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To: West Sussex Parish Council Clerks

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to let you know that the New Year has seen good progress with our plans to enable connections to better, faster broadband across the county.

The County Council is leading the project and has committed £6.26million which has been matched by the government. It is anticipated that the remaining necessary funding will come from the private sector. The County Council is working with partners in District and Borough Councils and representatives from community and business interest groups to make it possible for at least 90% of the county to be able to connect to superfast broadband services of at least 24Mbps.

A formal procurement process has now begun with potential suppliers to resolve how to provide improved broadband services and indeed in some cases a basic broadband service, to the areas that we understand are in need of the County Council's intervention.

We have issued our Invitation to Tender (ITT) to the suppliers signed up to the government's delivery framework, Fujitsu and BT Openreach.

We anticipate awarding a contract in the summer to the preferred bidder, whose first course of action will be to begin the geographical survey work necessary to plan how to build the necessary telecommunications infrastructure.

Our project team has carried out a review of local and national telecommunications suppliers' plans to provide Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband coverage in the county. The review has helped to identify which areas or pockets of West Sussex are likely to be left behind others without access to broadband services, and may be suitable for intervention by the West Sussex Better Connected project.

NGA defines the technology that the European Commission determines capable of providing 'superfast' broadband speeds.

Our proposed public sector investment must take account of EU State Aid rules. This is to ensure that the funding is being targeted at the right areas for the

right reasons, and that there are no credible investment plans for similar broadband infrastructure projects that overlap with our proposals.

The EC has given permission to use State Aided funds in this way in the UK. We have now made our submission to Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), the government department responsible for ensuring our plans meet the criteria approved by the EC.

I hope you will agree that some significant milestones are now achieved and I hope to be able to update you with more progress in the coming months.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lionel Barnard'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'L'.

Lionel Barnard
Deputy Leader & portfolio for Communities, Environment & Enterprise

cc West Sussex District and Borough Leaders and Chief Executives