

Policy & Resources Committee

Report Title:	BT Broadband / Wifi Update
Meeting Date:	18 April 2023
Contact Officer:	Karen Slater, Corporate Services Manager & RFO

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the broadband / Wi-Fi at the town hall.

Update

1. The Town Council entered a new 5-year contract with BT for super-fast 4G fibre broadband in November 2021. This was the best option at the time for broadband provision to the town hall offices for both the new iCloud phone system and Wi-Fi needed for all computer equipment.
2. The office staff have been experiencing technical difficulties with outlook and internet and after lengthy discussions with BT we have found out that our broadband line is currently shared with 20 other shops on the High Street. They also confirmed that our current running speed is 89/90 and our max availability is 90 mbps. This means when at full staff numbers in the office together with users in shops and hall hirers using laptops at the same time, we will be exceeding our current max speed of 90 mbps and will be at major risk of 'crashing' our outlook (email system) first and then phone system.
3. Based on the above-mentioned, to operate effectively & efficiently in the long term we need to upgrade our broadband provision. As you all know, the cable network has been upgraded to 'swish fibre' in Thame. BT refer to this option as a 'lease line' which once installed would be exclusive to TTC and cannot be shared by others. The work required is not optional but mandatory for us.
4. BT have agreed to cancel our existing contract, which has 3 years remaining, and upgrade to swish fibre cabling which will mean speeds of 500 mbps uploading and 500 mbps downloading. At this speed we will never have technical difficulties (including bus Wi-Fi interruptions) and will secure our long-term communication and office requirements. Whilst we cannot take up contracts with other suppliers at this time, we have reviewed the current market and found BT to be competitive, we will of course re-tender in 3 years to ensure that this remains the case.
5. Based on a high priority, we have arranged for BT to undertake a survey at the town hall as the whole project can take 6-12 weeks.

Resource Appraisal

6. The exclusive lease line for TTC will cost approx. £271 per month. Please note we have surplus CCTV funds from 2022-23 budget which we can use for the first year and then we will include in on-going future budgets, hopefully we will be able to offset some of the costs with savings expected in other IT areas year on year.

Action Required

- i) To note the updated report