

North Yorkshire County Council
Business and Environmental Services
Executive Members

17 August 2018

Mobile Phone Infrastructure - Project Update

Briefing Note of the Assistant Director – Growth, Planning and Trading Standards

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The mobile phone coverage is poor within North Yorkshire. North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) see this as a key inhibitor to economic growth in the County and are therefore keen to improve coverage.
- 1.2 NYCC commissioned a drive through survey of the County to ascertain the actual levels of coverage.
- 1.3 As part of this survey we received a number of recommendations where mobile phone coverage could be improved.
- 1.4 The County Council has secured £1m from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in pursuit of improving coverage within the County.

2.0 Drive Through Survey Report Findings

- 2.1 The survey identified that although there are areas where there is no coverage, these are set to be addressed by present planned commercial sites being built and also if the planned Emergency Services Network (ESN) is completed a programme of work which is being overseen by National Government. It is important to state that these ESN sites have the ability for other commercial Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to provide services from.
- 2.2 The coverage by individual operators is patchy and at a low level, however when combined the County does have a level of coverage in most areas. This does not provide a good user experience, in order to be state aid compliant utilising the funding which has been secured by the LEP only allows investment within “not spot” areas where there is no coverage or poor coverage by all the operators.
- 2.3 All the operators have areas where calls are dropped “not dots” which would affect user experience. These are very small areas where a user on a call they may experience a momentary loss of signal or speech.
- 2.4 There are some areas of poor coverage where operators have sites that planned to come forward in the next 6-12 months.
- 2.5 There are a small number of areas where NYCC could look to provide infrastructure to improve coverage where nothing is planned in pure not spot areas.

3.0 Next Steps

3.1 NYCC will investigate further the solutions to improve coverage in the following potential areas:

NY001	A684 West of Leyburn near Sissy Bank
NY002	North End of Coverdale
NY003	C48 West of Masham near Healey
NY004	Appletreewick, Craven
NY005	Skipton on Swale
NY006	A1041 – South of Selby
NY007	Duggleby
NY008	Kildale
NY009	Mickley/West Tanfield

3.2 This will involve going out to Public Consultation on these areas for planned Mast development, with relevant communities.

3.3 Following the sites assessment and consultation we will inform the Executive members of the outcome and seek approval outside of the Executive Member scheduled meeting process, under a virtual process, as we look to invest in improving coverage in the chosen areas. The locations will be chosen based upon the following factors;

Area Covered
Population Covered
Visitor Numbers
Amount of Road Covered

3.4 Officers are to discuss with Home Office's Emergency Services Network team around how we can assist in ensuring that the Emergency Services Masts are made commercially operational. This may be assisting in providing backhaul to these sites to enable them to be connected to the telecommunications network.

3.5 Officers are monitoring the Government's current review of the ESN deployment of 24 Masts within the County, in case the network is not to be completed, further investment opportunities will be available.

3.6 The research findings from the survey will allow officers to discuss in detail the "not dot" areas affecting coverage with a view to the operators overcoming these issues within their network configuration.

3.7 The Mobile Programme Manager is to work with the MNO's on areas where masts are present and coverage is poor to improve coverage and to investigate small areas of poor coverage to understand if offering a more localised solution could be an option i.e. Small pole masts to cover villages for example.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Conclude survey work and ascertain coverage levels within the County

4.2 Ascertain full development cost for Masts that we have identified and prioritise programme for building

- 4.3 Share final selected Masts and locations with Executive Members, County Councillors Don Mackenzie and Andrew Lee for approval outside of existing meeting structure
- 4.4 Report back to the LEP chosen priced sites
- 4.5 Progress procurement and delivery following NYCC procurement rules ensuring all State Aid requirements are met
- 4.6 Discuss with Home Office ways of ensuring ESN sites are commercially operational and how we can assist
- 4.7 Discuss with Ofcom, DCMS and government how to improve the coverage for all operators in rural areas through legislation or licencing
- 4.8 Investigate the potential for Rural Roaming and lobby for this.

MATT O'NEILL

Assistant Director – Growth, Planning and Trading Standards

Author of report: Michael Grayson