



**Department of Rural and
Community Development**



*An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail*



**Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe
ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil**
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment

Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Implementation Group

Meeting No.4

- Date/Time:** 10.30am Wednesday 31st January 2018
- Venue:** No. 8 Ely Place, Dublin 2
- Attendees:** Minister Denis Naughten T.D. (D/CCAIE) (co-Chair), Minister Seán Kyne T.D. (D/RCD) (co-Chair), Ray O'Leary (D/TTAS), Noel Singleton (D/TTAS), Pat Maher (TII), Gerry Fahy (ComReg), Peter Burke (LGMA), Peter Hynes (CCMA), Dave Walsh (D/HPLG), Orla Twomey (ASAI), William Parnell (D/RCD)
- Dept. Officials:** Stjohn O'Connor (D/RCD), Ciara Bates (D/RCD), Mairéad McCabe (D/CCAIE), Neasa Lehane (D/CCAIE), Rory Hinchy (D/CCAIE), Ross Elwood (D/CCAIE), Peter Harper (D/RCD)
- Secretariat:** Aisling Penrose (D/RCD)

1. Opening remarks

- 1.1 Minister Kyne welcomed attendees to the fourth meeting of the Taskforce Implementation Group and acknowledged the important contributions made by each of the action holders to progressing delivery of the measures set out in the Taskforce report.
- 1.2 Minister Kyne commented that the Implementation Group is working well in terms of bringing together key stakeholders to share information and identify more effective and efficient methods of dealing with issues. The Group will continue to play a vital role in identifying, monitoring and driving progress on actions to alleviate barriers to the rollout of telecoms infrastructure and services.

2. Minutes of last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2017 were approved without amendment.

3. 2017 Annual Review

- 3.1 Minister Naughten called upon each of the action owners to provide a synopsis of the key Taskforce actions which their organisation was instrumental in delivering on in 2017, and the impact arising from their implementation.

3.2 The action holders outlined the following items as significant measures successfully progressed in 2017:

- County and City Management Association (CCMA):
 - The establishment of the Broadband Officer role, which is bringing about a greater level of coordination and engagement with telecoms operators and assisting in resolving barriers to the rollout of telecoms infrastructure.
 - The development of local digital strategies will enable the local authorities to design a strategy tailored to their area and make full use of the enhanced network when the NBP is in place.
 - The standardising of Road Opening Charges which will provide clarity to the telecoms industry on consistent charges applied by local authorities for works.
 - The ongoing work on identifying solutions to mobile phone blackspots will ultimately result in improved mobile coverage.
- ComReg:
 - Increased availability of information around the choice of packages and handsets is raising consumer awareness of available products and services.
 - A greater level of information available on consumer rights and an improved customer charter are serving to inform consumers of their right to complain about inadequate services and procedures to follow to make a complaint.
 - Preparatory work being undertaken on mobile phone repeaters, national coverage map and handset testing will enable consumers to make informed choices on products and services.
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (D/TTAS):
 - Recently established structures such as the Monitoring Committee and User Forum are facilitating a high level of discussion and engagement between key stakeholders and assisting in identifying solutions to emerging issues.
 - The increase in the number of local authorities utilising the MRL system will lead to efficiencies and streamlining of application processes in relation to road openings.
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII):
 - The strong degree of bilateral engagement which continues to take place between Broadband Officers and the telecoms industry is serving as a practical mechanism to identify and resolve issues as they arise.
 - The works which were progress during 2017 have resulted in increased ducting provision which will enable telecoms operators to further deploy infrastructure to deliver services.
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government (D/HPLG):
 - Consistency across local authorities regarding the standardising of development contributions will result in greater clarity for telecoms operators with regard to no charges being applied for the placement of telecoms infrastructure.
 - Great efficiencies with regard to planning requirements will occur as a result of the revision of the Exempted Developments Regulations, leading to enhanced delivery of telecoms services.
- Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland:
 - The engagement with the telecoms industry which occurred during the ASAI's review of a broad range of telecoms services advertising was very positive. Further work will be undertaken in 2018 to build on the review, with the development of guidelines in relation to telecommunications advertising to be completed. The impact of this work will be greater awareness and clarity for consumers on products and services.
- Department of Rural and Community Development (D/RCD):
 - The co-funding of the Broadband Officers, and engagement with the Officers through the Regional Action Groups, is impacting significantly on increased levels of communications with the telecoms industry on identifying and addressing barriers to the rollout of telecoms infrastructure.

- The development of local digital strategies is a significant step forward in assisting the local authorities to develop or revise their strategies in order to make best use of the forthcoming high speed broadband network.
 - The mobile phone blackspots mapping exercise is bringing together local authorities and mobile phone operators to identify practical solutions to improve mobile phone coverage and quality throughout the country.
 - The identification of Strategic Community Access Hubs in every county to be prioritised for high speed broadband connection will ensure that the needs of remote rural communities are served until the NBP has been fully deployed.
 - Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (D/CCA):
 - The positive level of engagement with the telecoms industry during 2017 and the facilitation of that engagement by DCCA has led to significant progress being made on a number of key measures. In addition DCCA has inputted to and informed actions being progressed by other action holders, such as the revision of the Exempted Development Regulations by DHPLG.
 - The development of a Communications Strategy encompassing the NBP, Taskforce, National Digital Strategy will align messaging and inform consumers of the measures being progressed to improve the availability and quality of broadband and mobile services.
 - The establishment of the Blackspots Focus Group will identify specific categories of locations where high quality mobile coverage should be available, and inform future policy to address critical blackspot locations. The Department will further build on this work in 2018.
- 3.3 Minister Naughten requested attendees to advise any amendments to the content of the Annual Review to the Secretariat by the end of the week in order for the report to be finalised to proceed to publication and launch.

4. Work Programme 2018

- 4.1 The list of measures outlined in the work programme for 2018 has been developed from a number of sources: items carried over from 2017, to be completed in 2018; measures raised at the National Stakeholder Forum in October; and matters arising from bilateral discussions with action holders and other key stakeholders.
- 4.2 A discussion took place on each of the actions included in the 2018 work programme. Action holders provided an insight into the scope of the work and an indication of timeframe for delivery.
- 4.3 Each action has been assigned a lead organisation responsible for delivery of the measure. This will enable strong monitoring of implementation progress.
- 4.4 Action holders were requested to revert to the Secretariat to advise of any final amendments to the text of the 2018 work programme by the end of the week.

5. Any other Business

- 5.1 There was no other business raised for discussion at the meeting.

6. Next steps/Date of next meeting

- 6.1 Any final revisions to text included in the 2017 Annual Review and 2018 Work Programme report to be advised to the Secretariat by action holders by close of business on Friday 2 February to enable the report to be finalised for publication.
- 6.2 The Annual Review report, encompassing the 2018 work programme, will be submitted to Government for information, and will subsequently be published. It is intended to hold a launch event to release the report, the Secretariat will shortly advise of details of the event.
- 6.3 The next meeting of the Taskforce Implementation Group will take place at the start of April. The Secretariat will confirm details of date and venue as soon as agreed.

6.4 Bilateral meetings will be arranged by the Secretariat in advance of the April meeting to discuss the status of all actions in order to compile the Q1 2018 progress report.

7. Closing remarks

7.1 Minister Naughten praised the volume of work which has been progressed over the course of the last 12 months, and the strong level of engagement and open communication which is taking place between action holders on the Group and the telecoms industry to drive progress on identified issues. Minister Naughten encouraged action holders to build on the significant work undertaken during 2017, through delivery of the work programme outlined for 2018.