monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SUBJECT:	**DRAFT DIGITAL DEPRIVATION ACTION PLAN**
MEETING:	**ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE**
DATE:	**10TH APRIL 2019**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	**ALL**

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To consider the Draft Digital Deprivation Action Plan in light of the recent question to Council on the 7th March 2019, regarding what the Council itself is doing to address the issue of digital deprivation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Economy and Development Select Committee provides feedback on the Draft Digital Deprivation Action Plan to inform a final document, prior to consideration at Cabinet.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Monmouthshire County Council and Monmouthshire's residents feel that the delivery of the Superfast Cymru programme in Monmouthshire has not been seen as a priority area for Welsh Government due to the sparsity of the population, the rurality of the landscape and the difficulty of the topography.

3.2 The current situational analysis of Superfast Broadband Next Generation Access (NGA) coverage in the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), based on the OMR/SAPC undertaken prior to the Superfast Cymru Phase 2 (SFC2) Procurement, paints a stark picture in terms of the current lack of coverage in Monmouthshire, in comparison to our other nine Local Authority partners as detailed in Table One that follows. Currently digital deprivation rates stand at 12.5% in Monmouthshire in comparison to 3-4% in other CCR counties.

3.3 One of the core strategic objectives of the Council is 'Supporting enterprise, entrepreneurship and job creation' and the Council wishes to capitalise on the provision of a high speed, first class digital infrastructure, alongside our ambition for a tailored skills package in order to deliver economic growth, wealth creation and increased productivity and GVA for the county and the country. However without the digital infrastructure in place the county's ambitions are thwarted.

3.4 When comparing the ambition of the Council with the current NGA coverage along with anecdotal evidence received by Officers and Members alike, the following concerns can be drawn:

- Clear pockets of digital deprivation evidenced through independent CCR analysis and regular correspondence received from disgruntled residents who are receiving a service below 2MG;

- Evidence of digital businesses struggling to deliver a high quality service due to poor connectivity;

- Evidence of home owners struggling to sell their homes due to poor connectivity;

- Evidence of students being unable to undertake their studies effectively due to poor connectivity;

- Delays in digitisation of council services due to capability of current connectivity and limited access available leading to increasing service costs at a time of austerity.

Table One: NGA coverage in the Cardiff Capital Region

Local Authority	NGA Coverage	% NGA White	NGA White Premises
BLAENAU GWENT	96.7%	3.26%	1,175
BRIDGEND	95.6%	4.41%	3,002
CAERPHILLY	95.2%	4.76%	4,002
CARDIFF	98.9%	1.14%	1,935
MERTHYR TYDFIL	96.8%	3.17%	925
MONMOUTHSHIRE	87.4%	12.56%	5,898
NEWPORT	98.0%	2.00%	1,480
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF	96.4%	3.58%	4,252
TORFAEN	96.4%	3.61%	1,615
VALE OF GLAMORGAN	96.1%	3.95%	2,453
TOTAL	**96.4%**	**3.64%**	**26,737**

3.5 In addition to local concerns the lack of NGA coverage also highlights additional wider strategic concerns:

- Monmouthshire is **strategically located** within the CCR as a key gateway into Wales from the economic power engines of the South West and the West Midlands accessed via the Severn Bridge, the M4 and the A40/A449;

- **The SFC2 programme has been delayed** resulting in the NGA infrastructure delivery having ceased in Monmouthshire in December 2017. The tender process for the 'Monmouthshire lot' has now been awarded to BT however observations from the Minister to Monmouthshire residents in September 2018 were not to wait for SFC2 but to consider **'Local Community Solution'** funding whereby communities come together and apply for funding via a WG facilitator – details are still unavailable at the time of writing. Recent Officer and Member meetings with Welsh Government indicate that of the 48,457 premises in Monmouthshire, only 1582 of the remaining 8,066 premises (WG figures) will benefit from intervention under SFC2 leaving many deeper rural areas in the same situation as is faced today;

- **Rural Community Development Funding** (RCDF) previously used by the RDP team to draw in funds for Broadband pilots such as TV Whitespace has now been **withdrawn** from WG and the money diverted for environmental projects. Therefore the team currently have no access to broadband infrastructure funds;

- The current **CCR digital objectives are ambitious** and **Monmouthshire's digital deprivation could thwart their ambitions** which are:

  o To ensure that the CCRCD citizens and businesses have access to world class digital infrastructure to facilitate Social inclusion, Economic development and inward investment by:

    ▪ The creation of extensive Full Fibre Infrastructure across region;

    ▪ Global connectivity - access to international fibre links to drive inward investment from key sectors such as media and finance;

    ▪ Welsh Connectivity - Exploitation of the Cardiff Internet Exchange (IX) and wider connectivity;

    ▪ Community Broadband – Settlement and Individual Property Connectivity;

    ▪ Regional and Community Wi-Fi;

    ▪ Mobile 5G access - Pilot specific locations for 5G, establish PoC and Scale-Up;

    ▪ Sensing the CCRD - Providing a constellation of sensors to provide Smart City information resources;

    ▪ Open Data - Develop a fully Open Data environment

4. Options Appraisal

4.1 Table Two in the attached Appendix A: Draft Digital Deprivation Action Plan details an analysis of current strategic opportunities, impacts, resource requirements and risks to the Council.

4.2 In summary these can be assessed as follows:

- The Local Full Fibre Network funding which has already been approved will benefit 46 anchor sites across the county and upgrade 32 sites to 1gig capability and therefore provide the potential to run spurs to approximately 20% of the 12.56% unconnected premises utilising the Gigabit Voucher Scheme;

- The Trunk Road concession option has an ability to connect communities off the A465; A449/A40 and M4 – addressing approximately a further 20% of the 12.56% unconnected premises;

- An application to the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme to provide full fibre connectivity to Cross Ash and Mardy schools will address a further 5% of the 12.56% unconnected premises.

4.3 However, the SFC2 programme is currently stalled with no medium prospect of delivery in the county. WG's removal of the Rural Community Development funding for the bespoke local broadband solutions and the current limited information available on WG's 'Local Community Solutions' fund indicates that additional options are limited.

4.4 It is clear that there is an opportunity to address approximately 45% of the 12.56% of unconnected premises via the current options detailed above but these schemes will not progress nor will maximum benefits be achieved without a dedicated staff resource to move them forward.

4.5 The evidence would therefore suggest the need to progress the current options along with a dedicated staff resource(s) as a matter of urgency to avoid opportunity loss and reputational risk.

4.6 Another consideration may be an approach to WG or Cardiff Capital Region City Deal for additional funds to address the remaining 55% of the 12.56% unconnected premises supplementing activity with the Gigabit Voucher Scheme to support the costs. It is also likely that some support will be available for the most hard to reach properties via the Universal Service Obligation however at the time of writing, full details are not yet available.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

5.1 Not relevant for this report.

6. REASONS

6.1 The current digital deprivation rate of 12.5% in Monmouthshire is unacceptable, it puts our communities and businesses and indeed Wales at a severe disadvantage, particularly given Monmouthshire's proximity to the economic powerhouses of the South West, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. Therefore there is a strategic imperative to ensure that Monmouthshire has sufficient NGA connectivity to maximise our economic growth and wealth creation capability, and increase our productivity in order to increase the GVA for the county and the country.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The full capital resource implications are as yet unknown as the digital infrastructure interventions required will be different for each community or in fact some individual premises. In order to scale the size of the county's digital deprivation issue a network map of the County detailing potential technological solutions will need to be commissioned. From this commission a dynamic model will be produced indicating current proposed interventions, timescales and premises targeted, leaving those requiring further interventions. Following receipt of the model, potential solutions can be costed and brought forward to the Council's Investment Committee for consideration.

7.2 However what is known at this stage is that a dedicated staff resource will be required to take forward and manage the current strategic opportunities as identified in this report. Any job specification will be subject to job evaluation however it is anticipated that this role will warrant a salary of £30 - £35k and will need to be revenue funded for a fixed term period.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

8.1 The Assessment demonstrates that the detail contained in the draft Digital Deprivation Action Plan demonstrates compliance with the well-being five ways of working, supports the well-being goals and associated activities are expected to have a positive impact on all groups and people with protected characteristics.

9. CONSULTEES

Monmouthshire communities

Senior Leadership Team

Economy and Development Select Committee

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix A: Draft Digital Deprivation Action Plan
Appendix B: Future Generations Evaluation

11. **AUTHOR:**
Cath Fallon, Head of Enterprise and Community Development

12. **CONTACT DETAILS:**
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Appendix B

Name of the Officer Cath Fallon	**Draft Digital Deprivation Action Plan**
Phone no:07557 190969 **E-mail: cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk**	
Name of Service: Enterprise	**Date: Future Generations Evaluation** 15th March 2019

NB. Key strategies and documents that may help you identify your contribution to the wellbeing goals and sustainable development principles include: Single Integrated Plan, Continuance Agreement, Improvement Plan, Local Development Plan, People Strategy, Asset Management Plan, Green Infrastructure SPG, Welsh Language Standards, etc.

1. **Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?**

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Improved broadband infrastructure improves opportunities for education and training via access to on line resources, universities and training courses.	There is a strategic imperative to ensure that Monmouthshire has sufficient NGA connectivity to maximise our economic growth and wealth creation capability, and increase our productivity in order to increase the GVA for the county and the country.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Improved broadband infrastructure can raise awareness of biodiversity and climate change issues and encourage positive participation.	Improved broadband infrastructure can also enable citizens to work from home thus reducing carbon emissions.
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Given the move towards tele health care improvements to digital infrastructure presents opportunities for digital healthcare delivery and helps raises awareness of the benefits of physical activity.	Improved digital infrastructure can provide the opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity, classes for which can be delivered direct to citizen's homes via the Internet.
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Improved broadband access is proven to reduce social isolation and promote independence.	Improved broadband infrastructure is also proven to encourage wider participation in community and voluntary work.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	Improved broadband access can raise awareness of these issues and promote positive activity.	
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	Improved broadband access can raise awareness of culture, heritage and the welsh language and encourage positive participation.	

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Improved broadband access can enable access to on line learning resources to enable them to fulfill their potential, whatever their background.	

2. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future **Long Term**	The technologies deployed in some circumstances will provide a short term fix e.g. wireless until a longer term solution e.g. Fibre to the Premise can be deployed.	Improved broadband access will ensure that Monmouthshire citizens are able to embrace future technologies and opportunities.
Working together with other partners to deliver objectives **Collaboration**	A partnership approach will be undertaken to ensure the best solution for communities can be found. This is likely to be with Welsh Government and a range of private sector network providers.	
Involving those with an interest and seeking their views **Involvement**	Citizens are invited to get involved by participating in local meetings with potential broadband providers or by contacting Monmouthshire Enterprise directly.	Further information can be found here: http://monmouthshire.biz/digital-monmouthshire/for-residents/

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse **Prevention**	A situational analysis of Superfast Broadband Next Generation Access (NGA) coverage in the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), based on the OMR/SAPC undertaken prior to the Superfast Cymru Phase 2 (SFC2) Procurement has been undertaken. This paints a stark picture in terms of the current lack of coverage in Monmouthshire, in comparison to our other nine Local Authority partner.	Additional resources will be deployed to produce a dynamic model indicating current proposed interventions, timescales and premises targeted, leaving those requiring further interventions. Following receipt of the model, potential solutions can be costed and brought forward to the Council's Investment Committee for consideration.
Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies **Integration**	Access to broadband can reduce carbon emissions, rural isolation and rural poverty. It can also provide access to learning which can increase skills and subsequently wealth and overall well-being.	

3. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below. For more detailed information on the protected characteristics, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Standards that apply to Monmouthshire Council please follow this link:http://hub/corporatedocs/Equalities/Forms/AllItems.aspx or contact Alan Burkitt on 01633 644010 or alanburkitt@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Improved broadband access reduces the barriers to access for people with protected characteristics.	Any negative impacts can be reduced if suitable safeguarding strategies are put in place.	Affordable and accessible broadband solutions will be identified to maximize opportunities for all.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above. In addition, the proposals will take the needs of the disabled population into consideration during the development phase.
Gender reassignment	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above
Marriage or civil partnership	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above
Pregnancy or maternity	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above
Race	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above
Religion or Belief	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above
Sex	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above
Sexual Orientation	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above
Welsh Language	As per Age Line Above	As per Age Line above	In addition, all signage will be compliant with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 as specified in the Standards applied to Monmouthshire

4. **Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on important responsibilities of Corporate Parenting and safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect either of these responsibilities?** For more information please see the guidance

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	*During the delivery of the programme of activities, safeguarding will be at the forefront to ensure that any future service delivery promotes the well-being of children and vulnerable adults, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.*	As above	As above
Corporate Parenting	*During the delivery of this programme of activities the needs of any 'looked after' children will be considered to ensure any future service delivery protects their welfare.*	As above	As above

5. **What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

The Caldicot Vision document (February 2018) and various stakeholder engagement activities. In addition the CCR Regeneration Plan has been founded upon the following:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act;
- The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act;
- Prosperity for All;
- Growth & Competitiveness Commission Report Review and Recommendations Page 22;
- Cardiff Capital Region "Powering the Welsh Economy";
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

6. **SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**

The Assessment demonstrates that the detail contained in the draft Digital Deprivation Action Plan demonstrates compliance with the well-being five ways of working, supports the well-being goals and associated activities are expected to have a positive impact on all groups and people with protected characteristics.

7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress

8. MONITORING: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	Ongoing

9. VERSION CONTROL: The Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration