

Connecting Devon and Somerset

Summary: A strong alliance of Devon and Somerset local authorities backed by our Local Enterprise Partnership will make a compelling bid for vital Government funding **to provide superfast and better broadband to over 300,000 businesses and households**. This will ensure **better broadband for every home and business in Devon** – and superfast for the vast majority.

If successful the bid will transform the economic prospects for the heart of the South West, driving inward investment, helping retain and grow businesses, deliver rural and digital inclusion and underpin public sector transformation, bringing the public sector closer to people and communities. Our approach will:

- **deliver for the South West:** superfast broadband from the Isles of Scilly to the outskirts of Bristol
- be **joined up:** Local Authorities (Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay) working in partnership, putting in their own substantial resources, and with support from local stakeholders.
- demonstrate **a LEP in action:** Before our LEP is formed this is our business community getting together to deliver their no.1 priority

What's the current position? Over 75,000 businesses and households in Somerset and Devon have no or very slow access to the internet – as shown in the first attached map. It is a brake on business growth and competitiveness across Somerset, is a barrier for our rural communities and slows the essential transformation of public services. Private sector suppliers acting alone will not deliver the coverage our economy and communities need: the second attached map shows the size of the areas that the market will not deliver to even by 2015 – the costs are simply too great for the market to do this without support.

Why is this achievable now? Government, through Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) has made available £530m of funding to ensure that the UK has the best broadband network in Europe by 2015. Devon and Somerset will be bidding in April for a significant amount of funding from these funds. In addition, Devon and Somerset are committing significant resource to the project, and have a Project Team in place to deliver.

If our bid is successful then we will be able to secure a telecoms partner to start building a broadband network in 2012 and have it delivered by 2015. It is vital to Devon's economy and communities that we are successful in our bid.

Our goals for 2015:

- Significantly faster broadband (at least 2Mbps broadband) for everyone
- Superfast broadband for most (at least 85% over 20Mbps)
- At a fair price and through an open network
- Rural communities are key: no cherry picking
- Supporting businesses and the public sector to realise the benefits
- Supporting communities: delivering digital and rural inclusion

The third map (attached) gives an indication of what superfast for 85% and better broadband for all might mean across our area. This is not a picture of what will be delivered, simply an indication of the scale of the challenge. **As our plans progress we will work with businesses, communities, across the public and voluntary sector and with council members to ensure that our plans meet local needs.** This may include some communities working with us to ensure that they get the best network possible – ‘community hubs’.

What this means for parishes and communities:

- better broadband everywhere
- superfast broadband at a fair price
- the ability to choose from a wide variety of service providers
- a future-proofed approach: upgraded as technology improves
- a role in encouraging take-up and helping people make the best use of broadband
- a potential role in helping deliver services to their community, in those areas where the community wants even better broadband than our plans will be able to afford

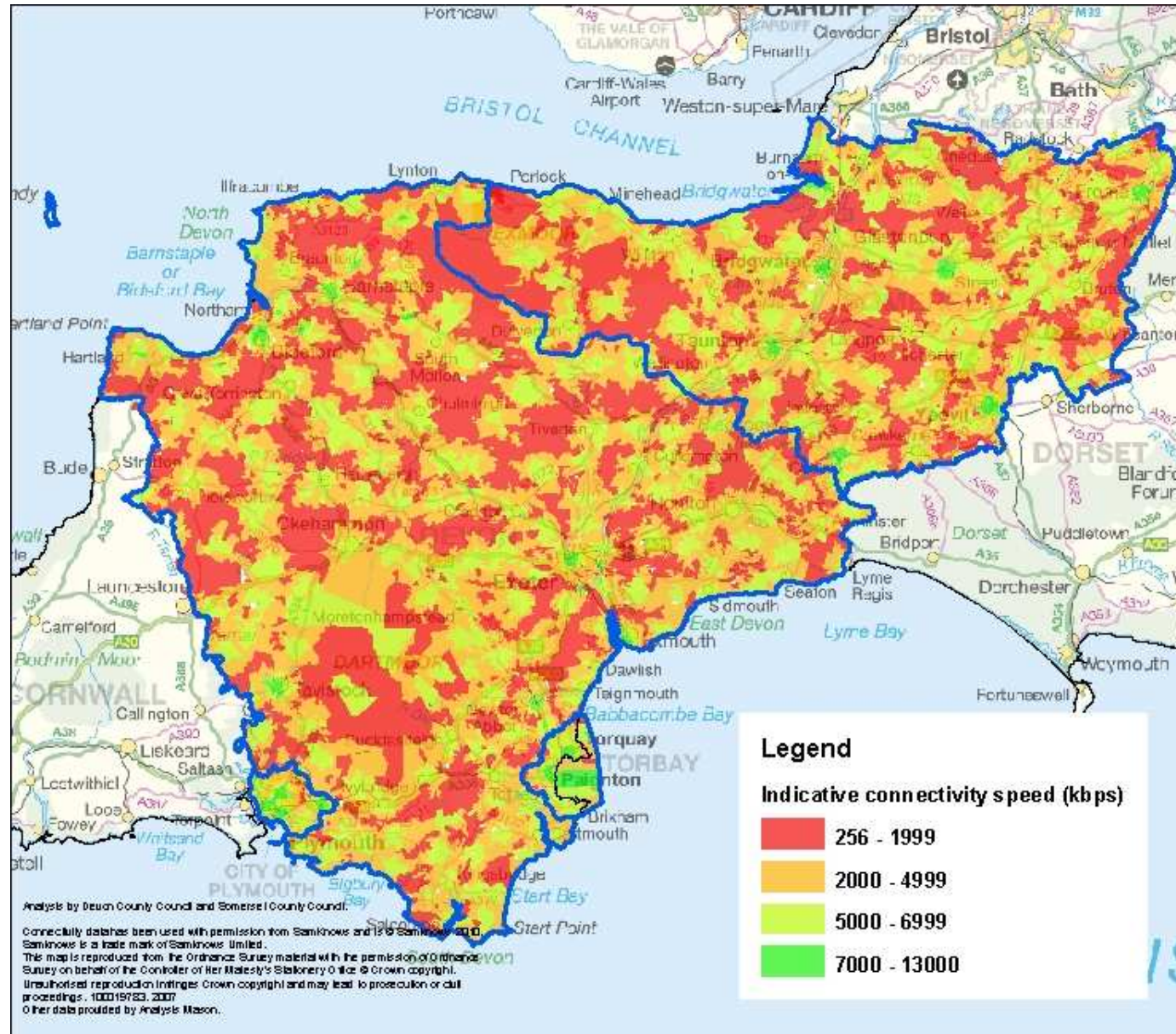
Timetable: The deadline for the bid itself is April 18th and a decision is expected by the end of May. If our bid is successful then delivery would start in early 2012 and be complete by 2015.

How parish and town councils can help:

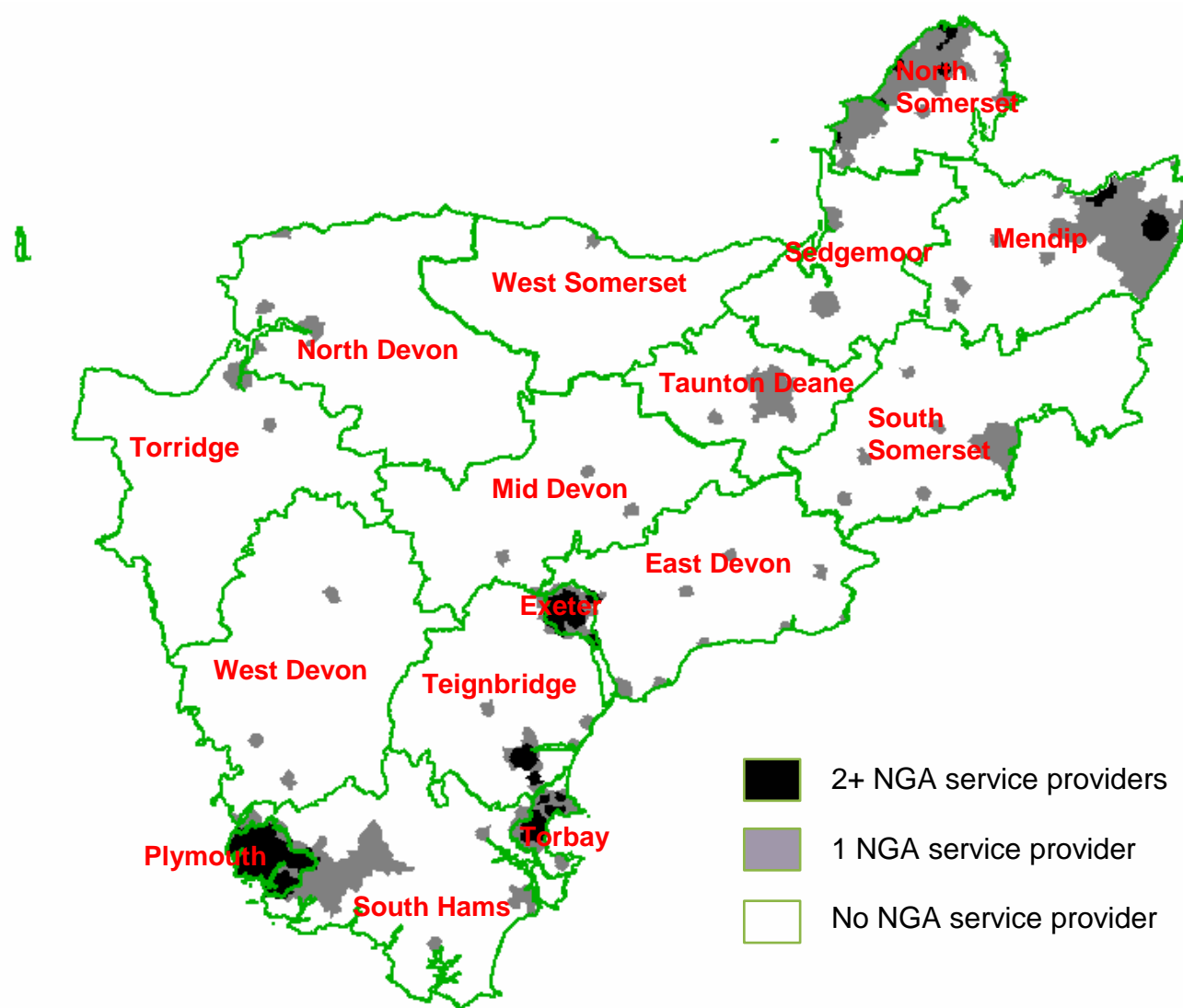
- **Help us make the best case for why this is so important to our businesses and communities by completing the demand survey on www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk**
- **Help us demonstrate to Government the local consensus behind our plans by emailing economy@devon.gov.uk with a letter of support. We intend to publish expressions of support on the Connecting Devon and Somerset.**
- **Encouraging residents and businesses to fill in the survey and sign-up to say they support our plans**
- **Make Devon County Council aware if you feel that your parish may be interested in developing and helping fund a community hub to deliver even better services to your community**
- **Keep up to date on our plans through the Connecting Devon and Somerset website – we will need your help throughout this project to ensure our plans deliver what you need.**

To contact the Project Team please email Tom Dixon (economy@devon.gov.uk).

Where are we now? This map shows the indicative speed received by postcodes across Devon and Somerset. Those in red receive less than 2 Mbps.

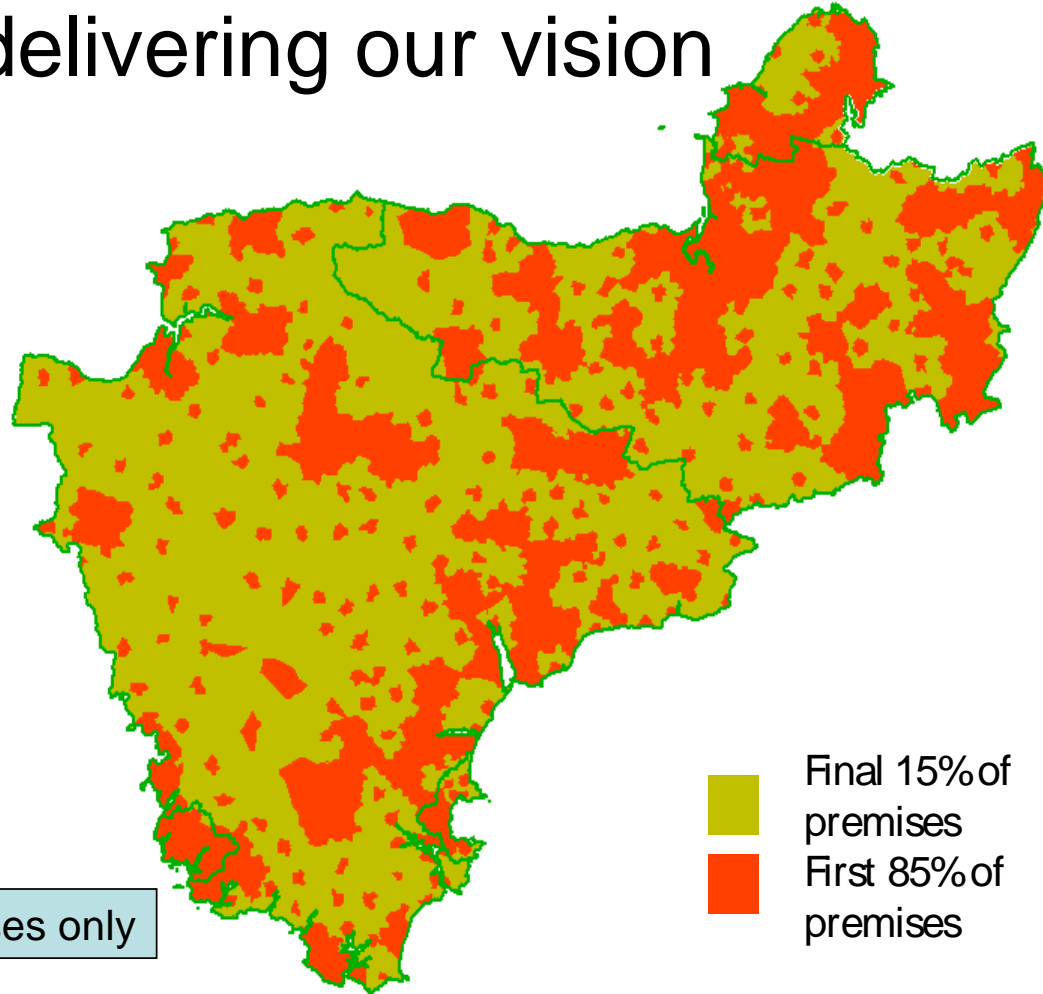


Leaving it to the Market: A forecast of what the “Final Third” will look like in 2015 ie the white areas are not likely to have any superfast broadband



...delivering our vision

Our plans aim to deliver significantly better broadband for every home and business in Somerset, and superfast broadband for the vast majority – at least 85%. This map does not show which areas will receive superfast broadband and which won't – it simply gives an indication of the scale of the challenge we face – 15% of the County is still a large area, and we hope to deliver superfast broadband into much of this final 15%, potentially working with communities to support the development of community hubs.



For illustrative purposes only