

**Questions and Answers from the Meeting with Openreach (at the
Parish Council Meeting on Monday 15th January.**

Rhona Weeks, Contract Manager from Connecting Counties, and representing Openreach, provided an update on the fibre broadband installation and answered Parishioners' questions which had been submitted beforehand.

Q1. Please can you give us an overview of the work that is being completed in Ashendon and how the fibre will be transported to and around the village?

- The first cabinet has been installed next to East Farm, and the second one at Upper Pollicott was due to be put in on 16th January, subject to wayleave requirement for a power source.
- The fibre will be "blown through" the existing ducts (including the one from Watbridge to Ashendon) and use the current overhead cable routes. No new poles will need to be installed.
- If the existing ducts have been damaged or are blocked this may cause some delay to the commissioning date.

Q2. How far has your installation progressed and what is your current timeline to completion?

- All surveys and plans have been completed.
- Work is progressing on schedule.
- The contracted date for completion is by 24th March 2018, one year after the actual signing of the contract with Connecting Ashendon CIC.
- Openreach Action: Wayleaves will be needed to do some work in Upper Pollicott and are currently being progressed.

Q3. Will the work include replacement of copper wires already known to be corroded?

- No existing copper wire from the cabinets to properties will be replaced before the new service is commissioned.
- Openreach Action: The Openreach representative was informed that there is widespread concern in the village that the current copper wire was very poor in some areas. She undertook to warn their engineers that they should be prepared to do remedial work on this if needed.

Q4. What is the mechanism for persuading Openreach to upgrade the copper line from the cabinets if the service is well below the indicative quality?

- Connecting Ashendon CIC's contract with Openreach is only for the provision of fibre to the two new cabinets being installed, and .. "to ensure they are fully functional and ready to take orders from communications providers" (i.e. Internet Service Providers).
- Once the cabinets are operational, individual properties will need to contract with an Internet Service Provider (ISP) for the fibre service to be distributed to them from the new cabinets.
- It is up to the householder's Internet Service Provider to ensure that their clients get a good internet service to their property from the cabinets.

- Thus the reporting and procurement of any repairs needed between the cabinet and individual properties will be the responsibility of your Internet Service Provider (ISP).
- This would include any necessary replacement of copper wire to the property which would be done by Openreach.
- Openreach Action: The Openreach representative noted that some Pollicott properties were on shared copper wires which might cause particular difficulties, and this might need special attention/rectification.

Q5. Is there the option of individual households having fibre laid from the cabinet to their property (FTTP)?

- Openreach were specifically asked what would happen if properties on the fringe of the contracted area (such as Hill Farm and Lower Pollicott) did not get the minimum superfast speed of 24 Mbps.
- Openreach explained that if a property covered by the current contract (which are listed, with anticipated speeds, on the village website) cannot get the minimum superfast speed of 24 Mbps over their copper connection then Fibre To The Property (FTTP) was an option to be discussed separately should the issue arise.*
- However, FTTP is not included in the current contract. Any such connection would need to be the subject of a separate agreement with Openreach.
- FTTP involves running a fibre cable from the cabinet to a junction/distribution box on a suitable existing pole and then connection to individual properties. This would give speeds of about 70-80 Mbps.
- Other households which do get superfast speeds under the new contract, but which want to upgrade to FTTP will need to apply through their ISP and (if FTTP is available) pay for the installation.

** Note: The matter of who pays if FTTP is essential to get at least 24 Mbps will need to be resolved separately by the Broadband Working Party and Openreach.*

Q6. Regarding fibre to the property (FTTP), can fibre be fed by overhead cables as now or does it involve digging up the road and people's gardens?

- It would follow the existing copper wiring over poles or through ducting. It may involve laying underground for the last section to the property.

Q7. If you are going to bring the fibre to the village using overhead lines is there any reduction of quality over fibre laid in a duct?

- No

Q8. What measures will Openreach take to protect the overhead line, viz falling trees, at field entrances?

- The fibre cable is held within a protective plastic sheath and all distribution cable / wire repairs are subject to the existing national Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

Q9. In the event of damage to the overhead line what Service Level Agreement will be in place to ensure minimum disruption and speedy repair?

- Each ISP company has their own Service Level Agreement with Openreach for the maintenance and repair of lines from the cabinets to a property. The contracted speed of repair may vary between providers.

Note: It is therefore strongly recommended by the Working Party that customers choose their ISPs carefully and check their Term & Conditions, customer service reputation and suchlike.

Q10. If (in the unlikely circumstance) Openreach were to fail to get the installation completed before the end of March 2018 what is the situation with regard our BDUK vouchers?

- The validity of the vouchers (which pay for approximately half of the contract cost) can be extended to December 2018.

Q11. Do BT offer specific, targeted superfast deals for a community when fibre is first connected, or will residents just have to choose from the regular marketplace through, for instance, USwitch.

- No: customers will have to buy from whatever deals are generally available at the time.

Q12. When do ISPs become aware that the community is to be connected to the fibre network?

- Openreach advise all potential ISPs of the impending upgrade 5 days before the commissioning date (known as the "Customer Ready for Service" date).
- The Broadband Working Party / Ashendon CIC will also inform all households as soon as this date is known.