

Local Government North Yorkshire and York

20 January 2012

Mobile Phone Coverage in North Yorkshire

This report will be supplemented by a presentation by BDUK
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1.0 Background

1.1 In October 2011, the Government announced £150m in capital expenditure to improve mobile coverage and quality – known as the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP). This project is being run by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK).

1.2 The objectives of MIP are:

- To improve the coverage and quality of mobile network services for the five to ten per cent of consumers and businesses that live and work in areas of the UK where existing mobile network coverage is poor or non-existent; and
- To extend coverage to 99 per cent of the UK population.

1.3 The government expects that the procurement will begin by Spring 2012, and to complete the project by 2015.

1.4 BDUK are seeking Council views on a number of important topics, including:

- How their local development priorities can be used to inform how not-spots are prioritised;
- What challenges need to be addressed in the acquisition of suitable sites on public land, what planning challenges exist and how best to address them sympathetically;
- The ways in which communities and others can contribute towards the development and operation of mast sites (e.g. donations of land) to extend coverage in their localities; and
- Learning from other related procurement exercises such as BDUK broadband.

2.0 Plans to Address Mobile “Not-Spots”

2.1 There is a growing recognition of the impact on and benefit to, economies and societies of mobile voice and data connectivity.

2.2 In certain areas of the UK, particularly rural areas, there is a limited commercial case for market-driven private investment to achieve an enhancement to coverage and quality of service. North Yorkshire is one such place as illustrated by Ofcom data – more information will be provided on mobile not spots in a presentation at the meeting.

2.3 BDUK is currently developing the delivery model and procurement options for the use of the available government funding, in order to develop or extend mobile infrastructure in areas where there is an insufficient commercial use. Various options are actively been considered and the views of the market are being explored. These include whether the contract to be awarded following a procurement should be:

- A framework (either a single supplier or multi-supplier framework);
- A works or services contract;
- A single national contract or separated into lots (by geographical areas or otherwise); and
- Used for purchasing on behalf of other contracting authorities.

3.0 Aims

3.1 To inform Councils on emerging BDUK thinking relating to mobile not-spots.

3.2 To seek Council views on the issues above and particularly how to ensure as smooth an implementation of mobile infrastructure as possible.

Report prepared by:

Gary Fielding – Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance and Partnerships)
North Yorkshire County Council
16 January 2012