



Navigating Broadband Challenges: Powys County Council's Commitment to Community Connectivity

Dear Powys Community Members,

As part of the Powys County Council's mission to foster a stronger, fairer, and more sustainable Powys, we remain committed to ensuring your access to dependable, high-speed broadband service.

We recognise that the recent reclassification of Voucher Priority Areas (VPAs) by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) may have caused some confusion and concern, especially amongst our communities working hard towards the delivery of Fibre Broadband service with Alternative Network Providers (AltNets).

We wish to keep you updated and reassured about the ongoing situation and our unwavering dedication to you.

Understanding the Current Situation and Its Impact

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) have recently spoken to all Alternative Network partners to ask them if they are able to guarantee that they will finish their work by Summer 2024. If this is not the case, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) have advised that they will now consider alternative options to provide fibre-based broadband services. Some of our Powys communities are included in this broader search for solutions.

If a specific project hasn't yet been given Voucher Priority Area (VPA) status, these projects will now be included in the search for alternative options proposed by BDUK.

VPAs will be closely watched throughout 2023 and the first half of 2024 to ensure they are following the plan that BDUK has been given. Similarly, proactive proposals will be evaluated to see if they can provide faster or better Value for Money (VfM) than a Gigabit Infrastructure Subsidy (GIS) procurement.

Regardless of the method, whether it's VPA or proactive proposal, the supplier should expect to make significant progress in 2023 and early 2024. They should also be able to show detailed and deliverable plans for this same period.

Our Proactive Engagement and Measures

Powys County Council is not just a passive observer of these developments, we maintain regular communications with key stakeholders, including Alternative Network Providers, local councillors, BDUK, Welsh Government and the Council's Portfolio Holder. Our goal is to ensure transparency and keep everyone updated with the latest developments.

In addition, we are actively seeking other potential solutions to secure enhanced broadband services for our underserved communities, ensuring we are prepared to act if the current arrangements do not meet the expected results.

The Potential Influence of Government Assistance and Funding

While the commitment of the AltNet provider is currently uncertain, a possibility remains for them to achieve the required targets by Summer 2024. If they succeed, they could still secure government assistance and funding. We fully support their efforts and remain hopeful for a positive outcome.

Towards a Stronger, Fairer, and Greener Powys

Powys County Council is committed to its vision of a stronger, fairer, and greener Powys. Dependable, high-speed broadband is an integral part of this vision. Therefore, we are doing everything within our capacity to ensure that all our communities, regardless of their VPA classification, have access to these services.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this period. Please be assured, we are confident that, together, we can successfully navigate these challenges and emerge stronger.

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You are welcome to contact us in Welsh. We will respond in Welsh, without delay.





Next Steps and Available Resources

We appreciate your interest and active engagement in understanding the ongoing changes to our broadband landscape. Your actions and involvement are instrumental in shaping a well-connected Powys.

To support you in staying updated on the situation, we recommend regularly visiting the official website of Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), which is part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Their site provides comprehensive information on a range of related topics. You can visit the DCMS website here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-digital-culture-media-sport>. In particular, details about BDUK's Project Gigabit can be accessed directly at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/project-gigabit-uk-gigabit-programme>.

For those eager to have a more direct impact on this issue, we wholeheartedly encourage reaching out to your local councillors or your Alternative Network Providers. These conversations can facilitate your contribution to our shared objective of enhanced community connectivity.

Be assured, we are committed to keeping you informed. Your proactive engagement plays a crucial role in our collective success. Together, we can navigate these challenges and work towards the common goal of a well-connected Powys.

If you have any immediate concerns or questions, please feel free to reach out to our dedicated broadband team at broadband@powys.gov.uk.

Yours Sincerely,

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