

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the EqIA Guidance Notes

Title	Superfast Dorset Phase 3 Ultrafast Contract Expansion		
Date assessment started:	11/07/19	Version No:	2
		Date of completion:	09/08/19

Type of Strategy, Policy, Project or Service:

Is this Equality Impact Assessment (please put a cross in the relevant box)

Existing:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Changing, update or revision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
New or proposed:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please explain):	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is this Equality Impact Assessment (please put a cross in the relevant box)

Internal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	External:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Report Created By:

Name:	Dominic Fitzgerald
Job Title:	Programme Manager, Superfast Dorset
Email address:	dominic.fitzgerald@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	Dominic Fitzgerald Rachel Howarth – Project Support Officer, SFD

Step 1: Aims

What are the aims of your strategy, policy, project or service?
<p>To further increase access to superfast broadband for Dorset residents and businesses by incorporating additional budget and outcomes to the existing contract awarded to Openreach in July 2017. The Ultrafast contract was let with sufficient total contract value to accommodate this expansion so no new procurement activity is necessary.</p> <p>The contract expansion will deliver fibre broadband to some of the most rural areas of Dorset. This will benefit a wide range of residents and businesses. Increased provision of fibre broadband allows for better communication in both social and economic transactions. Increased widespread access to broadband reduces the need for travel, allows for the creation of new economic developments & opportunities, and improves individual's ability to communicate and engage with services.</p>
What is the background or context to the proposal?
<p>Access to infrastructure providing superfast broadband in Dorset is good, with over 95% of premises (residential and business) now able to take a service.</p>

This proposal aims to increase coverage further by expanding the contract with Openreach within its full procured value (approximately £8.9m) beyond the £3.9m awarded in July 2017.

Grant funding has been secured from the Rural Payments Agency to extend superfast broadband coverage to rural businesses across Dorset. Additional funding is also available from re-investable project funds to further increase coverage in combination with this grant award.

The nature of broadband infrastructure deployment would mean that additional residential premises would be picked up when building the network. Due to the rurality of the target businesses the network will be built in some of the most rural parts of Dorset.

Build under the programme is accompanied by dedicated communication efforts in newly provisioned areas. This ensures communities are aware of the improved services available. The current Digital Norm campaign also aims to make the process and benefits of upgrading to a superfast service easily understandable to all. In addition, Dorset Council works with 40 partner organisations under the Routes to Inclusion programme to support vulnerable groups to get online via a network of 70 volunteer digital champions.

Take up of superfast services on network provided by the programme is currently at 59% (latest BT reporting data June 2019) and continues to grow. A superfast service is now available to 97.3% of all premises (residential and commercial) across the Superfast Dorset programme area (Dorset Council & BCP) and this proposal will further expand coverage into some of the hardest to reach areas remaining in need.

Step 2: Intelligence and Communication

What data, information, evidence and research was used in this EqlA and how has it been used to inform the decision-making process?

The scope of premises eligible to receive public subsidy to improve broadband infrastructure is based on Open Market Reviews (OMR), a consultation with infrastructure providers about their current and future plans to serve premises in Dorset. Only premises where no provider has any plans or current coverage can be targeted. There were 11,629 eligible premises identified in Dorset in the 2016 OMR.

The eligible premises to be targeted under contract expansion are understood to be those what would not be served by commercial deployment and without public sector intervention would be left with inadequate access to broadband. These premises are generally in the most rural areas of Dorset and have a wide geographical spread. Therefore, no specific protected characteristic or demographic data can be attributed to them.

What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your proposal will have an impact on?

Only 5% of the properties in Dorset could benefit from this, as the rest already have access to infrastructure capable of delivering superfast broadband.

Openreach will design and model the most economically advantages technical solution to deliver the most premises for the least public subsidy in the eligible area. Demographics of property owner / occupier is not a factor in designing the network, as it is based on the cost to deploy to each property.

However, data held on the whole of Dorset shows that at 28% the percentage of over 65s is 10% higher than the average for England & Wales at 18% (Dorset Council, State of Older People report, May 2019). Moving forward with increasing number of individuals wishing to stay independent, there will be added pressure to have improved connectivity in rural areas as this will allow increased use of assistive technology and improve communications between health and social care support.

As the scope of this expansion is business premise led it is important to note that 85.6% of Dorset businesses are Micro Businesses (0-9 employees) and only 0.2% are Large business (250+ employees). On a generalised scale it would be expected that the proposed deployment would have a positive impact of connecting Micro and Small Businesses. These are likely to be highly localised and help to create a sustainability community by employing local people.

The overall limiting factor on the decision-making process is the eligibility of premises as defined by the OMR. The planned deployment will serve predominantly rural premises, but the characteristics of the residents are unknown and cannot be reasonably quantified. From anecdotal experience there is no typical 'in need' premise. Although they tend to be rural that is not always the case, and all types of properties have the potential to be eligible premises, therefore there is no exclusion to premises unless they are already served with Superfast speeds.

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this EqIA?

Consultation with Infrastructure providers during OMR
 Equality Act 2010 requirements incorporated into competitive procurement process
 Proposed for review at Diversity Action Group

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

Coverage increased from this will be advertised on the Superfast Dorset web pages and communicated directly to communities and stakeholders

Step 3: Assessment

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the 'Please provide details' box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive impact on a large proportion of protected characteristic groups • Significant positive impact on a small proportion of protect characteristics group
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Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionate impact on a large proportion of protected characteristic groups • Significant disproportionate impact on a small proportion of protected characteristic groups.
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	<i>Positive</i>
What age bracket does this affect?	All
Please provide details:	Access to superfast broadband benefits all parts of society differently. Younger people will have access to training and job opportunities, as well as social benefits. Older people will have access to health and social care opportunities as well as the social benefits.

Disability:	<i>Positive</i>
Does this affect a specific disability group?	No
Please provide details:	All disability groups are benefitted. Adaptive technology is available online and often relies on good connectivity. Training and specialist support groups available online will also benefit. Better connectivity has the opportunity to lead to better communication (e.g. skype calling).

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	The improved connectivity to residents provided by this proposal will provide a positive benefit to this protected characteristic group, as access to superfast broadband will facilitate individual's ability to access national and international information and support groups.

Pregnancy and maternity:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	<p>This group will benefit from improved access to online registrations of pregnancy and access to online support groups.</p> <p>Partnership working is already in place for the Superfast Dorset team to support the CCG's Maternity Matters project, to ensure that all pregnancies are registered online. Improved connectivity will allow for the opportunity for increased take up in this service.</p>

Race and Ethnicity:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	The improved connectivity to residents provided by this proposal will provide a positive benefit to this protected characteristic group, as access to superfast broadband will facilitate individual's ability to access national and international information and support groups.

Religion or belief:	<i>Neutral</i>
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Please provide details:	Access to superfast broadband is not thought to have an impact on this protected characteristic group
Sexual orientation:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	The improved connectivity to residents provided by this proposal will provide a positive benefit to this protected characteristic group, as access to superfast broadband will facilitate individual's ability to access national and international information and support groups.
Sex:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	Access to superfast broadband is not thought to have an impact on this protected characteristic group
Marriage or civil partnership:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	Access to superfast broadband is not thought to have an impact on this protected characteristic group
Carers:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	Access to superfast broadband provides access to national and international information and support groups
Rural isolation:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	This project is specifically targeting properties in rural areas. This will lead to increased connectivity and productivity (rural business targets) in isolated rural areas.
Single parent families:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	The improved connectivity to residents provided by this proposal will provide a positive benefit to this protected characteristic group, as access to superfast broadband will facilitate individual's ability to access national and international information and support groups.
Poverty (social & economic deprivation):	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	<p>Applications to universal credit have to be made online, so access to superfast broadband is more beneficial to this group. Online shopping can save purchasers money, online only deals and discount vouchers etc. Wider training and job opportunities are available online.</p> <p>This proposal will expand fibre broadband in the county into areas that would not otherwise be commercially served – enabling individuals, families and businesses to access superfast broadband where they would not otherwise be able to do so. This proposal has no direct impact on the pricing of services offered by internet service providers and affordability is driven by individual considerations. However, open market access to any internet service provider is a requirement of publicly funded network deployment, facilitating competitive pricing and choice for the consumer.</p>

	Access to faster more reliable broadband incentivises use. Studies identify people who are 'digital first' as more likely to have more disposable income, even among those on low incomes, with 75% saving money online (Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index report, 2019).
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Military families/veterans:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	Access to superfast broadband is not thought to have an impact on this protected characteristic group

Step 4: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action	Person(s) responsible	Deadline	How will it be monitored?
Areas of deprivation are not upgraded	Superfast Dorset monitor deployment activity to ensure no areas are descoped from proposed contract build due to demographics	Dominic Fitzgerald	Annual review	Weekly meetings with supplier, review and sign off of build plans to align with contract
Properties upgraded do not take advantage of access to superfast broadband and take a faster service	<p>Superfast Dorset runs marketing and communications projects to drive up take up of newly available services.</p> <p>This is currently via the 'Digital Norm' campaign which is promoted through on and offline channels in areas where services are newly available (social media, leafletting and direct communications with Parish Councils).</p> <p>https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/business-consumers-licences/superfast-dorset/superfast.aspx</p>	Penny Syddall	Annual review	Take up reports reviewed and areas with low take up targeted with further work, refined by understanding the demographics in the area.
Contract expansion does not serve all remaining 'in need' premises	There are currently several types of vouchers available from central government that residents and businesses may use to increase their broadband speeds/ availability.	Pete Bartlett Dominic Fitzgerald	Annual Review	Superfast Dorset will continue to monitor the 'in need' communities and support those who need it through the voucher process/

Step 5: EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Dominic Fitzgerald	Date:	09/08/19
Equality Lead:	Susan Ward-Rice	Date:	14/08/19
Relevant Focus Groups*:	Dr David Bonner Corporate Diversity Action Group	Date:	14/08/19

* To include Diversity Action Groups