

KCB respondents to Consultation on Broadband provision

For the three weeks to 1st October 2017 KCB sought responses to the question of whether we should proceed with procurement of a community-led solution to broadband provision or wait until the Scottish Government's R100 commitment becomes clearer.

KCB provided context for this question with relatively detailed budget, timetable and risk analysis for the options on our website, through social media and in presentations (see link below). Directors also sought informal responses.

We received 165 responses to our online survey with 149 of them being positive (just over 90%) and over 30 of them having more detailed comments (which we list below). In most cases, given the uplift in budget, the decisive factor was timescale, with risk being the secondary concern. For those folk who were against the recommendation, we received only two detailed comments, one on Facebook and one via the comment facility on the survey. In the former case the respondent had recently moved to 4G provision and in the latter, there was a preference for trusting the nationally-led approach - we would presume this latter will be the case for the other negatives given feedback at the CGDT AGM. The majority of respondents were from Colinstrie and Glendaruel, as one would expect given the significantly higher number of properties involved in these communities, but there was vocal support from both Ardlamont Peninsula and Bute.

As indicated earlier, KCB were able to give a presentation at the CGDT AGM to c. 30 residents of ColGlen. This proved extremely useful, not least because it now means we have an up-to-date factually concise and accessible summary of what we are now proposing. In discussion with folks after the presentation it became clear that until the whole situation was laid out in this way, several were predisposed to favour R100. Once Director John Shiveral had very carefully, and with proper impartiality, laid out the community's options, the show of hands was unanimous.

KCB would therefore conclude that while communication through new media and print media has provided us with a 90% vote for our recommendation, if we made presentations to each community separately with the material used at the CGDT AGM we would be confident of receiving virtually unanimous support for the initiative. KCB will therefore be organising a series of public meetings before Christmas to raise awareness of our procurement and the resultant service.

SELECT COMMENTS

In all cases the initial email was acknowledged and any question answered whether the respondent was positive or negative to KCB's recommendation.

POSITIVE

Resident, Bute: "I am too far from the cabinet so presently Satellite or 4G are options The bute saw mill is using satellite and are apparently happy, they now get their e-mails. But I think this is a low bar. I started with 4GEE they are expensive (£50 for 50Gig) and the connection was not reliable so I have recently bought a new modem and run Three (100 Gig at half the price with Netflix - standard definition - not counted) with a second sim on contract to EE to fall back if the connection drops - so I still spend £50/month for an "OK' service For me an uncapped, reliable, faster service at that sort of price is of interest ... but I do not know how many in my post code will sign up, many in port bannatyne have access to FTTC. However I suspect that the properties presently unable to access FTTC will be a low priority for even R100 so I would support your decision to start a new process. I would suggest that the increasing availability of 4K TV should inform the speed / bandwidth that is being considered.

Resident, Duilettar, Glendaruel: "I live in Glendaruel and would prefer whichever will be the quicker, more robust process. Am fairly new to the area, the problem and the proposed solutions. With the information available so far, I would probably go with community procurement as the best option."

Residents, Kames: "We would like to continue to support the team at Kyles community broadband in the hope that they find a new procurement with a larger budget."

Resident, Glendaruel: "Very important that we go ahead with project even although some places are getting G4. This coverage is limited. The new proposals will ensure everyone will be able to get broadband which is what we wanted to do when we started this project."

Residents, Glendaruel & Bute: "We would go for Option 1. At PA22 3A- satellite broadband, landline (no mobile signal) & Sky TV costs us about £120 monthly. We will be downsizing next year to PA20 0-- currently poorly served by BT. We'd hope to have a much better service via KCB within the timeline suggested."

Resident/Business, Glendaruel Caravan Park: "I would prefer option one to progress immediately rather than waiting for the R100 programme."

Michael Russell, MSP, Glendaruel: "I am, as you will probably know, very keen to see Kyles Community Broadband bring a project to fruition and the extra resource now available should be

able to make that happen. I would encourage those involved to continue to drive forward and to press for the shortest and least bureaucratic tender process possible. I am happy to support that in any way I can.”

Resident: “Any indication as to what the speeds we are expecting to get through our own procurement process? I think the R100 is only proposing that the minimum speed is 10 Meg which is not superfast and not future proofing. From the initial tendering process do we think we will get more interest with a £1.5 million budget? More importantly how confident are we that we will get the technology to work? Speaking from my calmac experience with Horsebridge there has been no end of problems but that is more to do with the supplier. If we were not allowed to include the additional post codes (mine included) the first time what has changed to allow them this time? Overall if you think it is better to go our own way then I support your proposal.”

Resident / Business, Ardlamont: “As a business owner, operating in the holiday accomodation sector, along with a number of other providers, it is vital that Broadband is made available to our area. Visitors require access to Broadband as a matter of course in these modern times. We have limited availability, which is an enormous cost by Satellite to the business, without which, I would not be able to operate the actual activities that are required to receive reservations for our properties. We struggle with slow speeds and weak satellite signals, which can be affected by weather conditions. Broadband availability is absolutely necessary to us as a business, and it should be available sooner rather than later. My vote would be to pursue the local provision of the service as already underway.”

Resident, Ardlamont(?): “My own preference would be to re-tender with a bigger budget. For all the belief in the importance of the digital economy and proper roll out of broadband to rural areas, so many things may distract any Scottish government initiative. I think it's better to try and see if we can sort it ourselves rather than put ourselves at the mercy of so many imponderables.”

Resident, Colintraive: “Definitely push on with our own plan. R 100 will I'm sure be delayed or underfunded or reduced in scope as is so common with these schemes.”

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Resident, Glendaruel: “I'm not qualified or well versed on the pros and cons of the current dilemma but have read the exchanges on the web page. Is there a way that we can proceed with the current procurement process with the new uplifted budget but at same time keep an eye on progress of R100 i.e. keep options open a bit longer? Go as far as we can on our own in the hope that suitable contractor appears. However going this route we need to be as sure as

possible that it will deliver acceptable broadband speed in the end and - is there an issue regarding getting updates i.e. A disadvantage in going on our own and not being part of a bigger set up? I have read that scot Gov is committed to supporting small community effort out with R100 - will this be the case? I tend to think that KCB will not be fully covered by a regional process or it may be one of the last areas - but I have no real justification for that opinion. Thanks for all the effort going in to sort this out for the community.”

Residents, Ardlamont: “Our preference is to go for the new proposed CBS scheme as we have little faith that Open Reach will ever have the will to supply remote houses and farms. It is great news that CBS and KCB have presumably had agreement from the powers that be to over-rule Open Reach's objections to alternative broadband schemes in the extra postcodes now added.

“Well done to the KCB committee for all the efforts they have put in so far. It is much appreciated.”

Residents, Ardlamont: “It's a “yes” from us here at Ardlamont Schoolhouse ... Let us know if there is anything we can do to help.”

Residnet, Glendaruel: “We depend on Satellite broadband, which drops out all of the time. We need a better service urgently which I think the community will provide. I wouldn't want to go with BT or the others.”

NOT POSITIVE

Resident, Colintraive: “I notice that you expect the timescales for both options to be very similar and you have not said whether your new £1.5M project will be satellite, or fibre, or a mixture of both. What will happen if the money runs out before the project is complete?. My preference is R100 because bidders will be found and the budget will not run out.”

Resident, Colintraive: “With the R100 program of the Scottish Government we are more sure to get it before end of 2019.”