

## RESPONSE TO COVID-19 TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS – UPDATE 2

NUMBER	Recommendation	Referral for Action	Progress
<b>Update from CEO &amp; Leader of the Council</b>			
1.	<p>That a meeting of the Broadband Stakeholder Group be convened by the lead Cabinet member (Cllr Middleton) at the earliest opportunity, to which the suppliers of broadband services across Milton Keynes be invited to submit their plans to achieve this ambition in <u>every part</u> of the Borough and that a roadmap with tight timescales be prepared, showing just when and how those targets will be achieved.</p>	<p>Cllr Middleton/ Broadband Stakeholder Group</p>	<p>The prospects for further coverage of gigabit capable fibre and other technology broadband was discussed at the last meeting of the MK Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG) on 13 May 2021.</p> <p>Overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 99.1% of homes and businesses in Milton Keynes can obtain “Superfast” broadband speeds in excess of 30 Mbps.</li> <li>• 88.6% can already obtain Gigabit capable, or “Ultrafast” broadband.</li> <li>• At the lower end of the broadband speeds currently available 0.02% of homes and businesses can only receive sub-2 Mbps and 0.36% sub 10 Mbps.</li> </ul> <p>The remaining premises in these low speed categories tend to be in the rural areas of the Borough and thus it is costly to provide fibre network connections. This means that it is unlikely that the most remote premises will be a commercially viable option for companies such as Openreach, City Fibre or Virgin Media with connection costs running at tens of thousand pounds each.</p> <p>In an attempt to provide gigabit capable connections to more premises across the UK the Government recently announced its “Project Gigabit” programme. Milton Keynes is in the Lot</p>

			<p>12 Project Gigabit procurement area which we expect to go to tender in March 2022 with deployment planned to start in Summer 2023. The first stage of the Lot 12 procurement will be a study known as an Open Market Review (OMR). The OMR is issued centrally by the UK Government and asks suppliers to identify their current deployment plans in the Lot 12 Area, which also includes parts of Hertfordshire, Central Beds/Bedford and Northamptonshire. The OMR information is commercially sensitive so cannot be circulated to the public but the Council will be provided with details of supplier plans for consideration and evaluation during 2022.</p> <p>As this type of information on suppliers' future plans is commercially sensitive it is unlikely that they would provide their future plans for consideration by the Task and Finish Group as a separate exercise. However, a confidential report could be compiled for the Task and Finish Group once the results of the Project Gigabit OMR are known which would outline any new planned deployments in Milton Keynes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the meantime the Council continues to offer guidance to residents on obtaining better broadband through the "<a href="#">My Local Broadband</a>" Inbox and is working with the UK Government to further develop the coverage of Project Gigabit and the current Gigabit Voucher Scheme.</li> <li>• Several suppliers also now provide discounted broadband contracts to residents who are in receipt of certain benefits which may enable more residents</li> </ul>
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			to obtain better broadband speeds at reduced cost. More information on the discounted contracts currently available from BT is shown <a href="#">here</a> .
2.	That the Cabinet, through the Director of Partnerships and Communications, commissions Borough-wide research designed to establish local residents' insights/hopes/concerns as Milton Keynes emerges from the pandemic, with particular emphasis on the concerns of the young, of minority groups and of those with disabilities. The outcome of this research to assist the Borough in the design and format of its long-term recovery plan.	Cabinet/ Director of Partnerships and Communications	<p>There has been a lot of national research undertaken which provides insights that the council will be able to take advantage of.</p> <p>For example:  <a href="https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/generation-covid-19">https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/generation-covid-19</a> and  <a href="https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/globalassets/docs-and-resources/research-and-campaigns/back-in-lockdown-report.pdf">https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/globalassets/docs-and-resources/research-and-campaigns/back-in-lockdown-report.pdf</a> and <a href="https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/2021-facing-the-future-employment-prospects-for-young-people-">https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/2021-facing-the-future-employment-prospects-for-young-people-</a></p> <p>This will be complemented by local research if necessary. Cabinet will consider how the recommendation can assist in the delivery of the long-term aims in the Council Plan and HWB Strategy to reduce inequalities and promote inclusion.”</p>
3.	That Covid Vaccine Champions be identified by the Cabinet among community leaders/ influencers across Milton Keynes and that they be fully supported in a vaccine take-up campaign among these (often harder to reach) groups.	Cabinet / Director of Partnerships and Communication/ Public Health Team?	<p>The council has been working with community leaders and influencers to support the vaccine take-up amongst different communities in MK. We have also engaged the Covid Champions to promote the uptake of the vaccine, for example Covid Champions have successfully supported pop-up stalls in MK promoting the vaccine to MK residents. This work has focused on harder to reach groups at locations like MK Market.  <a href="https://twitter.com/mkcouncil/status/1381938654537469960?form=MY01SV&amp;OCID=MY01SV">https://twitter.com/mkcouncil/status/1381938654537469960?form=MY01SV&amp;OCID=MY01SV</a></p>

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<b>Community &amp; Voluntary Sector</b>			
1.	That working with partners through the Community Foundation and Community Action:MK, the Cabinet focuses funding and support on the building of community capacity, supporting the growth of social networks and social action and thus focusing on bringing all sectors together in projects that deliver on local priorities. Funding should also be focused on “training the trainers” programmes to deliver maximum coverage and benefits across the whole Borough.	Cabinet/ Voluntary Sector Partners	The co-ordination of the community and voluntary sector in relation to health and wellbeing is being taken forward by a new Alliance that has been formed. Importantly this development is sector-led. Other structures, like the one that supports MK Together (responsible for safeguarding and community safety) are being adjusted to recognise the new Alliance.
2.	That the Council works with its partners to develop new funds for 2021/2022 focusing (through a Corporate membership initiative) on tackling Child Poverty and converting the outstanding Covid response into a Friends Scheme to provide on-going support.	Cabinet/ As above	The responsible cabinet member is engaging with the sector to identify further opportunities for improving co-operation and collaboration.
3.	<p>That working with partners, the Council reviews and, if necessary, changes systems and processes to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify and speed up change systems and processes to allow for a swifter turnaround of applications for funding;</li> <li>• Work with organisations so that they are better prepared for funding (due diligence process, creation of bank accounts and governance for authorisation is clear and agreed in advance);</li> <li>• Improve partnership working across the plethora of organisations operating in Milton Keynes to avoid duplication and waste (especially on the distribution of food).</li> </ul>	Cabinet/ As above	New funds to tackle child poverty have been identified and are being rolled out in 2021/22, including: Summer of Play (enhanced for children on free school meals) and targeted activities over the autumn half term (£1,350M including government grant, development of the Xtra Support Hub and a pilot child care deposit programme for people on low incomes.

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<b>Domestic Abuse</b>			
1.	That the Cabinet undertakes a community awareness campaign (in conjunction with its partners, including Thames Valley Police and the Community /Voluntary Sector) to encourage community members to report domestic abuse in their neighbourhood and repeats this as a priority at the start of any future lockdown.	Cabinet (Cllr Townsend – Community Safety) / SaferMK Partnership?	A communication plan is now in place as part of the Domestic Abuse Strategy that includes a number of awareness raising campaigns.
2.	That resources and funding should be reviewed and if possible increased to support the work of domestic abuse charities in Milton Keynes.	Cabinet	The Domestic Abuse Strategy has a very clear action plan and this will be subject to ongoing review, including the funding for particular programmes of work e.g. the perpetrator programme. The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board meets regularly to oversee work being undertaken. This board has representation from across the system including MK ACT, MKC, MKUH, TVP and BLMK CCG. The levels of funding MK Council provide is high compared to many other areas.
3.	That the Children and Families Service makes training available to all councillors and community leaders on recognising the signs of domestic abuse.	Children & Families Service / Group Head	Training session booked for 26 October 2021.
4.	That the Cabinet contacts the MPs for Milton Keynes asking them to do all they can to work with and take briefings from locally based experts on domestic abuse with the aim of working together to ensure that all take full advantage of this once in a generation opportunity to transform the response to domestic abuse nationally and in particular across Milton Keynes.	Cabinet / Leader of the Council	The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will share the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan with the local Members of Parliament and will offer to meet with them to discuss domestic abuse issues in Milton Keynes.

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<b>Mental Health</b>			
1.	That the Cabinet embed and prioritise support for improved mental health and wellbeing within the community, voluntary and charitable sectors, working in tandem with NHS services.	Cabinet / Local Mental Health Service providers / CCG?	The Cabinet and the Council continues to recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing. Mental Health is a priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board and children and young people's mental health is now a priority for the MK Care Alliance. This will provide an opportunity for collaboration and integrated working across the whole system of services and support.
2.	That the Council continues working with the NHS and its voluntary organisation partners, together with line-managers, housing and education staff, to increase the supply of such services, to identify and assess those at particular risk.	Public Health Team  Local Mental Health Service providers / CCG? / Voluntary Sector Partners?	<p>The council recognises the importance of mental health services. It continues to work with the NHS and its voluntary organisations to increase the supply of services and identify those at risk.</p> <p>The Council has commissioned the Oxwell Survey to work with secondary schools to gain a deeper understanding of the mental health and wellbeing of young people in MK. This will help prioritise activities and interventions.</p> <p>The CNWL mental health support team for schools has also secured additional resources.</p> <p>For young people with the very highest level of need, the BLMK health system has been awarded £17,379,204 of additional funding over the next 3 years to establish a mental health in-patient unit for children and young people in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes. BLMK have also been awarded £700k over the next 3 years for eating disorders to enhance core services and day care provision.</p>

			The council, and our partners in the NHS continues to invest in promoting and protecting the mental health and wellbeing of all our employees through workplace initiatives like the MK Council Health Champions scheme.
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