

# Report of the Strategic Director to the meeting of Bradford East Area Committee to be held on 5 October 2023

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## Subject:

BT Digital Voice Programme

## Summary statement:

Earlier this year, BT announced that we would be contacting customers about the switch to our digital home phone service, Digital Voice, on a region-by-region basis from the summer. We also expanded our Digital Voice trials with a small group of customers beyond the pilots in Salisbury and Mildenhall, made up of lower usage landline customers, who have a full fibre broadband connection already.

## EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

Improved digital connectivity will help connect areas across the Bradford district's diverse communities. Digital connectivity provides opportunities to access services, information online, social connections; helping people to stay connected and informed.

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David Shepherd  
Strategic Director of Place

## Portfolio:

Neighbourhoods and Community Safety

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## Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Corporate

## 1. SUMMARY

Earlier this year, BT announced that we would be contacting customers about the switch to our digital home phone service, Digital Voice, on a region-by-region basis from the summer. We also expanded our Digital Voice trials with a small group of customers beyond the pilots in Salisbury and Mildenhall, made up of lower usage landline customers, who have a full fibre broadband connection already.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The following information has been provided by BT Digital Connect through the Engagement Management Team.

Over the last 6 weeks, we've upgraded the last remaining eligible customers to Digital Voice in Salisbury and Mildenhall, and around 35,000 lower usage, full fibre broadband customers from our expanded trial. In total, we've now got around two million customers across the country using Digital Voice.

Customer feedback from these trials has also been really positive, which has given us confidence to now extend these trials further to a wider group of customers across the country who are ready to make the switch. We have been contacting all full fibre and a smaller group of broadband customers yet to switch to Digital Voice.

As before, we won't be proactively switching customers who fall under any of the below criteria, where we have this information available:

- Customers with a healthcare pendant;
- Customers who are over 70;
- Customers who only use landlines;
- Customers with no mobile signal or
- Customers who have disclosed any additional needs.

These customers will be delayed from switching as work continues with stakeholder groups to build confidence in the new solutions we have, help to shape the solutions we're developing and help them to better understand the support available to make the move.

### Preparing for our regional approach

From the summer, customers will be encouraged to make the switch to Digital Voice on a region-by-region basis. The first three regions will be the **East Midlands, Yorkshire & Humberside**, and **Northern Ireland**. In addition, customers who are ready and keen to make the switch to Digital Voice can also contact us at any time, as many have continued to do.

Customers in these regions will be contacted at least four weeks before being upgraded, to help ensure they're ready to make the switch. For the vast majority of customers, the move to Digital Voice simply involves connecting a landline phone to a BT broadband router. More than 99% of phone handsets are compatible with our Digital Home Phone Service and for those that aren't, we have a range of handsets that customers can add to their order.

The regional approach will be supported by general awareness communications and advertising campaigns, delivered across local and regional media to explain to customers the simple steps required to make the move to Digital Voice. BT will also be present on high streets across the country and at local town hall drop-ins to directly address customer questions on the ground.

### **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 There are no other considerations.

### **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

4.1 There are no direct financial resource implications for the Council.

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

5.1 There are no direct risk management and governance issues arising for the Council.

### **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

6.1 There are no direct legal appraisal matters arising for Council.

### **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

#### **7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1.1 There are no direct sustainability applications.

#### **7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS**

7.2.1 There are no direct greenhouse gas emission impacts arising from this report.

#### **7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.3.1 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

#### **7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

7.4.1 There are no direct Human Rights Act issues arising from this report.

#### **7.5 TRADE UNION**

7.5.1 There are no direct trade union issues arising from this report.

#### **7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

7.6.1 This work will support digital connectivity across the district.

#### **7.7 AREA COMMITTEE LOCALITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

7.7.1 This work directly supports digital connectivity and inclusion.

## **7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

7.8.1 There are no direct implications.

## **7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

7.9.1 There are no privacy impact assessment issues arising from this report.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

8.1 There are no not for publication documents.

## **9. OPTIONS**

9.1 This report is for information purposes only.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 That the Bradford East Area Committee notes information presented within this report.

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 There are no appendices.

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

12.1 There are no background documents.