

Garsdale PC Clerk Report

Connecting Cumbria meeting 11th September 2014 Clough house, Sedbergh 10.00am

Present: Mike Roper, Annette Colton, Phil Johns plus Jon March CCC PM, Nick Cotton CCC plus reps from Dent, Firbank and Sedbergh PCs and Jock Steins, co-ordinator.

Jon March introduced himself with a brief history but noted that he had only been in this position for 2 weeks. He explained that he was there in his capacity for Cumbria CC although BT was the contractor.

BT had been developing fibres to cabinets over 50 months with funding from BDUK and RDF. Phase 1 should be complete by end of 2015 giving superfast broadband to 93% of the population in Cumbria Superfast is defined as at least 24 megs/sec. the remaining 5% will have minimum broadband of 2% but delivery unknown eg sat or cable. Garsdale should have been in this 7%. Phase 2 is yet to be finalised but is expected to be granted to BT and will give superfast to 95%. Phase 2 possibly to be completed by end 2017 but no firm details yet. There is a possibility of a phase 3 but very much in the air and may be announced in the Autumn Statement.

Dent asked if there will be any capability of measuring the actual broadband speed delivered, and any recourse to BT if below requirements. CC replied that this is unlikely due to size of BT. Dent has just had a copper cabinet installed. However anyone beyond 1.5km from the cabinet will not benefit.

Fibre has reached Sedbergh but was not live.

MR commented that BT was unaware in early discussions that a duct exists to The Hive.

Due to the proposed descoping by FG, all work in Garsdale and Dentdale was supposed to be ceased by BT in May. BT was likely to include a few hundred thousand as "sunk" costs in the descoping assessment. Dent reported that BT would not turn on/upgrade to superfast broadband if FG came into Dent.

An in depth discussion proceeded regarding the viability of FG and what would happen if it failed. FG was to start digging in October and were to have launch events in Dent and Garsdale. There was a general agreement that FG would be the best option as it would supply 100,00 megs/sec compared to 2 megs/sec from BT. Annette commented that if FG was to fail later, the cable would still be in the ground and could be taken over by another provider. Funding for FG was coming from Defra who have looked at the sustainability of FG. CC have been "at arms length" so have not undertaken their own viability study of FG but have been assured by DEFRA that FG is viable

Nick stated that there was no legal restriction that BT could use to stop FG developing into other areas. FG would allow other IPSs to use their fibre but BT has said that they wouldn't probably due to spite. The general sentiment from the PCs was that BT was not an ethical company to deal with and could not be trusted.

CCC said that 100% coverage of superfast broadband was their intention by 2020 but this could be “pie in the sky”.