

**MOORFOOT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MOORFOOT COMMUNITY BROADBAND PROJECT**

BRIEFING FOR MEETING ON 3rd AUGUST 2016

What is the issue?

Broadband speeds over most of the Moorfoot Community Council area are extremely slow, making it difficult for individuals and businesses to make proper use of the internet.

Most of Moorfoot will not benefit from the Scottish Government funded Digital Scotland programme which aims to extend superfast broadband to 95% of all premises in Scotland by March 2018. In the remaining '5%' areas, communities can apply for public funding to develop their own community-based broadband networks. Alternatively, they can develop their own privately-funded scheme, or work with BT's Community Fibre Partnership to co-fund a scheme that would be built by BT.

Moorfoot CC is proposing to develop a project that would apply for public funding from Community Broadband Scotland. At the meeting on 3rd August we aim to:

- seek views on this approach and on the alternatives, and
- agree on which areas of Moorfoot should be surveyed to determine the demand for a community broadband service.

What are the options in Moorfoot?

Three alternative approaches have been explored:

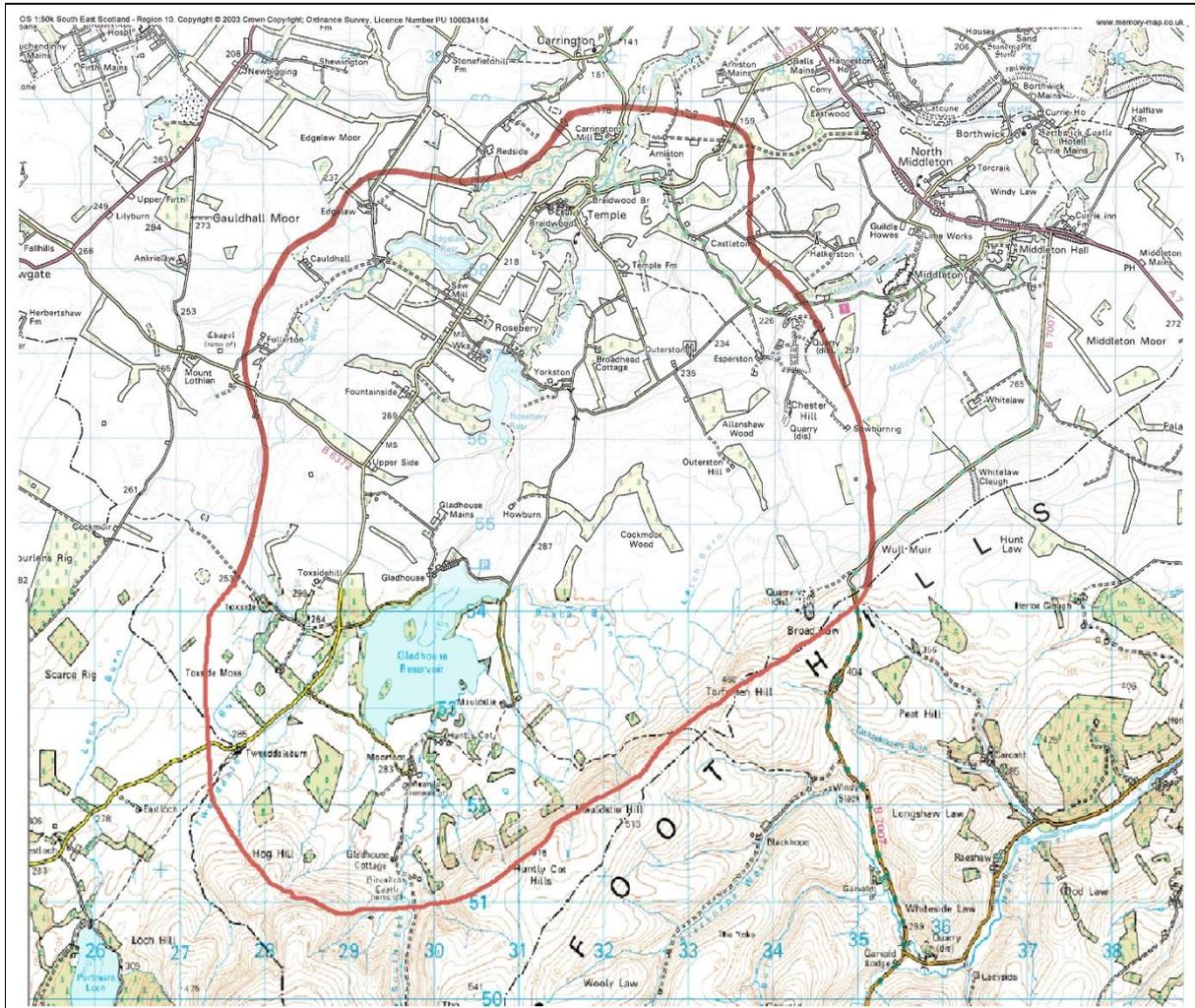
1. A privately-funded scheme aimed principally at serving some of the worst-affected properties in the Mauldslie/Huntly Cot/Moorfoot area, to the south of Gladhouse Reservoir.
2. A community-based project, designed to be eligible for public funds through Community Broadband Scotland (CBS), covering Arniston, Temple, Yorkston, Rosebery and the area around Gladhouse Reservoir.
3. A BT Community Fibre Partnership project, co-funded by BT & community.

We would like the 3rd August meeting to agree on which of those options to pursue. The main pros and cons of each are likely to be as follows:

1. Private-funded scheme: potentially quick to build; funding dependent on individuals; would probably only cover a small geographical area
2. CBS project: complex design and approval process, so slower to build; guarantees superfast speeds; can cover most parts of Moorfoot; reduced cost due to public funding.
3. BT Community Fibre Partnership: very limited information but appears likely to be very costly, with limited geographical coverage and insufficient speeds.

What does a CBS project involve?

CBS will consider community projects that will provide superfast broadband (speeds of at least 30mbps) in areas where there is no planned provision by either BT or Digital Scotland over the next three years. In Moorfoot the eligible area is as shown below.



In addition, CBS will consider areas where premises are already served, or planned to be served, by broadband that delivers speeds less than 24 mbps. That would apply to all or most properties in Middleton, North Middleton, Borthwick and surrounding area.

To date, the only part of the Moorfoot CC area where superfast broadband is available is the village of Carrington and surrounding area.

There are ten stages to a CBS-supported community broadband project:

1. Engagement: discussions with CBS on what's involved
2. Feasibility: survey of residents to determine the demand for superfast broadband
3. Scoping: CBS runs a 'market test' to check that no-one is planning commercial roll-out of broadband in your area

4. Tendering: suppliers are invited to submit proposals for the broadband network
5. Review: checks to ensure all legal/technical/regulatory requirements are met
6. Funding: CBS considers the community project's application for funding to build the network. CBS will fund a maximum of 89% of the capital cost (although it rarely funds as much as that), with the balance raised by the community.
7. Contract Award: if CBS confirms funding, a contract can be awarded
8. Build of Network
9. Connecting Customers
10. Ongoing Operations

The Moorfoot project is currently at Stage 2 – Feasibility. Following the meeting on 3rd August we hope to progress immediately to a survey of residents to determine the level of interest in a community broadband service. The main question for the meeting is: ***which areas of Moorfoot should we cover in the residents' survey?***

We propose that the survey should cover all premises across Moorfoot except for the ones in and around Carrington that are now served by fibre. This has the advantage of finding out whether people in areas that are fibre-connected, but still experience poor speeds, would be interested in being part of the Moorfoot scheme.

NB deciding the scope of the residents survey does not commit us to the scope of any actual project – that decision comes later, after reviewing the responses from the survey and the 'market testing' of Stage 3.

Other questions

There are many other issues to be addressed in developing a community broadband project across Moorfoot. To deal with these, we will need volunteers to be part of the project development group. If you are interested in helping, please get in touch. We would be particularly interested in offers of help from people with skills/experience in the following areas:

- engineering/technology, especially telecommunications/IT
- finance/accounting/fund-raising
- land management/planning

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