I had meetings with both B4RN and LonsdaleNET last Friday 31st

Openreach have been very slow compared with the other two but I am expecting to hear from them by the end of this week.

One of the key issues that came across from both companies is that they want to do the business but want us to make a commitment to supplier selection as soon as possible because the cost to them of completing a full survey and a fixed price commitment will be considerable.

This obviously works both ways and I am intending to create a draft document of our procurement criteria by the end of this week and want your input to the final version that we can use with both the suppliers and in justifying our decision with parish residents.

These Government vouchers are essentially “owned” by the residents (owners or tenants) and they must pledge their voucher to a supplier in order for that supplier to be able to redeem the money.

Please remember that when pledging the voucher the resident must commit to a 1-year fibre broadband contract with a retail ISP once the fibre is live.

Therefore we need to be transparent with the residents in how we are managing this opportunity and there will be competing forms of advertising from the potential suppliers particularly Openreach and LonsdaleNET promoting their merits.

All three of the suppliers are saying that we need at least 60% (+/-10%) of the total vouchers to be pledged to make a project viable. If we end up with more than one supplier there is a danger that none of the projects are viable without additional funding.

I have collected both email addresses and phone numbers for all residents in my community and will use the email addresses to keep them informed about progress. I will be “blind copying” these updates so that the full community contact list remains confidential. When we get to the stage of having decided on our supplier I will hand these contact details to the chosen supplier (only with the residents’ agreement) so that the supplier can ask the residents to pledge their voucher into their scheme.

I will not be sharing these contact details with any suppliers until we have made the supplier decision. This will not stop lobbying by suppliers because LonsdaleNET and BT (Openreach?) have the majority of our residents as existing customers but there is no point in increasing the inevitable confusion for residents. There is no requirement to share this contact information before the voucher pledging stage and this is sensitive information subject to GDPR legislation.

When a potential suppliers asks us for help in identifying landowners in order to agree wayleaves please assist them but only provide the specific name and phone number not our full contact list.

Brian Smythe

3rd August