

Broadband in the East of England

A Personal View

6th July 2010

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Structure of Presentation

- Current Situation
- Likely Shape of the Digital Divide
- Existing Programmes for the East of England
- Possible Roles for Communities and the Public Sector
- Summary
- Any Questions

Current Situation

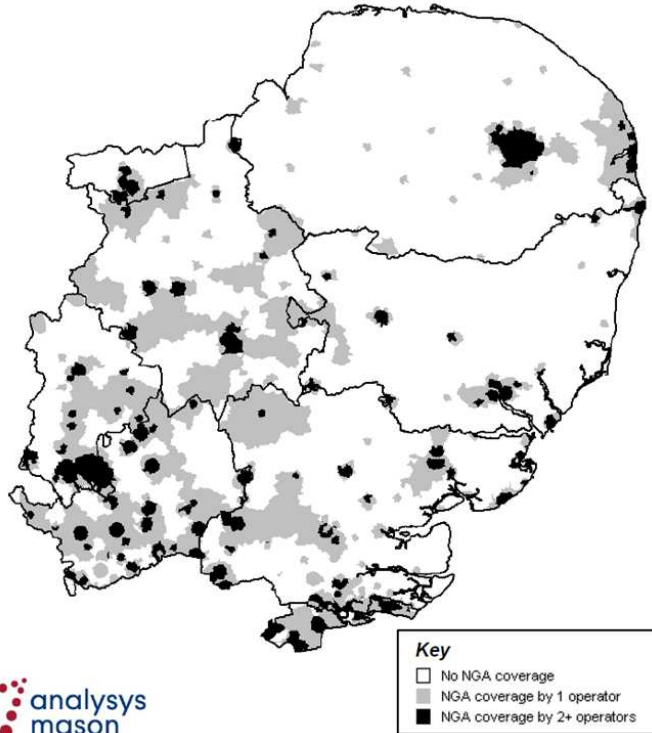
- The new Government has kept the commitment to a universal 2Mbits/s service but scrapped the proposed broadband tax
- Virgin media coverage is estimated at 59% of the premises in the region, offering 50Mbits/s NGA to its customers but with no announced plans for further expansion
- Openreach's Fibre to the Cabinet solutions will reach 4m homes passed nationally by the end of the year
- By 2015, the BT target is to cover 2/3 of UK premises – predominantly in urban areas
- Unfortunately, this will leave us with a large “Digital Divide” due to the rural nature of our region
- This “Digital Divide” is sometimes misleadingly called the “Final Third” by the Innumerate
- The Good News is that both this and the previous Governments recognise the problem and have established BDUK to realise the 2Mbits/s and to facilitate NGA in the “Final Third”

The Geographical Digital Divide

15

The 'final-third' area represents 27% of premises in the East of England region

Expected NGA coverage in the East of England region



This average hides large variations:

Norfolk – 44% of premises

Suffolk – 41% of premises

Essex – 30% of premises

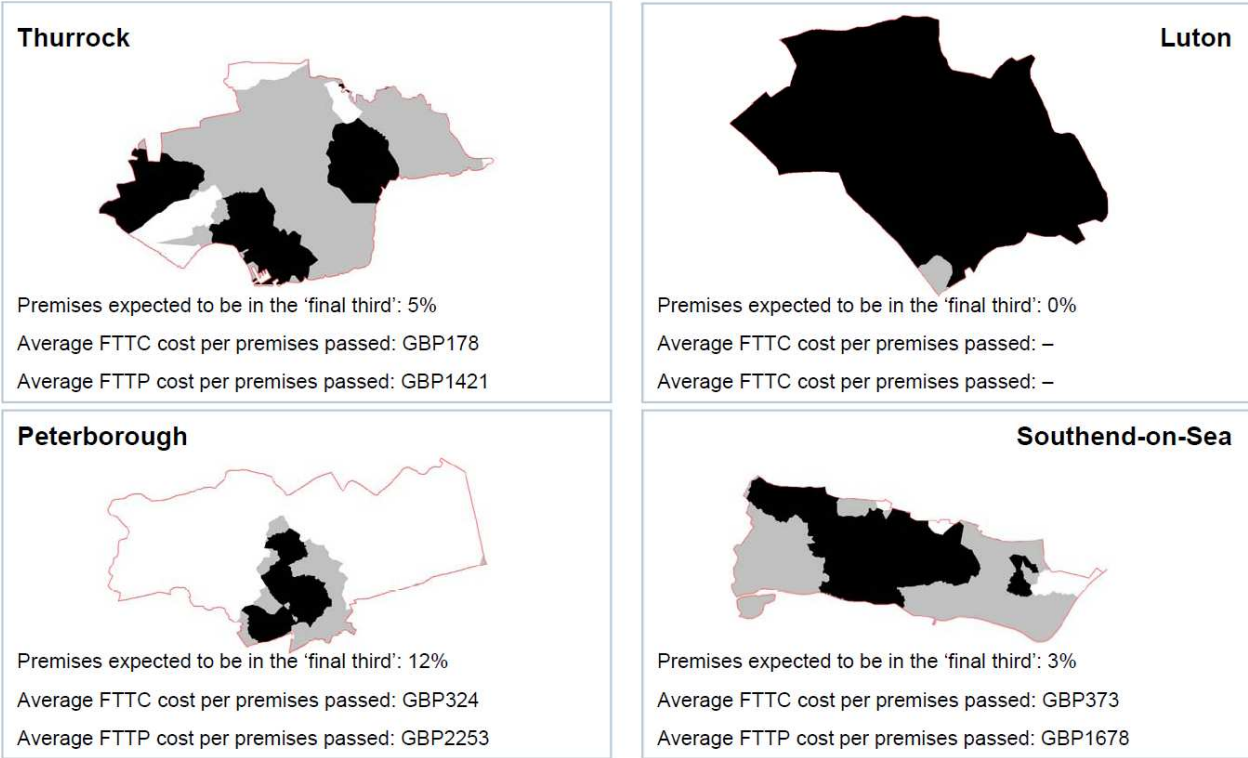
Cambridgeshire – 26% of premises

Bedfordshire – 20% of premises

Hertfordshire – 14% of premises

The Geographical Digital Divide

The unitary authorities of Thurrock, Luton, Peterborough and Southend-on-Sea will have few 'final-third' premises



Moral: If you want to be sure of better broadband, move to Luton!

EREBUS - 1

EREBUS Broadband Demand Registration

erebusonline.org.uk



Next Generation Broadband
for the East of England

[HOME](#)
[BROADBAND FOR YOUR HOME](#)
[BROADBAND FOR YOUR BUSINESS](#)
[PUBLIC/ THIRD SECTOR BROADBAND](#)
[FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#)

Less than 5 minutes of
your time could make an
enormous difference...



If you live in any of the counties shown in the above map, a few minutes of your time could help to bring faster broadband into your area. Please click on one of the links below to help.

[Click here](#) if you want faster broadband to your home.
[Click here](#) if you want faster broadband for your business.
[Click here](#) to register for faster broadband to a public or third sector building.
If you have any questions, we'll try to answer them [here](#).

EREBUS (Eastern REgion Broadband Uplift Scheme)

The goal of **EREBUS** is to encourage commercial suppliers to invest in next generation broadband infrastructure in the East of England. It seeks to do this in a manner that does not favour any operator or competing technology. **EREBUS** builds upon the demand registration schemes of the past but takes them a stage further.

The overall aim of the project is to register as much demand for next generation broadband services as possible in an information resource.

The purpose of this resource is to demonstrate that there is sufficient demand to make commercial investment in next generation broadband worthwhile. Nothing does this like listing real world (potential) customers (domestic, business and public sector) and the services which they require.

The project will establish a database that will map demand down to post code level. This data be freely available to anybody who needs it to provide a service - although we will not provide personal data on individuals.

For more information, please contact:
admin@erebusonline.org.uk

EREBUS is a project funded and run by EEDA (the East of England Development Agency). For more information on EEDA and its activities, please go to www.eeda.org.uk.




EREBUS is a demand registration scheme, launched late last year.

The data from the scheme, suitably anonymized can be found on the DPEast website from the end of this week:
(www.DPEast.org)

It is an ongoing scheme and will require continued promotion and support.

It is **not** a one off survey!

EREBUS - 2



Next Generation Broadband
for the East of England

HOME
BROADBAND FOR YOUR HOME
BROADBAND FOR YOUR BUSINESS
PUBLIC/ THIRD SECTOR BROADBAND
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EREBUS Home Broadband

erebusonline.org.uk

Entering your details here will register your interest in obtaining faster broadband to the location given in the postcode. There is no obligation to subscribe to such services should they become available and we will not share your details with third parties.

Name The name by which you wish to be known.

Email Please enter the email address at which you can be reached.

Postcode The premises for which faster broadband is required.

Message

You can leave a message here for any potential supplier. This could contain (for example) details of the type of service which you would like or details of why you want faster broadband.

Please don't contact me with details of faster broadband services.

Or [Click here](#) to cancel.

Slightly different types of information are captured for Domestic, Business and Public/ Third Sector registrants.

Common to all is the ability to capture messages from the registrants – to give them a distinctive voice for the first time.

Voices from EREBUS

Domestic Registration

Post Code Area: NR18

Please please please...we need faster broadband in rural areas.

The demand is here...homeworking is becoming more and more popular, and with large global companies like Aviva and HP in Norfolk, the number of people needing faster broadband is growing.

Date: 21/06/2010

Business Registration

Post Code Area: PE31

Broadband is essential for my business, which is a virtual office support business. The transcription arm of the business deals with large digital audio files (interview, conferences, meeting recordings etc), so a fast Broadband connection is essential

Date: 20/06/2010

Business Registration

Post Code Area: NR24

There are 18 businesses in the village of Gunthorpe, North Norfolk and we only have 0.5mg of Broadband speed which is dreadful, yet properties less than a quarter of a mile away have 4mg - WHY?

Date: 20/11/2009

Domestic Registration

Post Code Area: IP7

With current broadband speed of less than 0.5Meg my family are unable to download large files, stream video for learning and training purposes, use BBC iPlayer, research for their studies and so on. Total frustration is the name of the game. PLEASE PLEASE provide Suffolk with proper broadband

Date: 21/6/2010

Business Registration

Post Code Area: MK44

We run a hi-tech business here in Colesden designing test equipment for the automotive industry. Asking clients to post specifications on a CD because we can't get broadband is an embarrassment.

Date: 21/11/2009

Business Registration

Post Code Area: PE32

We will have to think about relocating just to get fast broadband to service our clients.

Date: 27/04/2010

Third Sector Registration

Multiple Sclerosis Society

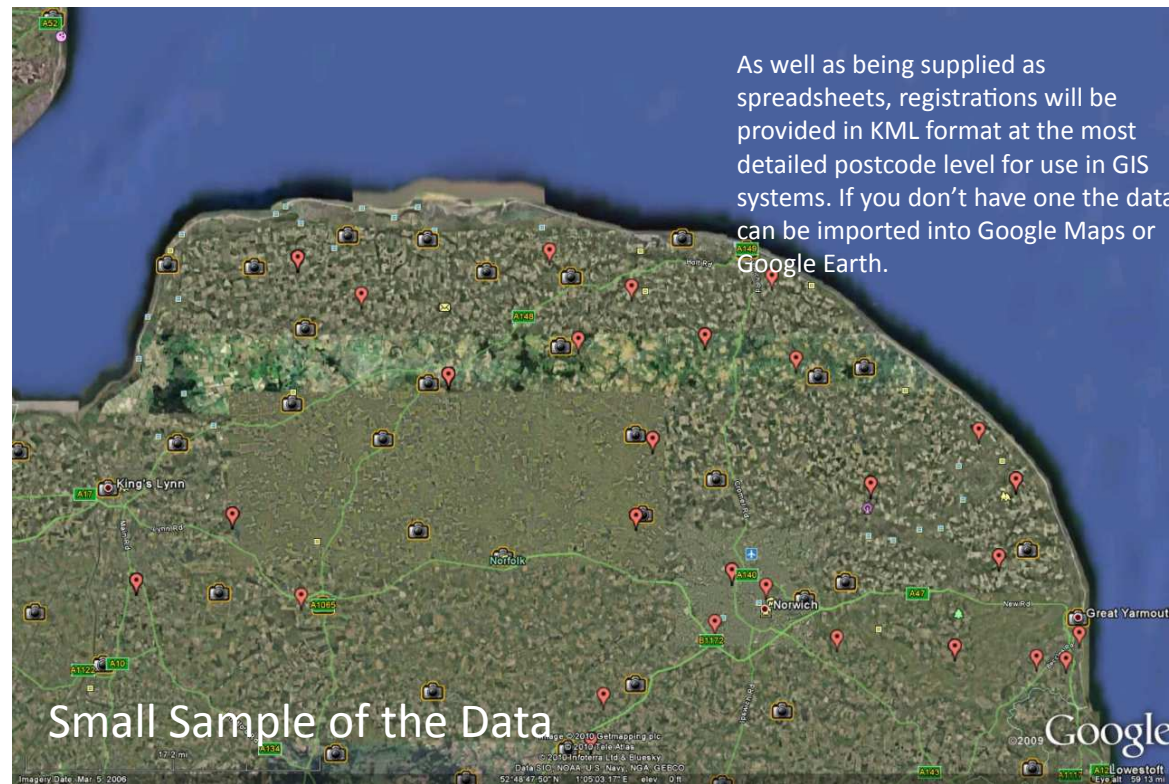
Post Code Area: IP23

Broadband for staff, officers and members to enable communication with public authorities, publish website information and host local MS forums

Date: 23/12/2009

EREBUS Data

Post Code	Post Code Area	Business Type	Business Size	Message	Date
CB7 5JP	CB7	J	Less than 5 employees		16/11/2009 23:02
PE377LE	PE37	J	More than 5 but less than 20 employees	higher speeds and more reliability for VOIP phones and downloading quicker to get Computer r	18/11/2009 07:13
NR10 4PE	NR10	M	Less than 5 employees	NO landline broadband at all - 11km from the exchange. Using a satellite service which OK (3.5m	18/11/2009 08:24
NR9 5JU	NR9	J	Less than 5 employees	As magazine editor I have to send large files to printer in Cheltenham. Average broadband spee	18/11/2009 08:33
PE31 8JJ	PE31	M	Less than 5 employees		18/11/2009 08:35
NR25 6NZ	NR25	A	Less than 5 employees		18/11/2009 09:18
NR28 0AN	NR28	B	Less than 5 employees		18/11/2009 09:32
NR9 5JW	NR9	Q	Less than 5 employees	Only approx 10 miles out of norwich and we cannot get broadband at all! we tried and were told	18/11/2009 09:42



SONGBIRD - 1

- Supporting Open Next Generation Broadband in Rural Districts
- Grants available (under European RDPE funding) to deliver services to areas which will otherwise not be covered by 2015
- Funds available - £500K. Get ready to feed your chickens!
- The funds will be allocated after a competitive bidding process



Artists Impression: Rural residents in the Eastern Region digging trenches for fibre optic cable under the SONGBIRD initiative.

(from the collection of the University of Westminster)

SONGBIRD – 2



Artists Impression: Rural life improved immensely by the provision of Superfast Broadband delivering services such as SKYPE.

(from the collection of the University of Westminster)

- Timetable
 - Launch this week
 - Deadline for expressions of interest COP 13th September
 - A panel will assess EOI's during the latter half of September so applicants will know as soon as possible if they have a chance of funding
 - Successful EOI's will be allowed enough time (deadline end of December) to produce a robust business case
 - These cases will be appraised in depth and a decision on funding announced at the end of the first quarter of next year
- More details (and EOI forms) on the DPEast website (www.DPEast.org)

BLIMP

BLIMP: Broadband Line Information Monitoring Project

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BLIMP

BLIMP is an acronym which stands for Broadband Line Information Monitoring Project. The aim of this project is to measure the broadband speeds which are being achieved in the real world and store these in a database from which we can identify the relative levels of service being delivered across the country by different suppliers and make this information publicly available. From this we can create an up to date, self maintaining atlas of Internet connectivity at a relatively low cost to the taxpayer - no consultants will be made rich as a result of this initiative!

The first step in accomplishing this is to ask you, the visitor to this site, to download a tool which will make periodic measurements of your line speed and return this data automatically to the BLIMP database. In return, you will have access to a historical log that shows how the speed of your broadband connection is changing over time and you will also be contributing information on broadband infrastructure which is vital if we are to achieve our goal of creating a broadband network that is in the top tier internationally.

We really do need your support to do this. You can uninstall the tool at any time, we don't collect any personal information and the tool should not significantly impact the performance of either your computer or the speed of your broadband connection.

[Download Getting Started Guide](#)

[Contact](#) [Terms & Conditions](#) [Disclaimer](#)

Possible Roles for Communities and the Public Sector - 1

Public Sector Organizations (especially Local Authorities) have an important role to play because:

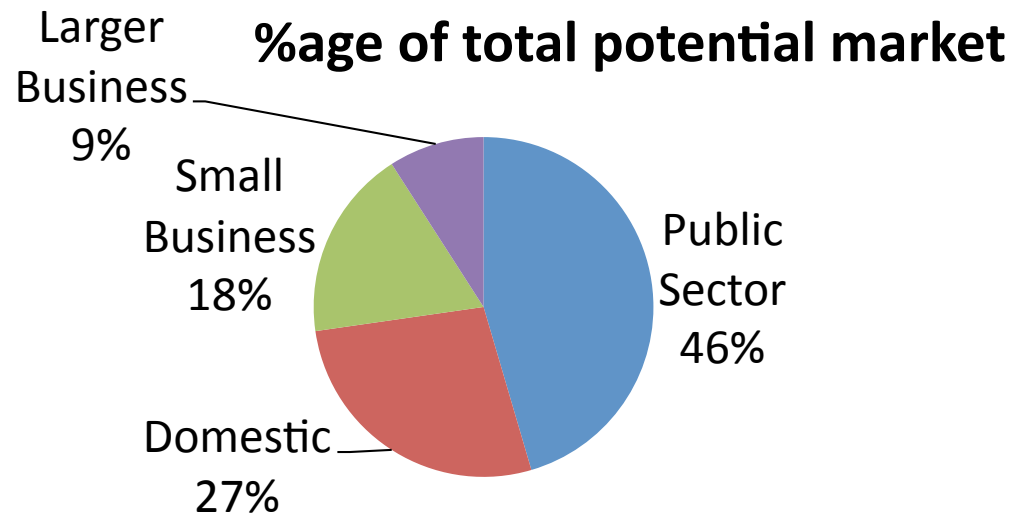
- They have contact with all citizens and businesses in their area
- In many areas, especially those that are predominantly rural, they will be responsible for a large proportion of the spend on telecommunications
- Poor procurement or planning by these organizations will actually reduce the chance of others in that area gaining an improved broadband service

Possible Roles for Communities and the Public Sector - 2

Four possible models spring to mind:

- Demand Stimulation to encourage Commercial Operators
 - e.g. support for EREBUS from councils in Norfolk and Suffolk
- Extending Procurements to include “wellbeing” elements to benefit the Wider Community
 - e.g. Cambridgeshire County Council’s reprocurement of the Cambridge Community Network
- Subsidies to Commercial or Community Operators
 - e.g. SONGBIRD and other RDPE funded schemes; possible panic subsidy in 2014 from Government to BT and Virgin (Joke)
- Network Build and Possible Operation
 - e.g. North and South Yorkshire Projects

Example: Effect of Public Sector Actions on NGA in a Rural Area



Action: Purchasing or building a network solely for Public Sector Use with no “wellbeing” elements

Consequence: Reduced costs for public sector
Unintended Consequence: Reduction in size of the potential market by 46% heavily reducing the chance of investment by other operators

Action: Helping economic development by giving grants towards provision of premium NGA services or satellite solutions to businesses

Consequence: Reduced costs for users of business broadband. Some benefit to inward investment.
Unintended Consequence: Domestic users and the large number (perhaps the majority) of small businesses (who use domestic broadband products because of the lower cost) will be unlikely to get an improved service.

Moral: Do not undertake actions that fragment or only partially fulfil demand in an area.

Personal Opinions – Stating the Obvious

- **A Digital Divide on services beyond 2mbps is inevitable.** A significant percentage of the region will be unable to get access to NGA networks within the medium term
- **Many consumers and businesses in rural areas would probably be happy to get a guaranteed 2mbps at the moment** but it is certain that as NGA is rolled out in urban areas there will be mounting pressure to provide better services to rural locations
- **For larger communication providers, there is not enough money to be made in delivering plain vanilla broadband services** without other value added products (especially to rural areas) to justify large infrastructure investments
- **Whilst local initiatives will be important, I don't think it likely that the "patchwork quilt" approach will make significant inroads into the Digital Divide.** I would love to be proven wrong
- **Intelligent public sector procurement and other forms of intervention could improve the situation** if coupled with a willingness to aggregate demand from all sources
- **Providing BDUK retains a clear mandate and has sufficient resources, it should be possible for them to provide a number of models which could then be deployed regionally or at county level.** Having a body dedicated to this purpose is potentially more effective than vesting such responsibility in more general purpose organizations subject to conflicting priorities for funding and which might suffer from a lack of understanding of the issues
- **I would like the Eastern Region to investigate some of the possibilities mentioned earlier together with BDUK to determine the best possible model**

Questions?

- Questions which occur to me:
 - Which of the four main models mentioned earlier:
 - Is achievable with the resources available?
 - Is least likely to distort the market?
 - Will produce the best results with the least cost?
 - Are there any other models which could be applied?
 - Can small community suppliers and independent network operators survive without access to cheaper backhaul?
 - Is a national, regional or county based strategy more efficient? Or some combination of the three? Or should it be done at an even lower level?
- Any other Questions?

Thanks for Listening