BDUK RCBF	540,000				540,000				
LA Phase 2	2,966,000					1,660,960	1,305,040		
BDUK Phase 2 SEP	5,520,000					2,766,400	2173,600		580,000
LEP LGF	1,674,000					937,440	736,560		
LA Bursary	540,000								540,000
ERDF H	580,000								580,000
EAFRD H	840,000							840,000	
Total	32,510,000		19,850,000		540,000	5,364,800	4,215,200	840,000	1,700,000

Chapter 4 Benefits Realisation

To date, the Fastershire programme has been heavily focused on supporting the deployment of Broadband infrastructure. While this remains the primary role of the project, due to the ever increasing availability of Superfast Broadband there is a growing need to ensure that availability translates into both greater community sustainability and economic growth across our rural areas. It is for these reasons that the rationale for the significant public subsidy was justified and therefore the project will make every effort to ensure that those benefits are realised.

High levels of take up are in general a good thing, not least in driving reinvestment through the clawback mechanisms in each of the contracts Fastershire holds with private suppliers. However, a ‘build it and they will come’ philosophy will only generate a relatively static level of take up. Even then, just because a faster broadband service is taken, it doesn’t necessarily follow that said service will be exploited effectively.

In recent years both Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council have sought external funding to deliver a number of programmes including CREATE and Superfast Business to encourage the optimisation of IT by local small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Both these programmes successfully engaged business in learning about and exploiting information technology.

Fastershire commands a very high level of brand awareness, particularly within the business community with a recent survey by the Royal Agricultural University showing that 75% of nearly 500 local companies surveyed knew about the project. Therefore, as part of this new strategy and in order to capitalise on this awareness, the Fasterbusiness programme is being launched.

fasterbusiness

This will be available across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and provide:

- Bespoke support to help local businesses understand the benefits of broadband
- Digital tools to improve the way local businesses exploit ICT
- The means to demonstrate the potential return on investment from high speed broadband adoption
- Offers to help with the costs of exploitation and
- Events designed to demystify aspects of digital and ICT.

Additionally, Fasterbusiness will sponsor two mini programmes:

- Faster Women to provide training and events and support for female entrepreneurs to develop the internet skills to start up or grow their businesses – funded by the Government’s Equality Unit; and
- Faster Farmers to provide training on cloud accounting and precision farming to Fastershire’s land based sector.

Faster Communities

Fastershire also aims to improve opportunities for citizens across the two counties to make use of digital connectivity whether supporting education and learning, accessing services, enhancing employment opportunities, supporting preventative health or addressing well-being by tackling isolation. Connectivity also has a key role in the sustainability of rural communities by helping rurally based businesses to be viable and competitive as well as ensuring people living in rural communities have access to the same broadband services as those in more populated areas. However, these aims will not just be achieved by providing greater access to high speed broadband but when everyone has the ability to engage digitally as consumers and service users. It is clear that the digital divide is not merely physical and therefore Fastershire will:

- Make small grants available to community groups and not-for-profit organisations interested in overcoming digital exclusion
- Offer 'Introduction to the Internet' training sessions for community groups and clubs
- Track the localities which are most at risk from digital exclusion and target additional support at those areas
- Work with public bodies to encourage channel shift with services making the most of the opportunity provided by faster broadband
- Work with libraries and other organisations / venues to promote availability of free use PCs and wifi.

Digital training at Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre (HARC)

Evaluation

Fastershire has been working with the Royal Agricultural University and the University of Gloucestershire's Countryside and Community Research Institute to understand the impact that Fastershire is having.

The results of this research are due to be published in 2016.

Chapter 5 Communications

To date, Fastershire has used fastershire.com and various social media channels to communicate on progress as well as more traditional media. In some respects, Fastershire has been constrained by the information it receives from suppliers and we acknowledge this has caused some frustration in the wider community.

This chapter of the strategy outlines what people should expect from Fastershire in the future.

Where it is within our power to do so, Fastershire commits to:

- Securing an open and transparent relationship between Fastershire, its suppliers and the community
- Moving away from using postcodes as a way of illustrating delivery to using premises level data
- Providing information about which premises are identified for which stage as soon as we know and within no more than 1 month
- Identifying when delivery is planned for each premise
- Being transparent about challenges and delays to that planned delivery and giving good notice of changes to programme dates
- Making direct contact with premises once enabled to advise how to upgrade in a supplier neutral way
- Fielding people to attend community events upon request (given reasonable notice); and
- Responding to electronic queries within a reasonable timeframe.

Where any of these commitments are not within our power, Fastershire will endeavour explain why that may be the case.

Glossary

Acronym	Full Title	Description
BDUK	Broadband Delivery UK	An arm of the Department for Culture Media and Sport tasked with funding Local Authorities to improve broadband coverage.
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	European Funding targeted at measures to improve economic productivity in rural areas
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund	European Funding targeted at measures to improve economic productivity
FTTC	Fibre to the Cabinet	Where fibre is deployed between the exchange and a green cabinet with the final connection relying on the existing copper connection
FTTP	Fibre to the Premise	Where fibre is deployed to a node within close proximity to a premise and which is connected to a premise with fibre once a service is ordered.
GBER	General Block Exemption Regulation	A set of pre agreed rules within which the state can intervene with funding.
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership	Body which coordinates economic development activity
Mbps	Mega Bits Per Second	Measure of Broadband Speed usually used to express download capability
MIP	Mobile Infrastructure Project	A BDUK project aiming to reduce the number of mobile no spots across the country
NGA	Next Generation Access	Term denoting broadband with specific characteristics
OMR	Open Market Review	A consultation of private operators to understand the extent of commercial plans
RCBF	Rural Community Broadband Fund	A grant scheme to address shortfall in coverage in rural areas.
USC	Universal Service Commitment	Central Government’s commitment that everyone should be able to access a 2Mbps Service
WISPs	Wireless Internet Service Providers	Private providers delivering broadband using wireless infrastructure