

**Agenda Item No:****Report To:** Cabinet**Date:** 30 September 2021**Report Title:** Update on the Broadband improvements in the Ashford Borough**Report Author:** Tom Jenkins, Senior Economic Development Officer**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Neil Shorter, Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT**Summary:**

This report analyses the latest data on fixed and mobile telecommunications access within the Borough. This shows 99% mobile coverage by at least one of the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), 90% coverage of premises with superfast broadband connections (>30Mbps), and 8% coverage of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP). Due to the predominantly rural geography of the Borough this highlights the continuing requirements for improvements in telecommunications access to ensure residents and businesses have the right access and speeds in this increasingly changing market place.

This report updates members on the activities undertaken to attract investment and improve infrastructure within the Borough by private sector operators. In particular the implementation of EMP6 within the Ashford Local Plan.

The report also sets out the potential areas for officers to investigate and work on moving forward and the importance of broadband and telecommunications infrastructure within the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2024.

**Key Decision:** NO**Affected Wards:** All Wards**Recommendations:** Cabinet are asked to:-

- I. **Note the content of this report and the Broadband work undertaken in the past year.**
- II. **To note that the delivery of broadband is a key priority in the council's draft Corporate Plan.**
- III. **Approve the proposed actions for digital infrastructure (section 34) be incorporated into the final version of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024**

**Policy Overview:** The Ashford Borough Council Recovery Plan July 2020 was approved by Cabinet in June 2020 and highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure considering the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic. Under the key theme of Place Making, Regeneration and Infrastructure, a key action

was identified to “Improve broadband coverage and reliability”.

The Ashford Local Plan (Adopted in February 2019) also identifies the importance of great telecommunications infrastructure through the adoption of Policy EMP6 – Promotion of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP).

Within the Draft Ashford Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-2024 approved for consultation by Cabinet in July 2021, the importance of improved digital infrastructure is highlighted in Objective TG2 under Targeted Growth “Enable the improvement of digital infrastructure to support the growing needs of business, voluntary sector and residents”. The draft explains that fast, reliable digital connectivity across the whole Borough is critical for businesses and residents to trade and access services. Some areas of the Borough are disadvantaged because of poor digital connectivity. A lack of digital connectivity can stifle innovation and business growth.

Each of these strategic documents prioritise the requirement for improvements to the existing telecommunications infrastructure.

**Financial Implications:**

If the recommendations are approved, the resource implications are involved in dedicating officer time to the proposed activity outlined in Section 34. No further financial undertakings from Ashford Borough Council are proposed.

**Legal Implications:**

N/A

**Risk Assessment**

Please see Section 35 within the report.

**Equalities Impact Assessment**

A fundamental priority in improving affordable reliable broadband and mobile access for residents and businesses within the Borough, is to reduce social exclusion and rural isolation. The aspiration to level up access across the Borough will look to reduce the current inequalities in access, highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Exemption Clauses:**

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## Agenda Item No.

# Report Title: Update on the Broadband improvements in the Ashford Borough.

## Purpose of the Report

1. To report to Cabinet on the latest activity undertaken by officers regarding broadband improvements in the Borough, provide an update on Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) and Superfast broadband coverage and outline plans for ongoing work.

## Issue to be Decided

2. Cabinet to take note of the update on the latest position and note the priority and proposed actions for improved broadband as set out in the Ashford Borough Council Recovery Plan and draft Corporate Plan.

## Background

3. The UK government is increasingly supportive of faster digital connectivity, and is providing both financial and regulatory support to help meet its ambition of 85% gigabit coverage of residential premises by 2025. On 19th March 2021 the UK Government announced "Project Gigabit"; a £5bn infrastructure project fund to support rollout of gigabit capable broadband to homes and premises in hard to reach places. The first areas to benefit from the funding were announced and additional £210m worth of gigabit vouchers released. The UK Government has announced that almost 500,000 premises across the UK have been connected to gigabit-capable broadband since summer 2018 as a result of a £1 billion government funding commitment that runs until the end of 2021. The main way to deliver gigabit capable broadband (>1000 Mbps) is using Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) cabling, however, other technologies may need to be used to deliver in harder-to-reach areas, such as Fixed Wireless Access (FWA).
4. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has committed £5bn to support a series of programmes including: "outside in" deployment of FTTP in areas unlikely to be commercially viable; FTTP via schemes such as the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN); Rural Gigabit Connectivity programmes for the final 20%; and a Gigabit voucher scheme. Furthermore in the 2020 March Budget, the Chancellor reiterated the Government's plans to invest £5bn to ensure gigabit-capable broadband is able to reach 85% of UK homes by the end of 2025.
5. In August 2021, government published their Project Gigabit Delivery Plan – Summer Update. This updates the commitments of the private sector operators to deliver gigabit connections at a national level. Kent has been identified with the Phase 2 Gigabit Programme with an allocation of between £119m to £203m modelled to connect 122,300 uncommercial premises. Each area will undergo a formal market survey to establish the extent of commercial

investment in gigabit connections before the procurement of the government gigabit delivery in that area. For Kent this will need to be undertaken before the planned procurement start date of May 2022, with the expected contract commencement in April 2023. A link to the plan is: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-gigabit-delivery-plan-summer-update>

6. Ashford Borough Council has been pro-actively supporting the rollout of superfast broadband across the Borough for many years and is recognised by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as one of the best case studies of Local Authorities taking the lead on broadband improvement. The major development in this sector has been ABC's inclusion of Policy EMP6 (Promotion of Fibre to the Premises) in its Local Plan from February 2019, which requires nearly all new developments in the Borough to provide fibre broadband connections to the premises.
7. The Economic Development team is also actively involved in conversations with individual providers to lobby for improved commercial coverage of the Borough, and works closely with KCC's Broadband team on promoting the Government's Voucher schemes and Community Fibre Partnerships (CfP).
8. To support the understanding of this report, a glossary of terms has been incorporated in Appendix B to this report.

## Ashford Borough broadband status

9. The Ofcom Connected Nations Report explains in detail the digital connectivity under different technologies, different speeds and different areas. We have attached to this report as Appendix A the results from the latest report (2021 Interim). The following key measures can be identified for Ashford Borough:

- **Number of premises with Superfast broadband (>30Mbps): 52613 (90%)**  
Superfast broadband UK average: 94%  
Ashford change since Spring 2020: +259 (no % change)
- **Number of premises with Full Fibre (FTTP): 4,564 (8%)**  
Full Fibre UK average: 18%  
Ashford change since Spring 2020: +1,087 (+2% change)
- **Number of premises below USO level (<10Mbps): 657 (1%)**  
USO premises UK average: 1%  
Ashford change since Spring 2020: -1,676 (-3% change)
- **Percentage premises covered with 4G indoors by at least one MNO: 98.9%**  
Average across all LAs in UK: 98.7%  
Ashford change since Spring 2020: -0.1%
- **Percentage premises covered with 4G indoors by all 4 MNOs: 71.1%**  
Average across all LAs in UK: 77.6%  
Ashford change since Spring 2020: -1.8%

10. The figures above need context alongside the comparative UK figures to explain what they mean for Ashford as a predominantly rural Borough and why they are like this. The Superfast broadband percentage of properties covered matches approximately population densities due to the required Return On Investment (ROI) by providers in reaching clusters of premises. The more rural an area, the lower the population density and the less percentage of premises are likely to be covered. This is evidenced by the fact that across the country, Tewkesbury (which has a similar population density to Ashford – 223 people per km<sup>2</sup>) also has 90% coverage, Braintree (slightly higher population density – 250) has 93% SFBB coverage, while Teignbridge (slightly lower population density – 200) has 89% coverage. In Kent, Folkestone & Hythe has a higher density (317) with 93% coverage and Thanet (much higher density – 1,365) has 97%. Some change in results is due to Ofcom now refining reports to include coverage within apartments and other subunits of large buildings, which Ashford has relatively few of. However, reaching rural areas will always be an issue for commercial infrastructure builds which is why it is important for the council to lead, coordinate and lobby for investment.
11. It is also worth noting that most FTTP rollout nationally is being driven by commercial deployments which, as mentioned above, require Return On Investment (ROI) for the providers. That leads the providers to mostly install FTTP where it is more cost-effective to do so, with schemes like the Gigabit Vouchers or Community Fibre Partnerships aimed at making connections in the more rural parts of the country more viable. Openreach explained in 2019 that the cost of connecting the last 10% of premises with FTTP in hard-to-reach areas could be £4,000 or more per property. This figure is only indicative and should not be relied on to make decisions until a full quote or further consultations have been made.
12. Mobile broadband coverage has not significantly changed across the UK since last year (with the reported percentage of premises covered by at least one MNO actually decreasing 0.2% nationally). Ashford has similarly seen a slight decrease in coverage but mobile operators have now started rolling out coverage to new areas through the Shared Rural Network (SRN) scheme. Ashford Borough Council officers are in contact with Mobile UK who are managing the programme to ensure that coverage in the Borough is improved. Data published in June 2021 explains that SRN is forecasting to increase 4G coverage by all 4 MNOs in the South East from 85% to 91%.
13. We would note that the introduction of Local Plan Policy EMP6 is contributing to the increased superfast and FTTP figures with 8% of premises now covered within the Borough, an increase of a third within one year. However, Ashford is ranked only 9<sup>th</sup> out of 12 districts within Kent for FTTP coverage. Significant % increases will not be achieved until existing premises are connected to FTTP such as through the investment taking place in Tenterden through Openreach's Fibre First Programme. We would also add that when comparing Ashford Borough to other districts in Kent or more widely, the lower density and higher proportion of rural areas in hard to reach locations is likely to always affect any rankings.
14. It is officers' assumption that a number of factors can be taken into account to explain the significant changes identified under the Universal Service

Obligation (USO). Considering this reduction is seen across the UK, officers suggest that a revision of how USO is identified and calculated by Ofcom, together with the reporting of completed projects such as voucher schemes, as well as the inclusion of more communities in future commercial builds, could explain the significant reduction in premises eligible for USO improvements.

## Gigabit Voucher schemes and Community Fibre Partnerships update

15. The Economic Development team has been working closely with KCC to ensure that the Government's vouchers schemes have been publicised and that communities across the Borough are able to improve their connections. The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) and Rural Gigabit Connectivity scheme (RGC) together with a Kent Top Up Voucher, have allowed residents and businesses to install gigabit capable connections at their premises. The GBVS offered up to £2,500 to help businesses and homes gain access to a 1Gbps capable broadband and the RGC offered up to £3,500 for small businesses and up to £1,500 for residents. The Kent Top Up voucher allowed households in Kent to claim a further £1,000 on top of the RGC voucher. The GBVS was closed in May 2020 with the RGC being replaced by the UK Gigabit Voucher (UKGV) scheme in April 2021. The table below shows the number of vouchers and value of grants achieved for each scheme by communities served from exchanges within the Ashford Borough.

Voucher Scheme	Number of Vouchers	Total Value
Gigabit Voucher Scheme (GBVS)	43	£95,360
Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme (RGC)	142	£326,000
KCC Top Up Voucher Scheme	32	£32,000
UK Gigabit Voucher (UKGV)	13	£19,500

Although we don't have comparable figures from other areas, officers from KCC have reported that take up of the RGC in Ashford has been high.

16. KCC recently produced an update on broadband performance which included statistics about the previous Gigabit Voucher schemes for Kent. The update has shown that KCC secured 9% of all vouchers issued in England under previous schemes. KCC secured £6.14m in vouchers for Kent compared to £3.5m for Scotland and £3.4m for Wales. KCC note that the above voucher figures relate to exchange areas so some benefit communities outside the Ashford administrative boundary. KCC also note that some vouchers are linked to Community Fibre Partnerships (CfP) and therefore are not isolated projects.
17. The Economic Development team has also supported KCC in lobbying Government for increased financial support in the form of vouchers for hardest-to-reach premises. KCC has identified that despite Government's voucher scheme and KCC's top-up voucher scheme, many premises in the

county will still be considered too expensive to connect under the current procurement frameworks. It is proposed that Ashford Borough Council supports KCC's call to Government to introduce a higher-value broadband voucher scheme that can be carefully targeted on areas that cannot be funded under the standard voucher scheme.

18. Alongside the voucher schemes, the Economic Development team has been working more closely with KCC on Community Fibre Partnerships (CfP). These are the main mechanism employed by Openreach to increase demand-led community-led broadband installation in hard to reach locations. The project requires a community to come together and work with Openreach on installing FTTP to their premises. The community has to agree however to use BT as its sole supplier as a result of the improved connections, which has presented a challenge to the programme. The reporting of Community Fibre Partnerships (CfP) creations and deliveries is subject to a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) between KCC and Openreach. We can report however that 48 Community Fibre Partnerships have been registered with Openreach from communities within the Ashford Borough. Of these, 5 projects are live/connected, 13 projects are in build, 2 are in contract discussions, and a further 18 have offers out to the community. 10 projects are at the earlier stages of registering and design.

## **Council-focussed work update**

19. Members will be familiar with the fact that Ashford Borough Council has implemented the first Local Plan policy in the country which requires developers to install Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) on most new developments in the Borough. Whilst there are exceptions, this policy is proving effective in ensuring that residential and commercial properties in the Borough are future-proofed. Following the approval by Cabinet last year of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Policy EMP6, the Economic Development Team have continued to provide support to colleagues in Planning with regards to the implementation and conditioning of the policy when possible.
20. Following guidance from DCMS aimed at supporting Local Authorities provide leadership and create a strategy, the Economic Development team has agreement from Management Team to establish a cross-departmental group of officers who are 'digital enablers' who can work from within their departments to further the digital connectivity ambitions of the council. In order to promote and attract investment by ISPs and MNOs, the council will need to ensure, in the first instance, that its own processes and assets are open to the providers.  
The team has also reached agreement on the naming of Ashford's Digital Champions (Portfolio Holder and Deputy Chief Executive) and Digital Infrastructure Coordinator (Senior Economic Development Officer). These form part of the duties required of the relevant Member and officers and as such is not considered to require additional resource or time.

## Provider updates

21. Openreach Fibre First continues and has expanded across the UK. Last year Openreach announced Tenterden was in scope for Fibre First and has now started connecting premises in Tenterden for FTTP. Not all premises connected to the Tenterden exchange are covered under this rollout, with premises in scope to be upgraded being in close proximity to the High Street and town core up to parts of St Michaels.
22. Virgin Media (VM) have merged with O2 and this has caused a pausing of many planned works. VM had planned for a rollout in Willesborough and are now also looking at other areas of Ashford to rollout their FTTP where work could start over the next year to extend the number of homes connected.
23. NextGenAccess had planned to rollout dark fibre core cabling along the HS1 route. However, because of challenges being faced due to the pandemic, this is no longer going ahead. NextGenAccess are still keen to progress more localised projects following an LFFN model with individual areas.
24. Openreach and Netomnia have announced their plans for a FTTP rollout across the Ashford Urban Area. This will see approx. 30,000 premises served by Openreach and Netomnia FTTP with Netomnia rolling FTTP out to a further 20,000 premises (including businesses). Details are being worked on and further information will be provided to Members as this rolls out. ABC has reached agreement with both companies to work collaboratively in what is considered a first case of Openreach and an Altnet working together in such a way. The two companies will be working collaboratively with ABC to ensure disruption to residents is minimised where possible and the rollout is a success. ABC is also coordinating this rollout with KCC.
25. Openreach has also announced that High Halden, Wye and Sevington exchanges are due to be upgraded to FTTP however this is not scheduled to begin until after 2023 with their website quoting a deadline of December 2026. Please see the maps in Appendix D to see Openreach's planned FTTP rollout for the Ashford Borough.
26. Officers have engaged with Broadband 4 Rural Kent (B4RK) to understand their model and how their plans are progressing. [ispreview.co.uk](https://ispreview.co.uk) reported in October 2020 that all of the properties being targeted by B4RK reside between the M2/A2, A251, A252 and A28 which therefore could include some communities in the Borough. B4RK has since confirmed that they have ambitions to provide gigabit-capable connections to 30,000 rural premises throughout Kent using a mix of Fixed Wireless Access, 5G and FTTP by 2025.
27. The Borough has also seen 5G being installed across Ashford town centre with Three, ID Mobile, O2, Sky Mobile, GiffGaff and Tesco Mobile reportedly being able to provide 5G coverage (see attached maps in Appendix E). Provider EE has also announced plans to install 5G in Ashford although this is not live yet according to their website.



## Digital connectivity work going forward

28. Broadband has been a growing priority for many, with technology evolving constantly and social trends changing at an increased pace. Residents and businesses in the Borough's communities rely on this technology and we need to ensure the future-proofing of infrastructure to enable better digital connectivity. The Coronavirus pandemic has further highlighted this need, with vulnerable residents in isolation and many people working from home. Digital connectivity has been identified as a top priority for the council in the draft Corporate Plan 2022-2024.
29. There are positive signs with increased levels of investment being seen in Ashford and Tenterden, and with plans in place for improved broadband in Wye, High Halden and Sevington. However, in Ashford, the average proportion of households per Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) with poor broadband is 1.14% (CI 0.9-1.4%) which is significantly higher than Kent (0.5%; CI 0.5-0.6%).<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F for a map of this data. Focus for improvements should therefore also move to the final 10% of hard-to-reach premises in rural areas. The increased investment now being seen in the urban areas of the Borough provides a starting point from which network expansion into rural areas can start. Lobbying for increased vouchers, for more investment commercially or through programmes such as CfPs could now be more achievable. The Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and subsequent funding for KCC to deliver improved broadband to those commercially unviable premises in rural parts of the county presents a key opportunity to support this.
30. Officers would also note that the issue of water quality degradation at Stodmarsh Lakes, which has impacted new housing development in the Ashford Borough, would also have an impact on FTTP coverage. Without new developments being brought forward, any improvements to FTTP coverage is solely reliant on connecting existing premises. As reported above, this is starting to happen, however, wider improvements may take longer to come forward without new developments pushing the requirements for improved infrastructure.
31. Whilst broadband, in particular FTTP, has been the principle focus of this work to date, there are other aspects of digital connectivity which will require action in order to deliver a fully improved digital Borough.
32. Mobile coverage in parts of the Borough is known to be an issue, with approximately 1% of premises not being able to access 4G indoors and some premises having issues with 2G and 3G. Mobile coverage is part of the essential digital infrastructure needed by residents and businesses especially following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Economic Development Team have not undertaken work with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to date however we have met with Mobile UK, the trade association for MNOs in the UK to understand how the Council can support investment in the Borough. Mobile UK is coordinating the Shared Rural Network (SRN) which will see the main MNOs improve their mobile capability to reach more premises in hard-to-reach areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Kent Analytics / KCC, "Digital Exclusion in Ashford", July 2021.

33. To date the Economic Development team, together with colleagues across the council, have managed to attract investment from providers, create a policy which will future proof developments and continued to promote ways for broadband improvements to take place. The work is undertaken across a number of teams but coordinated by the Senior Economic Development Officer, with support from the Economic Development Manager (EDM). The Senior Economic Development Officer (SEDO) normally dedicates approximately a third of their time to this activity, and the work undertaken over the past year has included:
- i. Working with Planning colleagues on implementing Policy EMP6 as conditions for applications
  - ii. Light touch engagement with providers known to be building or have plans to build in the Borough
  - iii. Engaging and coordinating the Openreach and Netomnia rollout for Ashford town centre
  - iv. Seeking agreement to set up the cross-departmental officer group to barrier-bust internally
34. As part of the increased priority for Broadband within the Corporate Plan 2022-2024, in light of the challenges posed by the pandemic, further activity could be considered with the prioritisation of resources in this area. Members and officers at ABC agree that improvements to digital infrastructure are a priority and as such the following activity could be considered:
- i. Set up the cross-departmental officers group to ensure the council has clear and pro-active processes across departments that allow providers to engage and invest easily and with more confidence
  - ii. Continue to work with broadband providers to support improved connections and increase investment
  - iii. Continue the coordination of the Ashford urban area FTTP rollout and ensure other planned rollouts are continuing at pace
  - iv. Take a leading role in coordinating and promoting programmes such as the Voucher schemes and Community Fibre Partnerships
  - v. Provide increased presence at broadband and digital related events or meetings, raising the profile of Ashford for investors.
  - vi. Directly lobby alongside KCC for central Government to establish a new higher value voucher scheme for the final 10% hard-to-reach areas
  - vii. Proactively engage with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and Mobile UK to progress the Shared Rural Network (SRN) and improve mobile connectivity in the Borough
  - viii. Continue to monitor Policy EMP6 and provide support to colleagues in Planning on matters relating to broadband connections
  - ix. Support KCC in their involvement in the Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and the delivery of this significant government investment in future years and to seek maximum coverage within the Ashford Borough through this investment

## **Risk Assessment**

35. The main key risks currently identified are:
  - a. Lower levels of access to broadband and mobile networks will impact on the economic aspirations for the Borough to target more knowledge based businesses and employees.
  - b. Lower levels of access will impact residents' employment opportunities where employers are increasingly likely to require them to work from home, particularly following the pandemic.
  - c. Lower levels of access will impact students within the area with their increasing need to access online education and training resources, in line with education delivery during Covid-19 terms.
  - d. Lower access impacts resident's levels of social inclusion and isolation from services, and have the potential to increase inequality, highlighted by the limits to social interactions under Covid-19.
  - e. The Council's, residents and businesses digital transformation plans will be impacted by the levels of broadband and mobile access throughout the Borough.

## **Options Considered**

36. In considering the options for Ashford Borough Council to act, the principle objective has been to maximise the opportunities for residents and businesses within the Borough to access affordable ultrafast broadband and mobile telecommunications.
37. The chosen option has been to dedicate officer time, where possible, to attract investment, work with partner organisations and support improved broadband rollout across the Borough. The scope and prioritisation of this work stream is widening to include mobile coverage and future technologies as well.

## **Next Steps in the Process**

38. If approved by Members, the key actions listed in Section 34 will be incorporated in the final version of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024 to deliver Objective TG2.
39. Officers will provide updates to the Portfolio Holder and key stakeholders on a regular basis and continue to provide a yearly update to Cabinet on progress of Digital Infrastructure improvements.

## **Conclusions**

40. Ashford Borough Council is one of the few local authorities to have dedicated officer time to improving broadband within Kent. Successes such as the implementation of Policy EMP6 (Fibre to the Premises) in Ashford's Local Plan and the trials run by Openreach at Godinton Park (one of two pilot projects nationally investigating new technology for infrastructure delivery) have placed Ashford as a leading authority on broadband improvements.

However, it is clear that more can be done and should be done to improve digital connectivity for residents and businesses in the Borough. The Borough is seeing significant investment coming forward, especially in the form of Openreach and Netomnia providing FTTP for existing premises which will boost Full Fibre and Gigabit-speed broadband significantly to at least 30,000 premises over the next 24-36 months. Beyond this commercial investment, the Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and allocated funds to connect Kent's commercially unviable premises presents a great opportunity for the Borough over the coming months and years.

41. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the issues that affect rural communities in the Borough that do not have decent digital connectivity. However rural premises are also in areas that will likely be left until last to be connected due to the commercial nature of FTTP rollouts. It will be important for the next 12 months to ensure the current planned commercial investment is delivered successfully, including through the establishment of an internal barrier busting team. However the main focus should be to promote take up of vouchers and support Community Fibre Partnerships, and to lobby for greater government interventions in the final 10% of hard to reach properties within the Borough. Digital Infrastructure activity will be delivered as part of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024.

### **Portfolio Holder's Views**

42. "The above report very well describes the current position for broadband delivery within the Borough of Ashford. It also makes clear that our ambition to significantly improve broadband delivery, particularly in the hard to reach areas which are predominantly the rural areas, is not directly within our gift to deliver. This simply reinforces the need to liaise with providers (Openreach etc.) partners (KCC etc.) and to lobby central government (strategy and capital funding) so that our Borough is as well provided for as possible. This is fundamental to economic delivery as well as social inclusion and wellbeing. The structuring of an internal delivery group, across all departments but led by the Economic Development team, to understand constraints and then remove them, should not (and will not) be a talking shop but a collegiate mechanism to streamline practices and procedures so that any advantage that can be squeezed from both ourselves and external providers is delivered."
43. Cllr Neil Shorter, Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT

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**Appendix A: Current Coverage and Situation (Connected Nations Report 2021 Interim)**

laura_name	All Premises	All Matched Premises	SFBB availability (% premises)	UFBB (100Mbit/s) availability (% premises)	UFBB availability (% premises)	Full Fibre availability (% premises)	Gigabit availability (% premises)	% of premises unable to receive 2Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 5Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 10Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s	% of premises below the USO	% of premises with NGA	% of premises able to receive decent broadband from FWA
ASHFORD	58645	58326	89.7	48.1	45.1	7.8	7.8	0.4	1.9	3.8	9.7	1.1	97.8	0
CANTERBURY	73504	73218	93.9	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	0.3	0.6	1.2	5.7	0.5	99.1	0
DARTFORD	49540	49474	95.9	55	51.2	15.5	48.3	0.3	0.8	1.4	4	0.1	98	0
DOVER	55669	55480	92.8	34.5	34.5	8.3	8.3	0.6	1	2	6.9	0.5	98.2	0
FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE	54375	54188	92.9	41.4	41.2	5.5	5.5	0.5	1.2	2.3	6.7	0.5	97.6	0
GRAVESHAM	45181	44984	96	70.6	64.5	6.9	6.9	0.1	0.3	0.6	3.5	0.4	98.5	0
MAIDSTONE	78118	77707	91.8	62.6	56.9	15.2	15.2	0.6	1.6	2.6	7.6	1	97.3	0
MEDWAY	121647	121311	97.1	81.7	77.9	5	5	0	0.3	0.7	2.7	0.2	98.6	0
SEVENOAKS	53404	53213	92.3	44.7	44.4	20.2	38.9	0.2	0.6	1.2	7.3	0.5	99.2	0
SWALE	67603	67070	93	45.5	39	10.2	10.2	0.2	0.8	1.7	6.2	0.7	98.1	0
THANET	73160	72651	96.5	53	52.7	52.8	52.8	0	0.3	1.4	2.8	0.6	98.8	0
TONBRIDGE AND MALLING	57241	57077	94.4	62.4	59.5	12.8	12.8	0.2	0.5	1.3	5.3	0.4	98.2	0
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	52777	52535	91.8	47.6	42.2	9.2	9.2	0.1	1.2	2.6	7.8	1.2	98	0

**Appendix A: Current Coverage and Situation (Connected Nations Report 2021 Interim) (Cont'd)**

laura_name	All Premises	All Matched Premises	Number of premises with SFBB availability	Number of premises with UFBB (100Mbit/s) availability	Number of premises with UFBB availability	Number of premises with Full Fibre availability	Number of premises with Gigabit availability	Number of premises unable to receive 2Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 5Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 10Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s	Number of premises below the USO	Number of premises with NGA	Number of premises able to receive decent broadband from FWA
<b>ASHFORD</b>	58645	58326	52613	28228	26422	4564	4564	217	1142	2238	5713	657	57372	0

## **Appendix B: Notes for Connected Nations Report 2021 Interim figures**

### ACRONYMS:

SFBB – Superfast Broadband

FWA – Fixed Wireless Access

UFBB – Ultrafast Broadband

NGA – Next Generation Access (incl. Fibre-to-the-Cabinet)

USO – Universal Service Obligation

WISP – Wireless Internet Service Provider

Column Header meanings (the same definition applies to percentage and number figures)

<b>Current headers</b>	<b>Note</b>
laua_name	Local and Unitary Authority Names
All premises	Count of all premises, in scope, based on Ordnance Survey AddressBase® Premium Epoch 81
All matched premises	Count of all premises matched to operator records with a nonzero recorded coverage. Unmatched premises are unclassified
SFBB availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have Superfast Broadband (30Mbit/s or greater) coverage from fixed broadband
UFBB (100Mbit/s) availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have Ultrafast Broadband (100Mbit/s or greater) coverage from fixed broadband
UFBB availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have Ultrafast Broadband (300Mbit/s or greater) coverage from fixed broadband
Full Fibre availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have coverage from a full fibre service from fixed broadband
Gigabit availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have Gigabit capable services from fixed broadband
% of premises unable to receive 2Mbit/s	Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 2Mbit/s from fixed broadband
% of premises unable to receive 5Mbit/s	Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 5Mbit/s from fixed broadband
% of premises unable to receive 10Mbit/s	Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 10Mbit/s from fixed broadband
% of premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s	Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 30Mbit/s from fixed broadband
% of premises below the USO	Percentage of premises that do not have access to download speeds at or above 10Mbit/s and upload speeds at or above 1Mbit/s including non-matched records and zero predicted speeds from fixed broadband, WISPs and Mobile FWA
% of premises with NGA	Percentage of premises with Next Generation Access from fixed broadband
% of premises able to receive decent broadband from FWA	Percentage of premises with Decent Broadband from WISPs

**Appendix C: Connected Nations 2021 LSOA data associated to Wards (Table)**

	<b>SFBB availability (% premises) (=&gt;30Mbps)</b>	<b>Gigabit availability (% premises) (=&gt; 1000Mbps)</b>
<b>Aylesford &amp; East Stour</b>	98.6%	3.3%
<b>Beaver</b>	100.0%	3.6%
<b>Biddenden</b>	74.4%	8.0%
<b>Bircholt</b>	65.9%	0.4%
<b>Bockhanger</b>	98.8%	5.0%
<b>Bybrook</b>	99.9%	0.0%
<b>Charing</b>	75.2%	4.7%
<b>Conningbrook &amp; Little Burton Farm</b>	90.4%	0.0%
<b>Downs North</b>	63.6%	4.5%
<b>Downs West</b>	75.4%	0.0%
<b>Furley</b>	97.8%	8.8%
<b>Goat Lees</b>	99.7%	49.2%
<b>Godinton</b>	98.1%	14.6%
<b>Highfield</b>	96.9%	0.0%
<b>Isle of Oxney</b>	66.2%	0.0%
<b>Kennington</b>	99.3%	0.0%
<b>Kingsnorth Village &amp; Bridgefield</b>	81.9%	7.4%
<b>Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry</b>	83.2%	48.8%
<b>Norman</b>	93.0%	0.0%
<b>Park Farm North</b>	99.7%	0.0%
<b>Park Farm South</b>	97.5%	4.4%
<b>Repton</b>	99.9%	52.6%
<b>Rolvenden &amp; Tenterden West</b>	61.7%	15.1%
<b>Roman</b>	95.7%	0.0%
<b>Saxon Shore</b>	70.4%	1.6%
<b>Singleton East</b>	97.0%	5.8%
<b>Singleton West</b>	96.7%	52.7%
<b>Stanhope</b>	99.8%	0.0%
<b>Tenterden North</b>	98.6%	0.0%
<b>Tenterden South</b>	94.5%	9.0%
<b>Tenterden St Michael's</b>	95.4%	0.0%
<b>Upper Weald</b>	72.9%	1.1%
<b>Victoria</b>	97.5%	4.6%
<b>Washford</b>	99.9%	14.5%
<b>Weald Central</b>	74.9%	4.0%
<b>Weald North</b>	75.9%	9.1%
<b>Weald South</b>	86.9%	1.3%
<b>Willesborough</b>	98.8%	3.6%
<b>Wye with Hinxhill</b>	81.7%	0.1

Note: We are not able to compare this data to last year as the reporting on FTTP and Gigabit availability has changed from Ofcom's reports. Last year we reported FTTP by Ward which is not available in this year's reports.



## Appendix D: Openreach planned rollout

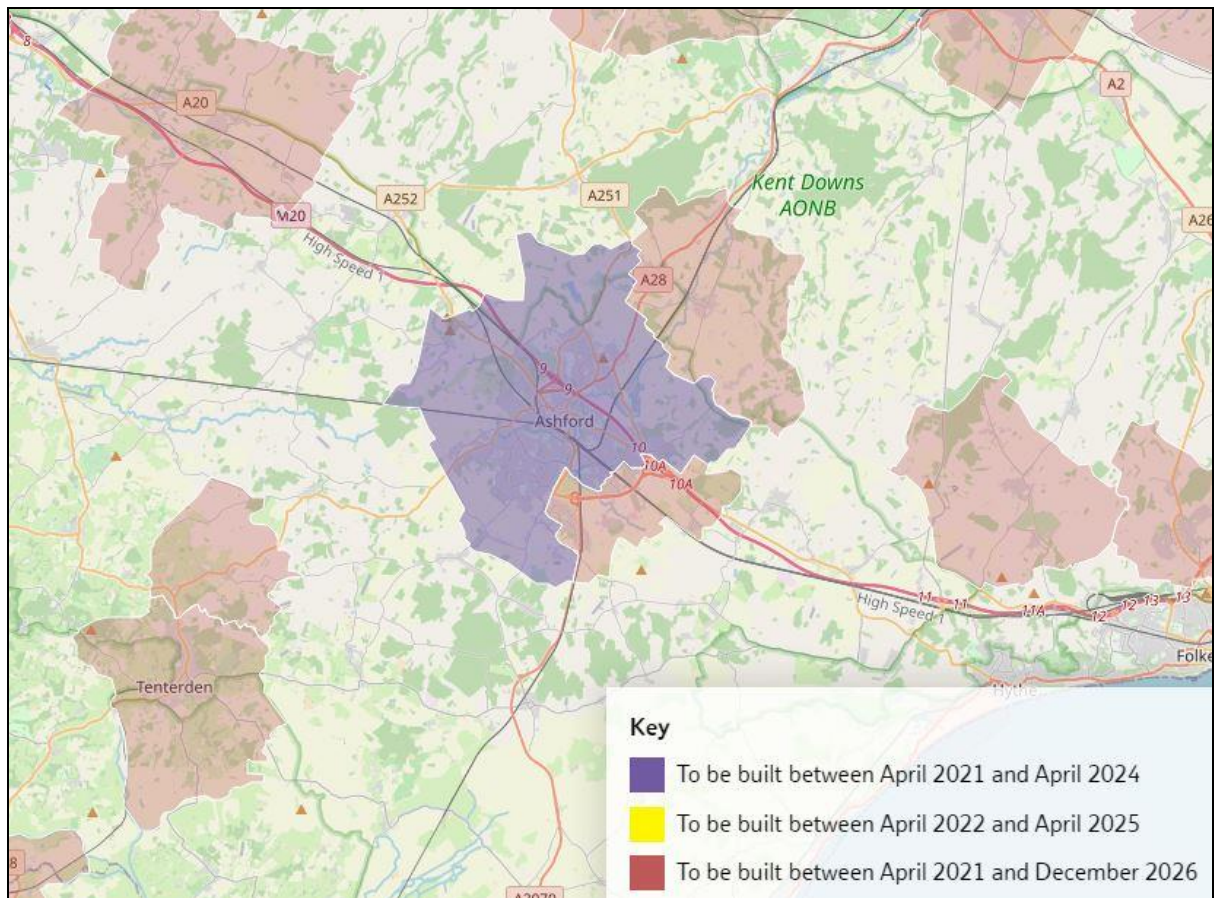


Figure 1. Openreach plans for the Ashford Borough taken from the 'When and Where' section of their website: <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/where-when-building-ultrafast-full-fibre-broadband>.

Note: the areas identified are the full coverage of the exchange which does not reflect the actual coverage of Openreach's plans under Fibre First or other schemes.

**Appendix E: Indicative 5G Coverage Maps**

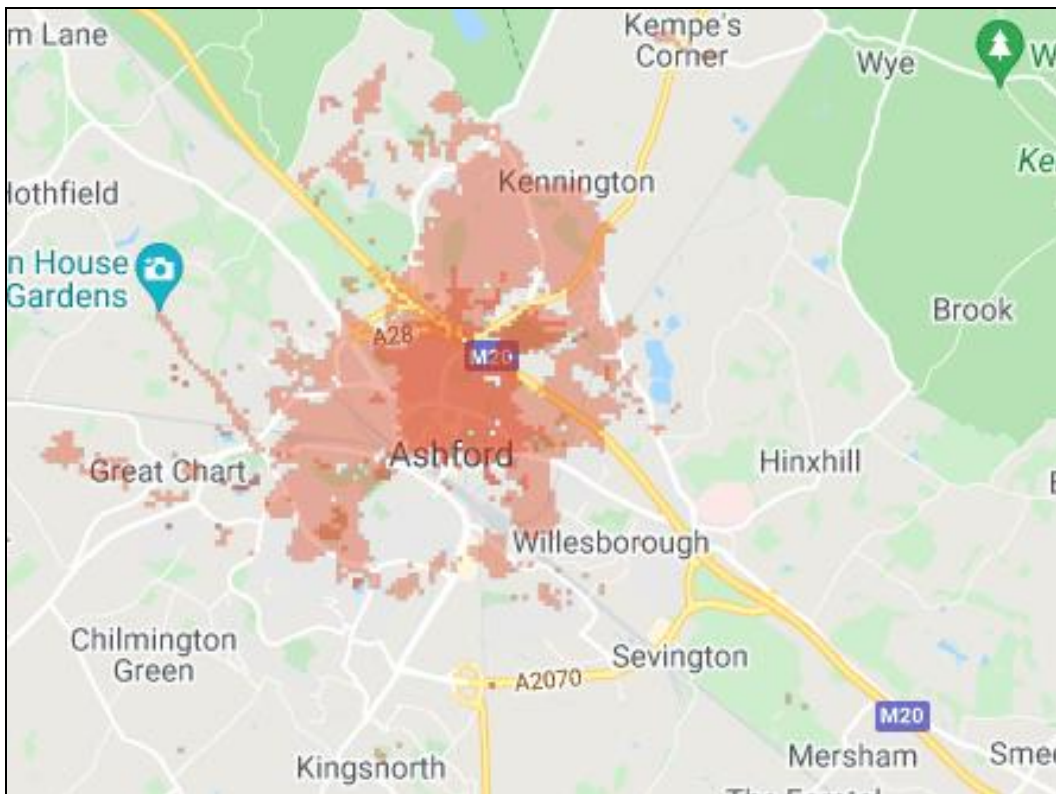


Figure 2. Indicative map of ID Mobile and Three coverage across Ashford urban area taken from providers' websites.

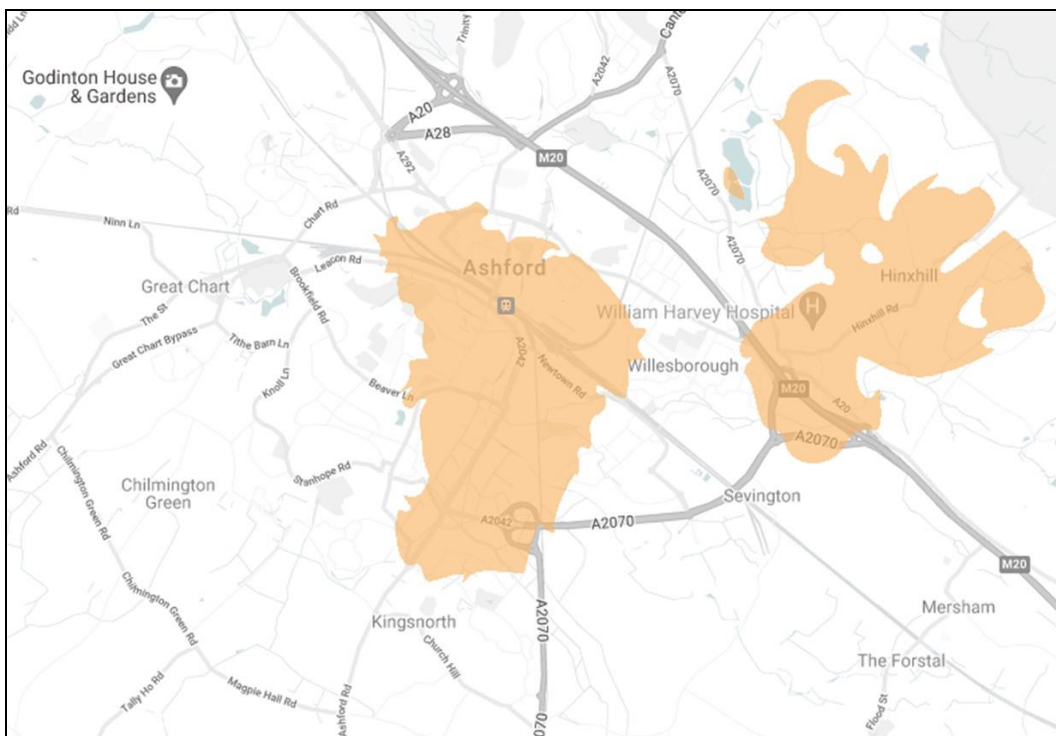
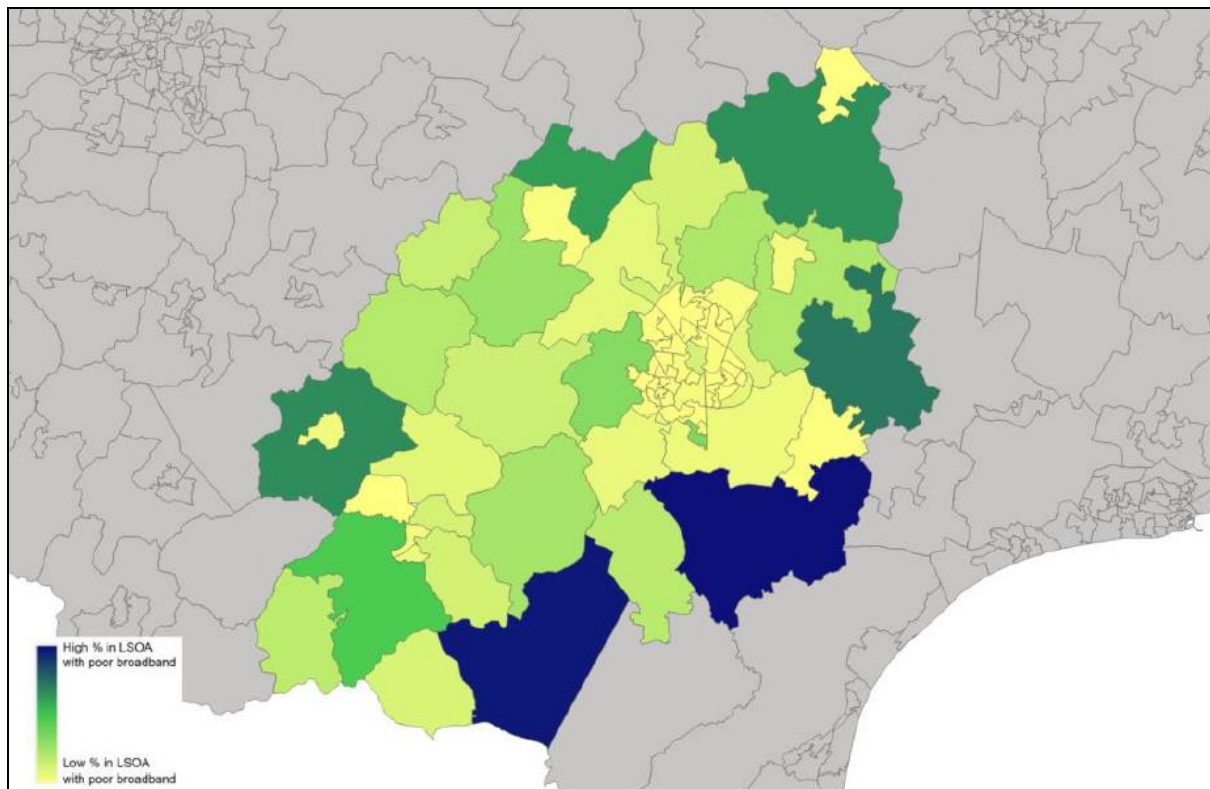


Figure 3. Indicative map of O2, Sky Mobile, GiffGaff and Tesco Mobile coverage across Ashford urban area taken from providers' websites.

**Appendix F: Kent Analytics / KCC “Digital Exclusion in Ashford” report from July 2021**



*Figure 4. Map of the pattern of proportion of households with poor broadband speeds at LSOA level. The darker areas have the highest levels of poor broadband and the lighter areas have the lowest levels of poor broadband. The map shows data provided by the Ofcom Connected Nations report for Spring 2021 as reported in the Kent Analytics/KCC “Digital Exclusion in Ashford” report of July 2021.*