



Shortlist: CPEND Broadband with CPEND Community Broadband Project

The Challenge

The aim of the project was to improve the level of delivery of Broadband across the CPEND rural area comprising 235 square miles with a population of 64,225, 29,800 households, and 4358 businesses of which 74% have 1-4 employees. The area includes 5 Town Councils and 69 parishes. CPEND includes representation from Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils giving us a powerful advantage in identifying needs and stimulating demand across the whole area, with immediate entry at local and parish level and through our community partnerships. We have huge support right across the CPEND area and this was very important when doing our survey..

We set up three teams with an overall Project Team Leader:

The Technical Team investigated the various solutions needed to give NGA or improved broadband coverage throughout our rural area.

The Business team developed an application for funding from the RDPE fund.

The Partnership team was essential in forging strong links with Local councils & Business Groups, Dorset Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils (DAPTC) the Telecommunications Industry and other Community Broadband groups. The support from NDDC has been invaluable and unstinting. We also involved our local MP Bob Walter

The Solution

Our initial budget was tiny but this increased slightly as the project progressed. We realised that we had to put a number of things in place. The first two essentials were:

Evidence of need: We carried out an online and a hard copy survey with 1200 responses. See http://www.dt11forum.org.uk/documents/broadband/survey_report2.pdf

The review: We succeeded with a funding bid and this enabled us to appoint a consultant to write a review. See http://www.dt11forum.org.uk/documents/broadband/cpend_review2.pdf

The first stage ended with the presentation of the review. 55 people attended including a strong representation from industry. We were extremely flattered by the number and the calibre of the attendees, particularly those from the industry. We believe that we are one of the very few community led broadband projects which has the mass of an entire district. We also have considered both practical and strategic issues without being tempted to jump to local or parochial solutions which may not be the best long term solution for the area as a whole.

At the end of the second stage we fully realised the size of the task we were facing in the rural communities. We were deeply concerned that if not resisted, there would be an acceptance of the BT model of FTTC with an estimated improved coverage of only 90% of the communities. Our concern was that large areas within the CPEND area would be that final 10% and which would be left out of any improvement. We are determined that this will not be allowed to happen.

The Achievement

Following the successful reception of the Survey and Review we realised that if we were to stand any chance of influencing the outcomes from BDUK funding then we would have to up our profile. With the help of Bob Walter MP, we received an invitation to the West Sussex Broadband Summit. In early June we had a meeting with a senior team from BT SW.

We have since then attended a number of meetings and seminars including two INCA meetings where we hope that we contributed positively to the discussion. This increase in the project's profile has raised awareness and we are now on the steering group with DCC and other local authorities to prepare the latest BDUK bid. The CPEND Broadband Project model will be used in the latest BDUK bid as an example of good community involvement and will also be incorporated into the wider Dorset Broadband programme.