QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT – Q2 2017

Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce

CONTENTS

This is the second quarterly progress report of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Implementation Group, established by Government to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the report of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce, published in December 2016[1] and it outlines progress made on measures due for action in the second quarter of 2017. The report also provides an update on 4 actions for Quarter 1 which were delayed.

Summary of Progress Made

Engagement between telecommunications operators and local authorities through the Broadband Officers is continuing to strengthen. Single points of contact are now in place within all local authorities, via the Broadband Officer, and through the provision by telecoms operators of nominated points of contact in their organisations. Telecoms operators have also been involved in informing local authorities of their commercial plans via presentations at the Regional Action Groups and through the hosting of site visits.

The Rural Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have formed an Association to represent their interests, to engage with local authorities and other stakeholders in a coordinated manner, and to provide a mechanism for a harmonised approach to customer services, complaints handling and advertising.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DAHRRGA)[2] are working with mobile operators and a number of local authorities on a pilot project to identify specific mobile phone blackspots areas, ascertain why these issues are arising, and identify solutions to improve the coverage in the area.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) published the latest version of the *Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads* (Purple Book) in April 2017. The revised guidelines will assist in improving the future management of road works by utilities and local authorities. Training is also being rolled out to local authorities and telecoms operators.

---

[1] The report of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce is available at
http://dccae.gov.ie/documents/Taskforce%20Report.pdf
[2] Specific functions related to rural development formerly undertaken by DAHRRGA have transferred to the new Department of Rural and Community Development under the remit of Minister Michael Ring, with effect from 19 July 2017.

The DTTAS Road Openings Monitoring Committee, which encompasses senior representation from DTTAS, DCCAE, DAHRRGA and the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DHPCLG), has held two meetings to date. The Committee will examine and identify solutions to road openings issues, in addition to wider barriers identified by stakeholders as impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and utility works.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has completed works on the installation of ducting on the N25 in Cork between Little Island and Middleton totalling 13km, and works on the remaining parts of the route are ongoing. Works will also shortly recommence on the M7/M8 corridor.

TII and the telecoms industry have also been engaging on identifying suitable sites on the motorway network for the locating telecoms infrastructure in order to improve mobile coverage. To date, two pilot sites have been identified and are being progressed. In addition a full route assessment of the M17/M18 Gort to Tuam motorway is being undertaken.

The Road Management Office continues to engage the local authorities with the objective of migrating any remaining local authorities to the MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System[3]. Of the outstanding four authorities, three are trialling the processing of some road opening licence applications through the MapRoad System.

ComReg is undertaking research on the feasibility of using mobile phone repeaters to overcome impediments to indoor coverage caused by building materials for domestic dwellings. Comreg is also working on compiling a five year forecast report which will provide information on mobile data volumes and speeds and fixed broadband connections and speeds.

With regard to the "Purple Book" implementation, further development of the cost-based fee structure and its inclusion in the online application system is to be undertaken. The LGMA is working on a Charging Framework to be concluded in July.

---

[3] MapRoad Roadworks Licensing is the new national system for the management and processing of roadworks licence applications - https://maproadroadworkslicensing.ie/MRL/

Impact

Of the 20 actions for delivery in Quarter 2 or ongoing, 18 have been delivered or are in progress with 2 delayed.

The benefits of bringing together the diverse range of stakeholders involved in this project are becoming clear. The strong cooperation between action holders is paying dividends in terms of progressing specific actions.

A collaborative approach is developing between stakeholders with sharing of information taking place at a level which has not occurred previously. A strong example of this is the pilot project on the mobile blackspots where operators have committed to providing details of their network coverage to local authorities in order to identify and ascertain solutions to specific blackspots areas.

The mobilisation of the Rural ISPs to form an industry association is a positive step in establishing a structure which will enable stronger engagement with their member companies in a more coordinated manner.

Proper engagement between asset owners, including the local authorities, and telecoms operators is critical to ensuring that appropriate access to relevant infrastructure is achieved. Some of the measures progressed in Quarter 2 have already impacted on the way telecoms operators engage with local authorities and planning authorities in regard to the deployment of telecommunications equipment. For example, the ongoing work involving TII and telecoms operators on the identification of sites for the locating of telecoms infrastructure along the motorway network is a significantly positive outcome. This process will improve mobile coverage along many stretches of motorway routes.

The publication of the revised "Purple Book" following extensive consultation will provide strong guidance on processes and a national standardisation framework for road openings and will bring about an overall improvement of roads management throughout the country.

The results of ComReg's consultation process in relation to the code of practice for complaints handling has led to specific provisions which all Service Providers are obliged to offer. ComReg's online awareness campaign, which is also underway, will inform consumers on complaints handling and customer care service they can expect from service providers.

The Taskforce Implementation Group is working well as a structure which enables action holders to raise any concerns relating to challenges in delivering specific actions. In addition the Group allows

stakeholders to flag emerging issues as they arise, which is resulting in early and proactive response to any emerging challenges to the delivery of actions. While many of the actions are stand-alone measures, it is becoming more obvious that work on many of the measures is giving rise to new actions which need to be captured and monitored in future quarterly progress reports.

The improved engagements set out above are already significantly contributing to the more efficient rollout of telecoms services.

Next Steps

While good progress has been made to date, it is important that the work of the Taskforce Implementation Group maintains momentum. Both Minister Naughten and Minister Ring are committed to the full delivery of the actions set out in the Taskforce Report.

Continued engagement by all action holders will contribute greatly to implementing tangible actions to remove barriers to the deployment of high quality telecommunications networks across this country.

Progressing the Taskforce actions will expedite rollout of required infrastructure and the delivery of mobile phone and broadband services, particularly in rural Ireland. A state of the art telecoms infrastructure will provide important support for rurally-based industries and communities. The delivery of reliable high speed broadband and mobile services will support employment and cost competitiveness in existing businesses and enable the formation of new business ventures.

Delivery of the actions in the Taskforce Report will enable consumers to be better informed of product and service choices. They will enhance social inclusion and provide individuals with access to a wider range of online services and resources to learn and develop new skills and to connect with family, friends and the community.

The Ministers would like to thank all action holders for their input to this quarterly report and encourage their ongoing engagement with the Taskforce Implementation Group.

Action 4: Run a public awareness campaign on all aspects of the National Broadband Plan and the work of the Taskforce.

Measure – Ongoing: As per headline action. (DCCAE/DAHRRGA).

Update (In Progress)

Ensuring consumers are kept well informed on progress made on all aspects of the National Broadband Plan and work of the Taskforce is a priority. DCCAE and DAHRRGA are developing a comprehensive communications and awareness plan, which it is envisaged will be rolled out in Q3. The plan will draw together a messaging strategy for the various initiatives under the NBP and integrate them with the work of the Taskforce Implementation Group.

DAHRRGA engages on an ongoing basis with the local authorities through the Northern and Southern Regional Action Groups, the subgroups established to progress specific work items that have been identified as aiding the rollout of the National Broadband Plan, and bilateral engagement with local authorities.

Next Steps: A comprehensive Communications Implementation Plan will be rolled out from Q32017.

Action 5: In line with the Programme for Government commitment, the Government will ensure that appropriate funding is made available to support the timely rollout of the NBP.

Measure – Ongoing: As per headline action. (Government).

Update (In Progress)
DCCAE is managing a procurement process to select a company or companies who will roll-out a new high-speed broadband network within the State Intervention Area, with the cost to be part-funded by a Government subsidy. European Regional Development Funding will also be used. €275m is included in the Capital Plan as an initial commitment to the NBP rollout. With the finalisation of the NBP map in April 2017 and following extensive dialogue with bidders, the procurement is progressing to the next stage**.** On 20 June 2017, the Department wrote to the three bidders in the NBP procurement process inviting them to submit their 'Detailed Solutions' by 26 September 2017.

DAHRRGA has provided part funding to all local authorities to support the appointment of a Broadband Officer in each area.

Next Steps: The bidder 'Detailed Solutions' will be evaluated following receipt in September. This will be followed by a final stage of dialogue before bidders are asked to submit final bids. The NBP procurement process will then move to the next stage where a preferred bidder or bidders will be identified.

Action 10: Telecoms operators will engage with Transport Infrastructure Ireland and local authorities in order to ensure that the Green Book is actively used to identify specific access sites. The Green Book will be reviewed, if necessary, in light of the experience gained from this engagement.

Q2 Measure - As per headline action. (DTTAS/TII/local authorities/telecommunications operators).

Update (In Progress)

Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Telecoms Industry Federation (TIF) met on 7 June 2017 to initiate a process of identification of suitable sites for the accommodation of telecoms infrastructure on the motorway network, based on the guidelines set out in the *Guidance on the Potential Location of Overground Telecommunications Infrastructure on Public Roads* (Green Book). The aim is to investigate and develop a process regarding sites on TII property to improve mobile coverage along motorways. It was agreed to progress two pilot sites which had been identified by the operators. Currently the process involves identification and assessment of sites on the M8, M18 and M50 (Scholarstown Road, Knocklyon) motorways, together with a full route assessment on the new M17/M18 Gort to Tuam motorway scheme which will open later this year. Further meetings between TII and TIF are scheduled for the end of June and mid-July.

Next Steps: Engagement between TII and TIF will continue as part of an ongoing process, to assist both parties in the identification and development of suitable sites, in line with the guidance provided in the Green Book. In this regard, a number of meetings have been scheduled in the coming weeks to progress the pilot site initiative.

The Rural ISP Association will be formalised as a representative body to, engage with, all National Broadband Plan and Taskforce stakeholders.

Action 14: Non-commercial State bodies will ensure that no impediments are placed in the way of reasonable access to State-owned property.

Measure – Ongoing: As per headline action. (Non-commercial State bodies).

Update (In Progress)

Issues have been raised by industry with regard to current impediments, including existing cost structures, to accessing State-owned property for the installation of telecoms infrastructure. A number of specific examples have been supplied by industry.

In light of these examples, a new action is being highlighted to the Taskforce Implementation Group on the requirement for the development of a standardised policy, lease and costing arrangement for using State assets for deployment of telecoms infrastructure. As the OPW already manages the existing Property Mapping Register, consideration should be given to the organisation being the most appropriate body to progress the development of the policy.

Next Steps: DAHRRGA and DCCAE to bring forward a proposal on a policy for standardising arrangements for accessing State-owned property sites for the installation of telecoms equipment.

Action 15: Non–commercial State bodies to consider nominating a single point of contact to engage with telecommunications operators.

Q2 Measure - As per headline action. (Non-commercial State bodies).

Update (In Progress)

A number of Government Departments have nominated an individual as the contact point in relation to non-commercial State bodies under their remit. DAHRRGA undertook to engage with each non-commercial State body to compile a listing of State-owned property in order to ensure that reasonable access is facilitated for installation of telecoms infrastructure. Consideration should be given as to whether this compilation should be developed into a comprehensive State owned property database.

Next Steps: DAHRRGA will develop a comprehensive listing of all relevant State-owned property assets which may be leveraged for the deployment of telecoms infrastructure under the National Broadband Plan.

Action 17: Telecommunications operators should identify, in consultation with local communities where appropriate, optimal locations/areas in which they require additional infrastructure to improve coverage prior to engaging with local authorities and non-commercial State bodies. Industry will then engage with the single point of contact to scope and manage any issues and risks associated with site selection.

Measure – Ongoing: As per headline action. (Local authorities/local communities/Non-commercial State bodies/ telecommunications operators).

Update (In Progress)

All local authorities are available to meet with telecommunications operators through the Broadband Officers. Already, a large number of formal and informal meetings have taken place between operators and local authorities. Three is currently engaged in discussions with the Broadband officers in the following authorities: Dublin City; Fingal; Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown; South Dublin; Meath; Louth; Kilkenny and has reported positively on its engagement with these local authorities.

Operators have provided the Broadband Officers with nominated points of contact in their organisations. They also plan to engage though town hall meetings and other relevant fora, where appropriate, in addition to their existing community liaison.

Industry is reporting positively that its engagement with Broadband officers is very effective in supporting ongoing development of fixed and mobile services. Positive momentum in relation to some opportunities for mobile development resulting in improved services in specific areas is anticipated in the coming months.

As a specific example eir is actively engaging with Broadband Officers in Donegal, Roscommon, Cavan, Monaghan, Laois and Cork on piloting a solution for mobile blackspots.

A number of telecoms operators (eNet, SIRO, Imagine, eir, Rural ISPs) have presented at both the Northern and Southern Regional Action Groups to inform local authority Broadband Officers on their commercial rollout plans. In addition site visits have been undertaken by SIRO, Imagine, eNet and eir to provide an overview to local authority Broadband Officers on some of the key technology

solutions to be deployed during the telecoms infrastructure rollout for the National Broadband Plan.

The Rural ISP Association has engaged in a mapping exercise (initially with Wexford County Council). This project aims to align their networks with the regional development plans across the country and to identify broadband black spots with a view to providing agile Next Generation Access broadband services to these areas as a priority in partnership with the local authority. The initiative is hoped to be rolled out across all counties in partnership each local authority.

Next Steps:

Telecommunications operators will continue to engage with local authorities through the Regional Action Groups (RAGs) and via the Broadband Officers. A subgroup of the RAGs is also focusing on developing a protocol to guide the engagement with industry.

The possibility of a pilot project is being explored by DAHRRGA and DCCAE to identify and address rural blackspots in conjunction with the mobile operators and a representative group of local authorities.

The Rural ISP Association will complete its pilot project with Wexford County Council and will review feasibility of application across the country.

Action 20: The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will review the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Purple Book) on an ongoing basis and, building on existing arrangements, will establish an appropriate stakeholder forum to provide for a clear and transparent engagement process for formal dialogue between the relevant stakeholders in relation to road openings.

Measure – Ongoing: As per headline action (DTTAS).

Update (In Progress)

Following extensive consultation (including with utilities/telecos) over some three years, the latest version of the *Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads* (Purple Book) was published in April 2017. The revised guidelines and supporting technologies (including on-site apps and web based application system) along with the support provided by the Road Management Office will improve the management of road works by utilities and local authorities in future by:

- Providing a national standardised framework for reinstatement requirements, notifications,

costings and records.

- Providing a single point of application, incorporating a tracking facility.

- Providing transparency of costs within a national framework.

- Enabling efficiency through the use of technology.

A Monitoring Committee, which includes senior officials from DTTAS, DCCAE, DAHRRGA and DHPCLG, was established on 5 April 2017 and met again in June. While it was established in the context of the Mobile Phone & Broadband Taskforce Report, it has a wider remit in relation to road openings. Among other things, the Committee will examine related barriers identified by stakeholders as impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and utility works and, where appropriate, make recommendations for prioritised, cost effective measures to address these.

Preparations for establishment of a stakeholder forum are progressing. Draft Terms of Reference have been circulated to the Monitoring Committee for review and DTTAS has written to utilities/telecos regarding, among other things, the establishment of the stakeholder forum (which will address ongoing operational issues relating to the MapRoad Road Licensing System and review, as appropriate, the Purple Book and any subsequent guidelines).

Next Steps: Monitoring Committee to meet at least quarterly and as circumstances require. First meeting of Stakeholder Forum to be held Q3, 2017.

Action 21: The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will strengthen the existing multi-sector group to steer and oversee/monitor the progress of the road opening licensing system and stakeholder forum and to examine solutions to barriers identified by Stakeholders as impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and utility works (including a nationally agreed pricing framework).

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. [This group (the Monitoring Committee) will comprise senior officials from the DTTAS, DCCAE, DAHRRGA and DHPCLG].

Update (In Progress) See also update under Action 20
A Monitoring Committee was established on 5 April 2017 and met again in June. Among other things, the Committee will examine related barriers identified by stakeholders as impacting on the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure and utility works and, where appropriate, make

recommendations for prioritised, cost effective measures to address these.

Next Steps: Committee to meet at least quarterly and as circumstances require.

Action 22: The MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System will be utilised by all local authorities and road opening licencing applicants as the single national centralised road opening licensing system.

Q2 Measure - As per headline action. (DTTAS/local authorities/telecommunications operators).

Update (In Progress)

The MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System is currently being used by 27 local authorities. The Road Management Office continues to engage with the remaining 4 major urban local authorities towards migrating those LAs to the MapRoad Roadworks Licensing System. Three of those authorities have already trialled the processing of some road opening licence applications through the MapRoad System with a view to migrating to it. The one remaining local authority is already engaging with the Road Management Office towards progressing its migration to the system.

TIF members continue to request that the Purple Book (April 2017 revision) be used consistently across all local authorities and that there are timely decisions regarding road opening applications and planning permission for telecoms infrastructure with agreed national deadlines.

TIF members request that the Purple Book be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that all unnecessary onerous specifications for road reinstatement are avoided. In particular, TIF members call for a fair, cost-based fee structure for road opening applications and associated fees (administration, supervision and long term damage) be worked on by DTTAS in the coming months.

Next Steps: The Road Management Office will continue engagement with a view to migrating the remaining local authorities to the MapRoad licensing System by Q4, 2017.

Industry has indicated that further meetings will be required to review the Purple Book implementation, and that further engagement will be required to develop the cost-based fee structure and its inclusion in the online application system. (see also update under Action 20)

In response, the LGMA is working on a Charging Framework to be concluded in July, which will then be advised to operators.

Action 23: A training and communications programme will be developed and rolled out to local authorities and telecommunications operators to support the implementation of the Purple Book

Q2 Measure - As per headline action. (DTTAS/local authorities).

Update (In Progress)
Six regional seminars for approximately 300 local authority staff were rolled out in May/June 2017 and DTTAS has now written to utilities/telecos to establish their requirements with a view to the roll out of training for them in Q3.

Next Steps: DTTAS to organise appropriate training supports for utilities/telecos to include information relating to the Purple Book and the Green Book.

Action 24: Transport Infrastructure Ireland will bring forward revised charges in relation to duct access and report on the cost of access to the Taskforce Working Group within six months and annually thereafter.

Q2 Measure - As per headline action. (TII).

Update (Complete)
TII has completed this action. The Board of TII has approved revised charges for access to motorway ducting. The proposed revised charges were determined following a review of marketplace charging commissioned by TII. The revised charges involve a significant reduction in both the administrative charges for the processing of applications for access to TII ducts and in the supervision charges for cable installation. In addition a modest reduction in the annual duct rental charge is proposed.

The approval of the revised charges is now a matter at Ministerial level within the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Department of Finance and Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Next Steps: In accordance with Section 53 of the Communications Act 2002 as amended by the Communications Regulation (Premium Rate Services and Electronic Communications Infrastructure) Act 2010, TII has written to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, seeking the approval of the Minister, in consultation with the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, for the revised charges.

Action 33: ComReg will engage with a suitable third party to produce a publication that sets out a five year forecast of data traffic that is reviewed, updated at regular intervals and made available on ComReg's website. Examples of forecast items include: 1. Mobile data volumes/speeds, 2. Fixed broadband connections/speeds.

Measure – Ongoing: As per headline action. (ComReg/telecommunications operators).

Update (In Progress)

ComReg is commencing work in relation to this action. On a quarterly basis, comprehensive data is provided to ComReg by operators on a range of fixed and mobile data traffic usage, including:

- Data from mobile operators on total traffic for 3G and 4G subscriptions.
- Data from fixed operators on traffic type by technology including ADSL, Fibre to the Cabinet, Fibre to the home/premises, fixed wireless access, cable and satellite.

Comprehensive historical data is also available that will provide a solid platform for development of future data trend predictions.

Operators have advised that they are ready to engage with ComReg on this matter.
The Rural ISP association has undertaken to co-ordinate responses from their membership to ensure that there is accurate representation of their customers and communities.

Next Steps: Work will continue on producing a publication that sets out a five year forecast of data traffic, with a view to publishing the forecast in line with the headline action.

Action 34: Adequate funding will be made available to support the commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government to accelerate the rollout of infrastructure including funding to local authorities to assign officers with responsibility for broadband.

Measure – Ongoing: As per headline action. (DAHRRGA).

Update (In Progress)

DAHRRGA has provided financial support to all local authorities to co-fund the assignment of a Broadband Officer who will act as the dedicated local point of contact with responsibility for promoting telecommunications infrastructure development and as the liaison with telecoms

operators on coverage and rollout issues.

DAHRRGA has been working with local authorities to identify a number of Strategic Community Access Hubs that can be connected with high-speed broadband in order to ensure communities that are likely to be connected towards the tail of the NBP rollout have access to high-speed broadband access in the interim. Over 300 hubs have been identified around the country.

DAHRRGA is also working with local authorities to provide support for the development of local digital strategies to ensure that local authorities are primed to take advantage of high-speed broadband coverage over the coming years.

Next Steps: DAHRRGA will continue to engage with local authorities through the Regional Action Groups and on a bilateral basis. DAHRRGA will also liaise with local authorities on the development of local digital strategies.

Action 35: Mobile network operators will be more proactive in social inclusiveness and in meeting the specific needs of more vulnerable groups.

Measure – Ongoing: As per headline action. (Telecommunications operators).

Update (In Progress)
In Three the Community Investment Theme is based around Education & Learning among disadvantaged young people. Three operates a charity partnership with An Cosán Virtual Community College (VCC). In addition to helping VCC to deliver its online and mobile learning platform and suite of educational courses to marginalised communities nationwide, they also support this charity through a range of employee skills based volunteering and fundraising events.

In addition Three is a member of Business In The Community (BITC) and participates in its School's Business Partnership initiative. In Dublin Three is partnered with St Joseph's in Fairview where employee Volunteers are working with 5th year students to impart education and career advice over a series of workshops. Three also provides access to the industry-supported Text Relay Service which launched this quarter.

The Rural ISP association has begun to collect information from its membership around social inclusive activities (e.g. provision of free broadband to local schools and interest groups) that are

currently in place in their communities.

Next Steps: DAHRRGA and DCCAE will continue to work with operators, ComReg and industry representative bodies to identify and implement initiatives to improve social inclusiveness and target vulnerable groups.

Mobile network operators will continue to work to improve social inclusiveness and meet the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including through awareness raising activities.

The Rural ISP Association will furnish the Taskforce Implementation Group with a copy of its report when available.

Action 37: Comreg will develop a licensing scheme allowing the use of mobile phone repeaters to help address the issue of indoor coverage, particularly in rural areas.

Measure – Commence Q2 2017: As per headline action. (ComReg).

Update (In Progress)

The matter of indoor coverage is one regularly raised but represents an area in which there is a relative dearth of research and solutions. To better inform the debate in this area ComReg has taken the decision to conduct extensive research into commonly used building materials for domestic dwellings. It is strongly suspected that the levels of insulation currently used in houses is a significant impediment to indoor coverage; as heat and radio signals are part of the same electromagnetic spectrum, keeping heat in by default keeps radio signals out. ComReg has identified two potential solutions; native Wi-Fi calling and the use of high standard repeaters. Native Wi-Fi calling is for the Mobile Network Operators to implement. To facilitate the use of repeaters by the general public, ComReg is conducting background research on the feasibility of the introduction of mobile phone repeaters that are beyond network control. In parallel, work is also ongoing on the preparation of project and consultation documents.

Next Steps: ComReg will complete the feasibility research and publish a consultation document in Q3 2017 with Final Decision expected in Q2 2018.

Action 38: Wireless and fixed network operators will report quarterly to the Taskforce Implementation Group on activities undertaken to optimise the performance of their networks.

Measure - Ongoing (First report by Q2 2017): As per headline action. (Telecommunications operators).

Update (In Progress)

The following updates have been provided to the Secretariat by eir and the Rural ISP Association:

eir has continued mobile network rollout throughout Q2 with a programme focussed on enhancing Voice and High Speed data service throughout Ireland. Specifically in Q2 eir has rolled out 66 sites and will continue mobile rollout programmes in the next quarter. eir has also continued its extensive investment in Broadband and will pass 70,000 homes and businesses with rural FTTH by the end of this quarter.

eir has enabled Advanced Mobile location on Emergency Calls to provide the GPS location of the call. This feature is available on all Android devices and can assist Emergency services where the caller is unable to provide the emergency location.

The Rural ISP Association has been set up as an industry body to represent the interests of the Rural ISPs and to engage with the TII and local authorities. Currently there are 29 members signed up to this entity, with up to 12 others expected to join in the coming months. This association will also take a leadership role within the industry in an effort to harmonise efforts in relation to, the following, amongst other areas: Customer service level agreements; Complaints handling; Advertising Standards.

In addition to this, the Association has been tasked with engaging with hardware suppliers to assist in the upscaling of its networks to provide Next Generation Access Broadband service. 20% of the members have now started a pilot scheme with one hardware provider that allows networks to co-exist and to automatically reduce interference to ensure better end-user experience. Initial findings on this pilot project show speeds of 50mbs can be achieved for customers in a short space of time. Other new technologies that are coming on stream are demonstrating similar improvements in speeds and the Association's membership is encouraged by these emerging technologies.

Next Steps: Operators will continue to provide updates to the Taskforce Implementation Group on activities undertaken to optimise the performance of their networks.

Action 39: All operators will introduce WiFi calling, VoLTE and other network feature and functionality enhancements at the earliest juncture and report on progress to the Taskforce Implementation Group.

Measure - Ongoing (First report by end Q2 2017): As per headline action. (Telecommunications operators).

Update (In Progress)

As noted in the last quarterly report eir launched WiFi calling in early 2017. Since launch they've extended the supported device range of products. In the last quarter there has been strong take-up of the service with customers successfully making 1 million WiFi calls throughout Ireland. eir will continue to extend the device capability range over the next few months and are conscious of the positive experience enhancement for customers to make calls where never possible before.

On June 15 changes to Roaming in line with the spirit and principles of the EU regulations changes were introduced. Customers have been notified of the changes. All customers roaming within the European Economic Area will receive all of their domestic voice and text mobile allowances and "Fair Use" data allowance fully in accordance with the Commission Implementing Regulation of 15 December 2016. Customers also will receive pro-active communications via text message upon their arrival in an EU roaming destination informing them of the available allowance as well as notification at 80% and 100% consumption of their allowance. Customers must then actively agree to continue their data roaming.

Next Steps: Operators to continue to report to the Taskforce Implementation Group on network features and functionality enhancements.
An exploration of roaming charges in respect of wifi calling may be required.

Action 40: A review will be undertaken to address the issue of blackspots to include recommendations on initiatives to address the issue, taking account of the various innovative options available.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DCCAE).

Update (In Progress)
Blackspots are defined as locations where mobile coverage is unavailable within an area which is

affecting a range of users and communities in the area or those travelling by train or road through the area. This may arise in respect of total lack of coverage from any operator, or partial blackspots where service is available from some, but not all, operators.

Blackspots are caused by one or more of the following:

- Lack of coverage of a specific area by a base station transmitter
- Shadowing effects of large buildings or hills reducing the received signal
- In-building penetration losses due to building materials (modern buildings having a high level of insulation, or old building with very thick walls)
- Radio planning problems and propagation issues
- Handset performance (in areas of marginal coverage, some handsets will perform better than others).

Operator engagement

DCCAE has conducted a review, through extensive engagement with each of the mobile operators where they have presented the key issues preventing them from serving blackspots. Each operator proposed a series of initiatives and recommendations to help reduce the impact of blackspots both in rural and urban locations.

Recommendations include:

- Operator led solutions – introduction of new network functionality and features such as HD calling and Wifi Calling.
- Community and local authority led initiatives – to assist in the identification of suitable site locations or existing infrastructure
- Updating of the Exempted Development Regulations to allow new equipment be deployed on existing sites
- Consider reducing site rental costs for State owned sites for particular sites to alleviate blackspots

A number of these initiatives are already being implemented through actions underway via the Taskforce Implementation Group. In addition, the operators have shared a list of their top 5 blackspots in each county where assistance is needed to alleviate the issues.

Engagement with local authorities

Mobile network operators are working with DCCAE and DAHRRGA to provide mobile phone coverage maps for each county for each local authority.

This mapping data will be provided as a pilot exercise to five local authorities who will subsequently identify their local blackspots and nominate any infrastructure that could potentially be used to provide additional coverage.

Next Steps:

Operator engagement

DCCAE to further refine the recommendations and identify owners/timeline for each initiative.

Identify the key actions required to address the top 5 blackspots in specific counties.

Local authority engagement

DCCAE to review effectiveness of mapping pilot exercise and create a formal blackspot engagement process with all local authorities.

Action 19: The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will explore whether take up of the Metropolitan Area Networks can be improved including a review of the pricing and other arrangements relating to connections to the Metropolitan Area Networks.

Q2 Measure - As per headline action. (DCCAE).

Update (Delayed)

Following a procurement process in Q1 2017, independent consultants were selected to carry out the Pricing and Access Review of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs). The review is progressing and it should be completed in Q3 2017. The MANs provide a wholesale and open access network to all licenced telecommunications operators, and can be used by retail service providers to provide a variety of services including telecoms, internet access, television and closed circuit television (CCTV) to businesses and citizens in the areas in which they are located.

Next Steps: Completion of pricing and access review by Q3 2017.

Action 26: Transport Infrastructure Ireland will work to complete the duct installation on 95km of roadway on the M7/M8 corridor between Dublin and Cork.

Q2 Measure - As per headline action. (TII).

Update (Delayed)

Works have been completed on the installation of ducting on two sections totalling 55km on the route. In April, following an approach by the Telecoms industry, a decision was made to re-direct efforts for a period of time so as to provide ducting on the N25 in Cork between Little Island and Middleton in order to meet specific demand for services in this location. Currently ducting works are ongoing on approximately 13km of this route. Progress has been slower than on the M7/M8 corridor because of higher traffic volumes and the necessity for night time works.

Next Steps: Works will re-commence on the M7/M8 once the N25 works are completed. It is now planned to complete the M7/M8 works in Q3.

Action 8: All remaining local authorities to be fully compliant with the Development Contributions Guidelines for planning authorities, issued by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in January 2013.

Q1 Measure: As per headline action. (Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DHPCLG)/local authorities).

Update (In Progress)

27 of the 31 local authorities have adopted revised development contribution schemes in compliance with the 2013 guidelines, which exempt telecommunications infrastructure from development contributions. A further local authority is due to adopt their revised scheme shortly. Of the remaining three, one scheme will be reviewed this year, with DHPCLG following up on the two other schemes with the relevant local authorities.

Next Steps: DHPCLG will continue to engage with relevant Councils and monitor the reviews of schemes in this context, recognising the role of the elected members in this matter.

Action 9: Revised Exempted Development Regulations will immediately be brought forward to the Oireachtas.

Q1 Measure: As per headline action. (DHPCLG).

Update (In Progress)

There is a broad range of exempted development provisions in the planning regulations relating to telecommunications infrastructure. This ensures that telecommunications infrastructure can be deployed rapidly in order to meet emerging demands. DHPCLG has had extensive engagement with DCCAE regarding proposed amendments to these existing exemptions to reflect advancements in new technology and to facilitate increased capacity on existing structures. While other priority legislative commitments in DHPCLG in recent months delayed the finalisation of the proposed regulatory amendments, it is expected that this work will be completed, in conjunction with DCCAE, as soon as possible.

Next Steps: As required under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, it is intended to present draft exempted development regulations to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government as soon as possible, before the Summer recess subject to Oireachtas scheduling, for consideration and subsequent approval by both Houses of the Oireachtas. Once Oireachtas approval is secured, the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will sign the regulations to bring them into immediate force.

Action 30: In line with provisions in respect of contracts and transparency under the existing Universal Services Regulations, a breakdown of contract costs including monthly handset and services costs will be made available to consumers.

Q1 Measure: As per headline action. (ComReg/telecommunications operators**).**

Update (In Progress)
ComReg updated its public Annual Action Plan with a related action in Q1 2017 to "Engage with telecommunications operators regarding awareness of end-user contract costs". In this respect, it is in the process of collecting relevant information from mobile service providers.

The industry representative body TIF has confirmed that while industry believes that the existing terms and conditions are adequate and sufficiently transparent, it is willing to engage with ComReg on the matter.

ComReg has reviewed the responses received from industry and is requesting additional detail in respect to cost recovery for specific instances, and also in relation to unlocking handsets. ComReg is also launching its new price comparison tool that identifies handset costs upfront allowing consumers make more informed decisions.

Next Steps: ComReg is developing a new price comparison website which will include information on handset costs and total cost of ownership and will communicate with Providers in respect to the specific obligations in regard to transparency.

Action 31: Both Service Providers and ComReg will make their complaints procedures readily available to consumers on all issues relating to mobile phone and broadband Services.

Q1 Measure: As per headline action. (ComReg/telecommunication operators).

Update (Partially Complete)

ComReg published a Response to Consultation and Decision on 30 June 2017 that outlines specific provisions in respect to the codes of practice for complaint handling which all Service Providers are obliged to offer.

The Rural ISP Association has agreed to harmonise complaint procedures across its membership. The Association is currently reviewing best in class practices across the tech sector and developing a complaints handling process that each member will sign up to. This will be made available once this exercise is completed.

Next Steps:

Consumer Engagement is underway; ComReg has commenced an online campaign to create awareness of the obligations on the Service Providers in respect of their complaints handling and also ComReg's consumer care service.

ComReg   Commission for Communications Regulation

DAHRRGA   Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

DCCAE   Department of Communications, Climate Control and Environment

DHPCLG   Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government

DTTAS   Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Intervention Area The area of the country which will require State intervention to bring about the deployment of high speed Broadband services.

LA   Local Authority

LGMA   Local Government Management Agency

Mbps   Megabits per second

MRL   MapRoad Roadworks Licensing

NBP   National Broadband Plan

RMO   Road Management Office

RSP   Retail service providers. Firms that sell retail products to end users. They do not necessarily have their own network infrastructure.

TII   Transport Infrastructure Ireland

TIF   Telecommunications and Internet Federation