

Chelford Parish Council wishes to make it clear that the Connecting Cheshire view, which concludes that no further investment is required in Chelford, is an unrealistic appraisal of the situation which currently exists in the parish. There appears to be an assumption that the current roll out has somehow met the needs of the parish and therefore the programme can now move on somewhere else. However, problems of speed and access remain. According to BT's own statistics 42% of properties that are fibre enabled are still receiving significantly less than the 30Mbps threshold. Given this significant number of properties we are at a loss to understand why Chelford is not being included in the next phases to deliver >30Mbps.

There are also properties within Chelford where fibre is not currently available at all. Whilst it is pleasing to see that additional cabinets are promised for these areas, it is very difficult to see clearly from a simple large scale map just where these properties are located. It is disappointing that the information provided, regarding coverage and timescales, is not clearer and regrettably this a common feature when trying to ascertain an accurate picture of plans. Plans and coverage ought to be much clearer at this stage of the project with far greater transparency.

Chelford is a growing Village with plans that are well established to increase the number of homes by at least 180 properties. The plans for development of 94 homes on the Stobart site are well advanced and there is outline planning for a further 90 homes on the market site. Consequently over the next couple of years there will be a significant increase in demand for fibre enabled broadband. Without appropriate investment in more/better fibre cabinets the village will inevitably grind to a halt as more demand is placed on the already inadequate supply of cabinets. The Parish Council does not believe that this increase in demand has been assessed in the planning of the next phase, given that current planning has failed to assess demand accurately.

Cabinet 6 has become a bone of contention as it is already at capacity with no commitment or clear plans from either Connecting Cheshire or BT to do anything to resolve the matter. Residents who were given the promise of faster broadband now find themselves unable to access the service because of poor planning. It is unacceptable to suggest that the residents ask to be placed on a waiting list. There is an urgent need for additional cabinets to be installed in the Village and in particular further into the Dixon Drive estate to both resolve the capacity problem and to deliver the required >30Mbps performance. The explanation that people simply live too far from an existing cabinet to receive >30Mbps is a convenient excuse and plans should be included in the forthcoming phases to resolve this matter. People can't move their properties nearer to cabinets but further cabinets (or perhaps some form of repeater technology) could be installed to resolve these outstanding performance issues.

For those whose broadband speed is below what was promised, the only suggestion offered is to complain. The reality is that residents are met with technical excuses or that the lines are working and no faults can be found. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any attempt to accept that the service is underperforming and that residents should be compensated by lower subscription rates.

In conclusion, Chelford Parish Council believes that Chelford must be included in the next phase of investment, to bring its broadband infrastructure up to a standard which will meet the current and future needs of the parish.