

Thank you to those who were able to attend last week's meeting. Paul Hunt from Chipping Area Internet (CHAIN) gave a useful insight into the practicalities of the Chipping project.

To bring everyone up to date, B4RN are currently in the process of preparing a Core plan which will identify every property in the area. They expect to have it available within the next few weeks. We will then need to identify whether there are any other properties that need to be added or removed if appropriate.

Paul indicated they had reached this stage with the Chipping project by September 2016.

He went on to explain that having received the Core plan they set up a steering group to move the project forward to identify, amongst other things:-

Which properties were likely to be connected
Which households were likely to invest

That was then reported back to B4RN so they could assess whether the projected was viable. The chipping project had approximately 800 properties on their plan. Paul estimated there would be a take up of around 40%. To date they have raised around £120,000 from investors and a number of grants. Some have committed £1,500, others significantly more. They anticipate the whole project may cost around £200,000.

It seems they are well on the way to moving the project forward. The main cabinet has been installed at Chipping village hall, The hall and around 10 properties are connected with more planned over the coming weeks and months.

To date part of their fund has been used to pay for the cabinet, the ducting and other materials. Much of the work running the main ducting to the cabinet has been carried out by one local farmer with a mole plough. In return they will receive shares based on the amount of ducting laid. Some lengths passing over ground, inaccessible to machinery has been dug by hand. Volunteers have been out digging with others supplying tea and cakes. Some grants have been secured to cover the costs of engaging contractors to cross the highway where there has not been an alternative option.

Their main challenge was securing wayleaves from landowners.

Hopefully the fact we have a number of large landowners who are in favour of the project, will mean we won't have many problems on that front.

Once we have our core plan, we will need to arrange another meeting to appoint a steering group and collect information, anonymously if preferred, of details how much people are prepared to invest.

We can then feedback to B4RN. They can prepare their route plan and the steering group can set about identifying land owners, talking to them to establish the best routes, checking they will agree to a wayleave and ascertaining whether they want to lay the ducting or whether we need to engage B4RN to do it.