

RSN Special meeting with DCMS

Date: 10th May 2021

Subject: Improving Broadband for Very Hard to Reach Premises

Chair: [Graham Biggs MBE](#)¹, Chief Executive, Rural Services Network

Speaker: [Richard Swinford](#)², Head of Digital Infrastructure Investment, Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport

Notable Key Points

- Government have issued a consultation on Improving Broadband for Very Hard to Reach Premises.
- Consultation closes on 11 June 2021.
- [Open consultation - Improving broadband for Very Hard to Reach premises](#)³



What are we terming 'Very Hard to Reach'?

(public)

Presented in the call for evidence as:

- Not being delivered, or expected to be delivered, by the market
- Beyond the potential reach of the UK Gigabit Programme for Gigabit delivery at reasonable Value for Money using either supply side (gap funding) or demand side interventions (vouchers, hubs etc)
- Not in scope of ongoing procurements (Superfast and UKGP)
- Unlikely to be addressable by other programmes (ongoing USO delivery)

Typical characteristics

- Skewed to 'remote rural postcodes'
- Over-represented in Scotland and Wales
 - Northern Ireland substantially addressed by Project Stratum
 - Some parts of England also relevant for VHTR, particularly National Parks and AONBs

- DCMS are looking for responses from four specific groups of stakeholders and the questions asked are different for each:
 - Rural Consumers
 - Rural Businesses
 - Suppliers / Vendors
 - Representative Organisations (Rural, Business, etc)
- The Government is seeking information on Demand, Benefits, Barriers and Approaches. The information will be used to inform policy development.

¹ <https://www.rsonline.org.uk/page/our-team/graham-biggs/>

² <https://www.linkedin.com/in/richardswinford/?originalSubdomain=uk>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-broadband-for-very-hard-to-reach-premises>

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network

Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 813693

www.rsonline.org.uk email: events@sparse.gov.uk twitter: [@rsonline](https://twitter.com/rsonline)

- There is a fully accessible PDF version and a lightweight PDF for people who are on slow broadband connections as a much lighter file to download. There is an HTML version, which is fully browsable from mobile devices.
- DCMS are only seeking responses through the online questionnaire and several delegates raised the point that those without broadband may be unaware of the call for evidence, or unable to respond. DCMS would encourage those to work with a representative organisation to provide their response to them.
- DCMS already have a model of every premise in the UK and the service delivered and its capability, what they want from this call for evidence, is information about the implications of not having that connectivity and being able to quantify the impact of those implications.

Key Points Raised by Delegates

- Concern over nonresponses from areas where there is no connectivity currently.
- Should Parish Councils be contacted as part of the Inquiry to share the information? DCMS stated that they are engaging with key stakeholders, DEFRA and the NFU. The RSN has published the Call for Evidence in the Rural Bulletin and will also share on social media to our membership.
- Technical questions on how to respond to the survey based on organisation type.

Attendance and Apologies

Attendance

Full Name	Organisation
Bethan Aldridge	Rural Services Network
Ashley Barnes	Durham County Council
Graham Biggs MBE	Rural Services Network
Hayden Bird	YMCA Lincolnshire
Kerry Booth	Rural Services Network
Chris Borg	NALC
Tracey Brockman	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Tony Brown	Northumberland County Council
Alex Buckley	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Stephen Bunney	West Lindsey District Council
Jamie Campbell	Rural Design Centre
Cllr Mark Canniford	North Somerset Council
Jay Chapman	Cornwall Rural Community Charity
Ceren Clulow	Nottinghamshire County Council
Amy Cobbett	NFU
Beccy Coombs	Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr Sue Cooper	South Oxfordshire District Council
Julian Cowans	Superfast Cornwall/Cornwall Council
Gill Cowell	Northumberland County Council
Paul Cowie	National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise

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Jane Crisp	South East Water
Isabel De Veer	Harborough District Council
Jane Deville	University of Lincoln
Nick Devitt	Rural Design Centre
Paul Dixon	ACRE
Nicola Doble	South Somerset District Council
Katie Duke	DCMS
Cllr Kevin Dukes	Bassetlaw District Council
Georgina Edwards	Plunkett Foundation
Phil Eke	Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Matthew Garrard	Lincolnshire County Council
Andrew Globe	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Richard Good	Richmondshire District Council
Freda Grant	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Roger Habgood	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Cllr Tim Hamilton-Cox	Lancaster City Council
Helen Harris	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Michael Harris	New Forest District Council
Lizzi Hearn	CPRE, the countryside charity
Cllr Edward Heron	Hampshire County Council
Steve Howdle	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Nick Hubbard	Citizens Advice Rural Issues Group
David Hutchinson	Durham County Council
David Inman	Rural Services Network
Paul James	Cotswold District Council
Tom Jenkins	Ashford Borough Council
Paul Jenkins-Green	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Peter Jinman	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Neil Jory	West Devon Borough Council
Kirstie Kalonji	Alzheimer's Society
Joanne Kerrison	South Norfolk & Broadland District Council
Carl Knight	West Lindsey District Council
Sarah Lee	Countryside Alliance
Robert Ling	North Yorkshire County Council
Nancy Maitland	Derbyshire Dales District Council
Toby Matthews	Norfolk County Council
Jane Morgan	Cornwall Rural Community Charity
Cllr Julie Najuk	Gedling Borough Council
Jim Orwin	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Jonathan Percival	Lichfield District Council
David Platts	Stratford on Avon District Council
Sylvia Pringle	Northumberland County Council
Maria Ramshaw	Melton Borough Council
Dr Malcolm Rigler	The Sound Agents - Liverpool
Ian Sherriff	University of Plymouth

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Robert Stepniewski
Cllr Peter Stevens
Richard Swinford
Cllr Virginia Taylor
Alastair Taylor
Chris Taylor
Sasha Taylor
Cllr Peter Thornton
Cllr John Toye
Nadine Trout
Cllr Sue Tucker
Alli Walker
Joe Walsh
Catherine Weldon
Richard Woolley

Worcestershire County Council
West Suffolk Council
DCMS
Eden District Council
North Yorkshire County Council/NY Net
Shropshire Council
Worcestershire County Council
Cumbria County Council
North Norfolk District Council
Rural Services Network
Scarborough Borough Council
Durham County Council
South Somerset District Council
Cumbria County Council
Connexus

Apologies

Full Name

Louise Allen
Chris Ashman
Cllr Philip Atkins
Mark Balchin
Paula Batchelor
Toffer Beattie
Ursula Bennion
Jane Berni
Stephen Brookes
Ian Cass
Cllr Richard Cheadle
Kevin Chorley
Steve Cunnigham
Alistair Flowerdew
Jan Gamon
Jonathan Harris
Nik Harwood
Cllr Linda Haysey
Cllr Robert Heseltine
Claire Holt
Linda Howells
Dan Janota
Kirstie Kalonji
Cllr Phil King
Jackie King
Guy McQueen

Organisation

Durham County Council
Isle of Wight Council
Staffordshire County Council
Hastoe Group
YMCA Lincolnshire
South Somerset District Council
Trent & Dove Housing
YMCA Lincolnshire
Lincolnshire County Council
The Forum of British Pubs
West Devon Borough Council
Sedgemoor District Council
Norfolk County Council
Isle of Wight NHS Trust
South Somerset District Council
Cumbria County Council
Young Somerset
East Herts District Council
North Yorkshire County Council
Durham County council
Uttlesford District Council
Dartmoor National Park Authority
Alzheimer's Society
Harborough District Council
Tandridge District Council
Lewes District & Eastbourne Borough Councils

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Adele Metcalfe
Cllr Cecilia Motley
Denis Murphy
Sarah Naylor
John Noakes
Brian Norris
David O'Leary
Amanda Phillips
Cllr Ken Pollock
Cllr Susan Prochak
Louise Richardson
Philip Roberts
Cllr Jeremy Savage
Cllr Richard Sherras
Martha Shields
Sarah Thomas
Cllr Angie Fitch-Tillett
Lewis Walsh

Peak District National Park Authority
Rural Services Network/ Shropshire Council
Advance Northumberland
North Northamptonshire Council
Warwickshire County Council
Living Memories C.I.C.
The Rural Design Centre
United Utilities
Worcestershire County Council
Rother District Council
Leicestershire County Council
Devon County Council
South Norfolk Council
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Eden Housing Association
National Federation of Women's Institutes
North Norfolk District Council
South Somerset District Council

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