

APPENDIX 4 : Support for Improved Broadband Services in Rural Areas

a) Excerpts from Parish Plans

Compton Dando 2010

To be taken on by the Parish Council

Inadequate broadband provision	Ensure poor broadband rural blackspots are highlighted to B&NES, eg via map showing quality, speed (from working group).	B&NES were unaware of poor rural broadband provision. Broadband important for rural businesses. See also 'Local people' section
Inadequate mobile phone reception	Investigate reception of different providers (via questionnaire?) & publish results locally, put pressure on suppliers to improve service.	Longer term - explore possibility of improvements via wireless LAN

Dunkerton 2007

Attempts should also be made to encourage British Telecom to make Broadband more widely available in Dunkerton, and to alert residents to the existence of the website if and when it is set up.

Enquiries have been made seeking to improve local broadband availability, currently very poor in Dunkerton, by 'piggy-backing' new developments in Bath Business Park.

Freshford 2008

Do you have broadband 58% yes, 42% No

Do you have home access to the internet 78% Yes, 22% No

Action: Develop services for home workers

The examination of national trends in employment, particularly with respect to the changing retirement age for women, the growth in flexible employment, - including all types of working arrangements such as job sharing; flexible hours; working from home; and hot-desking will be of generally positive interest both to our older workers and to our young families. There is also much national evidence of many more people working on into their 70s than has ever been the case before. Their advice and expertise has rarely been in such demand.

Home Working Publish on website register of skills and interest. Establish a community business club/meeting place for home workers to provide social contact and networking.

New Ventures Set up a working group to explore types of small businesses that could be easily set up in the village. Establish a small fund administered by the PC to encourage the development of appropriate new employment opportunities in the village. Identify local buildings/ land that could be used for incubating new businesses. Promote local business development in Freshford. Establish “Village Skills” training, around environmental projects and village improvements.

Part Time Employment Establish a register to provide local childcare/ parent care to allow some part time working. Advertise all local part time jobs on website

Paulton 2010

Improve TV and broadband services to the village

73% of respondents already receive digital TV signals (although this will have increased significantly since the recent digital switchover). However, 39% said they would use cable TV if available. 64% of respondents said they already had a broadband connection, although many complained of poor service, and 9% said their house could not be connected to a broadband service.

Improved road and telecommunications infrastructure

88% of respondents do not think there are enough facilities in the village to attract employers. 9% of respondents have found that their house cannot be connected to a broadband service, although 64% said they already had broadband. Many respondents complained about poor quality telephone calls, broadband services and DAB digital radio signals. These requirements for infrastructure improvements need to be reflected in the Local Strategic Plan, formulated by B&NES Council.

Improve TV and broadband services to the village (High priority)

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Improved road and telecommunications infrastructure (High priority)

Important enablers for the establishment of new businesses in the parish are felt to be improved road and telecommunications infrastructures. It is difficult to reach the national motorway network from Paulton, and the village centre is congested at rush hour, thus providing a disincentive to potential business development. Also, the current telecommunications infrastructure does not provide the fibre optic cabling which would offer high bandwidth broadband services. Such broadband services would better support the high data transfer requirements of the type of professional service businesses that the Polestar development is hoping to attract. It would also enable more effective home working for those who would like to take advantage of flexible working arrangements.

Wellow 2006

Of the utilities, both electricity and water services were seen as reasonable or good by over 80% (no gas service is available, despite a pipeline running through the Parish). By contrast, phone services were rated positively by less than 60% and as poor by over 35%. This is of concern in an age of increasing dependence on telephone services and the rapid growth in the use of the internet (especially broadband) by small businesses and households. Radio reception fared even worse, less than half giving a positive rating and almost as many rating it poor. TV reception however, was rated positively by over 70%.

All telephone lines to be connected as soon as possible to the newly laid cable serving Wellow to ensure best possible connections for voice calls and the fastest possible high quality connection speeds to the internet via broadband.

Bring Broadband to Wellow (only a few homes have it).

b) Responses to Spatial Options consultation (Autumn 2009)

Home working and broadband	David Orme	Potential for growth in homeworking will only be realised if there is broadband access. It should be seen as an area for early improvement, some radical thinking and innovative partnering, not an inviolate
	Freshford Parish Council	We do not accept the negative implication re rural broadband, the extension of which to all rural settlements should be encouraged. Strategy should assume that development of broadband will continue to accelerate and that a greater portion of the rural population will be working from home than is now the case.
	Ubley Parish Council	Ubley Parish Council would like to understand more about the commitment to home working. For this to be a reality there must be action to see that rural broadband speeds are increased to a basic minimum level. Currently many areas of the Chew Valley have unacceptably low broadband speeds
	Priston Parish	Support for homeworking must include increasing both access itself and the quality of access to the broadband infrastructure. Bath and North East Somerset should have a policy on this issues and use the influence of the West of England Partnership to pressurise for improved broadband infrastructure across rural areas.
	Pamela Cole	<p>In order for there to be a buoyant economy in the rural areas, it is essential that access to high speed broadband is improved. Fast reliable internet access is absolutely essential for diverse rural businesses.</p> <p>It is not acceptable to create a policy which from the outset includes the assumption that access to broadband will be limited. In the future it will be increasingly important and essential for all sorts of everyday activities. This is a major factor restricting</p>

		<p>'accessibility' in rural areas and has the added effect of impacting most on the elderly and poorer members of communities.</p> <p>Strategy for rural diversification should include commitments to work towards improving access to high speed broadband so that the rural areas are not disadvantaged both economically and socially.</p>
	Englishcombe Parish Council	Recommend pressure for improved and reliable broadband to assist Businesses and home working projects.
	Avon Wildlife Trust	Agree.
	Dunkerton Parish Council	The current poor rural broadband coverage seems to be seen (at para 7,41) as an insurmountable obstacle that we will just have to put up with. This is unadventurous and misleading. Should work with broadband providers to ensure commitment and delivery.
	Bathampton Parish Council	The policy should include a commitment to work to remove the limitations.
	Paulton Community Plan Steering Group	<p>Just how will commitment and support be shown to home working?</p> <p>The policy, to be useful, must address the limitations on the rural economy imposed by lack of access to high speed broadband, not just accept them.</p>
	Claverton Parish Council	Should work proactively to remove limitations of access to broadband.