

Question from Chair of the Committee:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been led to believe that there is a map in existence showing where faster broadband will be rolled out in North Staffordshire. I work for Newcastle Borough Council and have been requested by the Chair of the Economic Development Scrutiny Committee to try and track down a copy of this map as the Committee would like to discuss it and be in a position to pass the information on to their constituents and local businesses.

I have also had a request from the chair for clarity as to whether there are any plans to upgrade the Wolstanton exchange and the service offered to the Centre 500 industrial estate.

I would be grateful for any information you could provide me with.

Response from the County Council

Dear Julia,

Thank you for your message. My immediate thoughts are as follows:

1. Commercial broadband operators have published plans for upgrading infrastructure and improving services. BT has announced that it will upgrade the Newcastle-under-Lyme exchange, which I understand serves Centre 500, to provide fibre-to-the-cabinet services, and has indicated that the upgrade will take place during 2012.
2. For areas where commercial broadband operators have no plans for the foreseeable future, Staffordshire County Council is leading a project in alignment with the Government's Broadband Delivery UK initiative to enable upgraded services to be available.
3. There are no maps showing where upgraded services will be rolled out in any areas of Staffordshire under that project. Such a map cannot be produced until the process of procuring a broadband supplier to carry out such upgrades has been concluded. Once any such map is produced, it will be made available (subject to any necessary redactions for reasons of commercial confidentiality).
4. Any maps which anybody may have seen to date will simply illustrate information such as evidence of line speeds, and are absolutely not maps showing where upgraded services will be rolled out. Any such maps should not be circulated, and should only be used in conjunction with the local broadband project team, and with the permission of Staffordshire County Council.

If this is not what you wish to hear at this time, or if it comes across as a bit blunt, then I apologise, but it is vitally important that people do not misinterpret information or circulate information for incorrect purposes.

If you have any further questions, please ask.

Best wishes,

James Hinton

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