

Keith I would appreciate your sharing the following with Wells Councillors.

I shall be attending the induction and installation of the incoming of Rev Andrew Good at St Nicholas Church so regret not attending your council meeting. Whilst a fuller report will appear in the Quay I offer below an update on Broadband, a reminder of the new fund and a development regarding apprenticeships.

Regards

Marie Strong

County Councillor Dr Marie Strong

Better Broadband for Norfolk

Approval has been given to the appointment of BT as the County Council's partner in its Better Broadband for Norfolk project. BT has pledged to make a £9.3 million 'capital' contribution towards the cost of installing the broadband infrastructure, and cover ongoing costs of supporting and maintaining the networks. The County has promised that every single property in Norfolk will be able to access a minimum of a basic broadband service of at least 2Mbps by June 2015. In addition double the number of properties will be able to access superfast broadband speeds, classified as 24 megabits per second (Mbps) and above. Twenty per cent of properties should be able to receive speeds ranging from 5 to 23Mbps. 49 per cent of properties are expected to be able to access speeds of between 50 and 100Mbps, with a further six per cent able to receive speeds in excess of 100Mbps!!

Subject to clarification it is expected that by the autumn detailed planning of the installation schedule will begin and information on this shared with residents and businesses at the earliest opportunity. I have been assured that the www.norfolk.gov.uk/broadband site will be kept updated with full information.

NCC Officers have worked extremely hard to bring this deal to fruition but additionally everyone who signed up to say Yes to Better Broadband is to be congratulated. It was the contribution from individuals, schools, businesses – and potential businesses – which made us an attractive proposition to the private sector. Well done everyone.

Community Construction Fund:

The County is releasing £3.5 million for grants from £100 to £100,000 to support community building and construction projects. The key words are community and construction – go to the NCC website for details and deadlines (www.norfolk.gov.uk/communityconstructionfund) for full details. I look forward to receiving lots of creative requests for support from across my parishes – not just simply the councils but groups and organisations.

Apprenticeships Norfolk:

Apprenticeships Norfolk is the name of a new NCC initiative to raise the profile of apprenticeships and create hundreds of new opportunities for young people in Norfolk. You may have read previously of my concern for young people described as NEET – not in education, employment or training. This new scheme is intended to help precisely those young people. NCC has committed £3.5m into the fund being run by a consortium of apprenticeship providers. If you are a business interested in employing an apprentice go to www.norfolk.gov.uk/apprenticeships