

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

17 May 2022

Item 15 – Members’ Questions

From Cllr Trevor Carbin, Atworth, Holt and Staverton

To Councillor Ashley O’Neill, Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, Staffing, Communities and Area Boards

Question (22-10)

- a) Wiltshire Online: According to Gigaclear some areas in North & West Wiltshire which were in the timetable for inclusion in the project won’t now be done as they’ve been ‘de-scoped’. Was this done unilaterally or in conjunction with WC?

Response:

Gigaclear’s proposed reduction in scope is being done unilaterally and not in conjunction with Wiltshire Council.

The funding for the superfast programme was provided by BDUK with a deadline of 31 March 2020. This deadline was subsequently extended to 31 March 2022.

As of 31 March 2022, there were properties undelivered by Gigaclear within the programme. There is no further public funding available under this scheme and so these properties must now be built commercially or picked up through another publicly funded programme.

As there are properties undelivered which cannot claim public funding, these will need to be descoped from the contract. Descoping of any properties is undertaken through a Change Request which is approved by BDUK and not Wiltshire Council. Wiltshire Council’s role is to assure the accuracy of the information provided.

Wiltshire Council has continually sought to challenge Gigaclear to ensure delivery under the contract, and we have triggered all performance mechanisms available to us.

In response, Gigaclear have committed to delivering part of the planned roll-out commercially, and other properties have already been delivered by other providers. Some properties have not been connected as the landowner refused the necessary wayleave permission.

Wiltshire Council has advocated to BDUK that the properties left outstanding by Gigaclear should be supported under Project GIGABIT which is due to commence this year. It will be for BDUK to determine the scope of the Project GIGABIT roll-out.

- b) Have there been any changes to the payments made to Gigaclear as a result?

Response:

The contract pays by number of premises connected, so Gigaclear will not be paid for premises which are not delivered. As such, there will be a reduction in funding paid to Gigaclear.

The final amount is subject to change following the Change Request process as approved by BDUK but will still reflect the reduced number of properties delivered.