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<b>Report on</b>	Project Stratum Update
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	10 December 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Fiona Mc Keown, Head of Economic Development

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

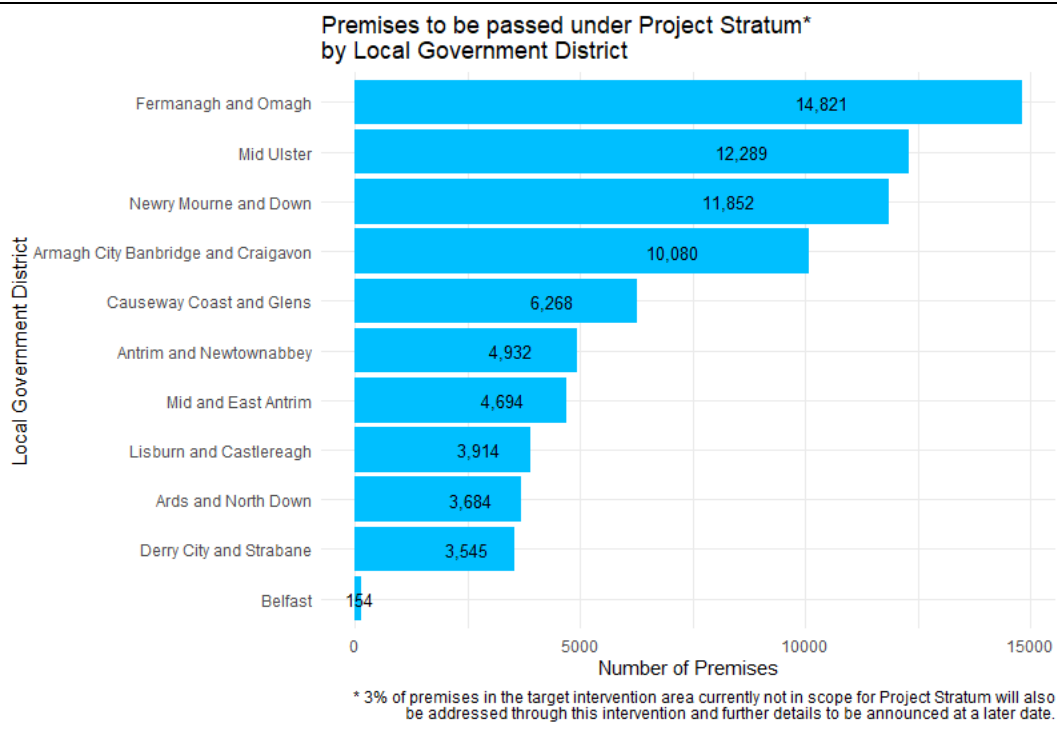
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide members with an update on Project Stratum.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b>Project Stratum Update</b> Project Stratum is a broadband infrastructure project that has public funding of £165m and private funding of £45m to extend access to superfast broadband services to approximately 79,000 premises across Northern Ireland.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Project Stratum Update</b> Project Stratum aims to improve broadband connectivity mainly to rural areas by delivering 30mbps broadband. The funding for the project is made up as follows;</p> <p>£150m Confidence &amp; Supply funding  £15m DAERA  <u>£45m</u> Fibrus capital contribution  <b>£210m Total Funding for Project Stratum</b></p> <p>Members will recall that the initial Project Stratum calculation in 2018 was approximately 98,000 premises needing intervention. Following a data refresh exercise undertaken by several infrastructure suppliers completed in January 2020 the number of premises requiring intervention under Project Stratum was reduced approximately 79,000 premises. The areas taken off the list were identified for potential improvements by other suppliers.</p> <p><b>Maximising Coverage across the Intervention Area</b></p>

LOCAL COUNCIL	NGA Coverage before Stratum	Premises to be passed by Stratum	NGA coverage after Stratum (76,000+)	Premises in council to benefit from Stratum (76,000+)
ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY	92.0%	4,932	99.8%	7.8%
ARDS AND NORTH DOWN	95.0%	3,684	99.9%	4.9%
ARMAGH CITY BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON	88.6%	10,080	99.7%	11.1%
BELFAST	99.9%	154	99.9%	0.1%
CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS	90.3%	6,268	99.6%	9.3%
DERRY CITY AND STRABANE	94.2%	3,545	99.6%	5.4%
FERMANAGH AND OMAGH	71.2%	14,821	98.9%	27.7%
LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH	93.6%	3,914	99.9%	6.3%
MID AND EAST ANTRIM	92.2%	4,694	99.7%	7.5%
MID ULSTER	78.4%	12,289	99.4%	21.0%
NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN	83.6%	11,852	99.6%	16.0%

The contract for Project Stratum was awarded to **Fibrus Networks Ltd** following a lengthy procurement process by Department for the Economy (DfE).

On 24 November 2020, Council officers were invited to attend a virtual meeting with DfE and were updated on Project Stratum. (Presentation attached on **Appendix 1**). The key points are;

- Approximately 79,000 premises across Northern Ireland are to have access to superfast broadband i.e. 30mbps by March 2024.
- Fibre To the Premises (FTTP) is confirmed to approximately 76,000 premises by March 2024.
- There are 2,517 premises in NI who are still going to get 30mbps broadband but DfE cannot confirm it will be FTTP. DfE stated that they are seeking additional funding to further deliver FTTP to these premises and estimate it will cost £10m - £15m for these premises.
- In all, there are 12,289 premises in Mid Ulster earmarked for improvements. There are 354 premises in Mid Ulster outside the scope of FTTP.



On 2 December 2020, Council officers were invited to attend a virtual meeting with DfE and Fibrus and were updated on Project Stratum (a detailed presentation is available on **Appendix 2**). The key points are:

- A new website for the project has been launched <https://hyperfastni.com/>. This website will provide information on key aspects of implementation, including planned phasing and full deployment of NGA broadband infrastructure across the target intervention areas. The information is likely to be updated and expanded on a regular basis.
- A summary of Fibrus’ rollout plan across NI is as follows;

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
<b>2021</b>	<b>Coalisland</b>	Kilkeel	Warrenpoint	Castlerock
	Killyleagh	Castlewellan	<b>Maghera</b>	Keady
	Ballycastle	Ballynahinch	Portstewart	Carnlough
			Enniskillen	Cullybackey
			Ballymoney	
<b>2022</b>	Crossmaglen	Garrison	<b>Aughnacloy</b>	Rathfriland
	Castledearg	Omagh	<b>Fivemiletown</b>	<b>Cookstown</b>
	Fintona	Downpatrick	Kesh	Garvagh

	Newtownstewart	Larne	Irvinestown Newtownbutler	<b>Moy</b>
<b>2023</b>	Kircubbin	Ballystrudder	Templepatrick	Newry
	Seahill	Bleary	Cushendall	Derrylin
	Dromore	Randalstown	Clough Mills	Limavady
	Laurelvale	Lower Ballinderry	Claudy	Gortin
		Broughshane	<b>Pomeroy</b>	Strabane
				Moneyrea

- 76,000 rural premises in NI to benefit in 40 month rollout plan (March 2024).
- Fibrus are 6 months ahead of timescale and have started work in the rural areas around Coalisland targeting 2121 premises.
- In the next 6-9 months they are going to Maghera rural area targeting 3767 premises.
- Fibrus have stated they are keen to work with Councils and open up good lines of communications.
- Fibrus is planning to install 244,749 poles, as 80% of network will be overhead.
- Premises do not need a landline in place to benefit
- Only postcodes on DfE's broadband "white listed areas" will benefit from this intervention through Project Stratum. "Grey listed areas" will see some incidental benefit from Fibrus' commercial wing. (To view the postcodes "in scope" for Project Stratum ie, white listed areas, visit <https://bit.ly/39EhZrn>)
- There are 2,517 premises in NI within the "white listed areas" but not included for FTTP. DfE said they are not overlooked and further funding is being sought to enable FTTP.
- Fibrus intend to have fibre ambassadors in each Council area to promote the new fibre broadband offering.
- Fibrus has developed a "Community Giving Back Campaign" valued at £200k+

Members of Mid Ulster Council's Broadband Working Group are joining with Fermanagh and Omagh Council's Broadband Working Group to meet with the

	Department for the Economy and Fibrus on 7 December 2020 to receive a full briefing on Project Stratum.
	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: None for the purposes of the report.
	Human: Council officers liaison with DfE and Fibrus
	Risk Management: None for the purposes of the report.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None for the purposes of the report.
	Rural Needs Implications: Project Stratum focused on rural areas.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That Members <b>note</b> the content of the report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix 1 - Project Stratum - DfE Update - 24.11.20  Appendix 2 – Project Stratum - Fibrus Presentation – 2.12.20