Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce
National Stakeholder Forum

Wi-Fi network: 1WML
Password: windmill1
Submit questions to our panellists
through slido using code #0862481

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Brian Looney
Broadband Officer
Kerry County Council

Connectivity as an enabler for balanced regional development

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Connectivity as an enabler for balanced regional development
Tales from the Black Valley and beyond...

Brian Looney

Head of Digital, Smart Programmes & Broadband – Kerry Co. Council
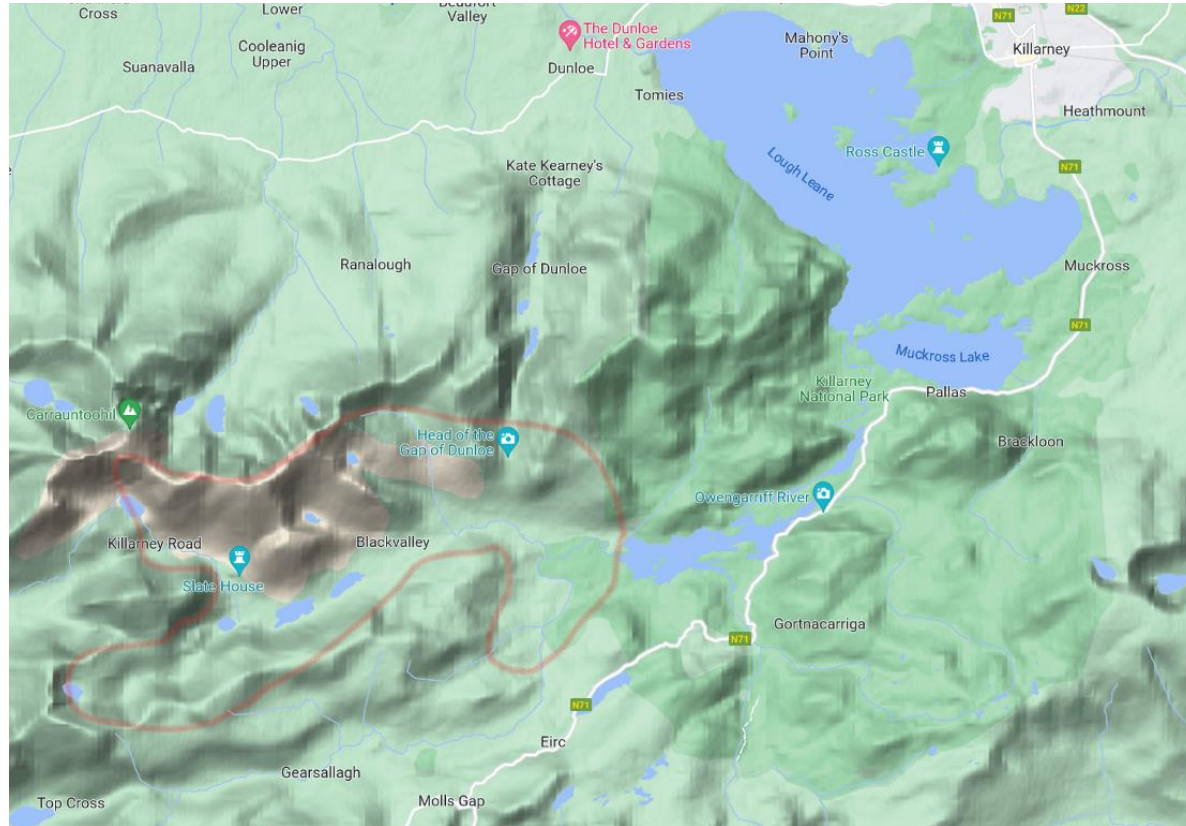
Presentation topics

- **Black Valley**
  - A Brief history of Communications in the Valley
  - Engagement with the Black Valley Community
  - Creating a Forum to share information and work on the problems
  - Initiatives & Projects
  - Where we are at & Next Steps
- **Wider Connectivity as an enabler examples in Kerry**
  - Transformative Enterprise Hubs
  - BCP's & Community Hubs

Comhar, Cabhair, Cairdeas

Black Valley - Location

Black Valley Footage

https://youtu.be/EUaf7pyM_uM

Warm-up

- Important to warm-up

- Everyone stand up & stretch

- Now sit down if you have decent broadband at home!

- Sit down if you've mobile coverage at home, enough to make a voice call

- Anyone who has a landline, or can get one, so they can make and receive phone calls, including to the emergency services, please sit down

- Everyone left standing must be a resident of the Black Valley or an islander !

… which gives us our Problem Statement

- For the residents of, and visitors to, the Black Valley:

- No or poor Broadband

- No or poor mobile coverage (any network)

- No copper – no or poor 'landline' service

- What we call the **Triple Whammy**.

- Impacts magnified during COVID 19

THE TIMES

Black Valley phone blackspot putting lives at risk, say residents

"We were told before that the wet weather was to blame for the problems with the phones and now we're told that it's the hot weather that's to blame," he said. "There's a group of 200 people gone visiting the Black Valley today. What if one of them has an accident?"

He said it was "disgraceful" that in the 21st century, huge numbers of householders could be left without a basic service such as a telephone.

"It's like living in another world. They might as well be in Outer Mongolia. The people of the Black Valley have put up with this for too long and their phones must be put right," he said.

Cllr Healy-Rae said that according to Eircom, a new fixed-line service could be installed in the area for approximately ?650,000, which, he said, was "not out of this world" in terms of cost. The existing 'Rurtel' system has failed totally, he added.

He said it was very difficult for people in the tourist industry and those running the local hostel to take bookings at the moment, without a reliable phone

60-second History of Communications in Ireland

- March 7th 1876 – Alexander Graham Bell patents the TELEPHONE

- 1921 – **P&T** take over the fledgling manually switched network from the Post Office

- 1957 - Crossbar automated switches deployed

- 1980+ Digital switches rolled-out

- "This saw a total transformation of the telephone network with modern automatic and digital services reaching **even the most rural parts of Ireland by the mid-1980s**"

- 1986 Eircell launch Irelands first mobile network

- 1993 Eircell launch GSM (2G) service followed by Digifone

- 2004 Vodafone launch 3G service

- 2013 Meteor launch 4G

- 2020 Three launch 5G

… meanwhile in the Black Valley up to 2022…

- 'Rurtel' radio based System deployed circa 1990

- WiMax based radio system deployed by Eircom circa 2007

- Residents can't make 'landline' calls!

- No Mobile service* 2G, 3G, 4G, 5G

- 50,000 annual visitors to the Black Valley (along the Kerry Way) and the Gap of Dunloe; climbers & hikers on Ireland's highest ridges cant make a mobile phone call

Community Engagement

- Following Representations from local Councillors, Kerry Co.'s Broadband Officer met with the residents to listen to the issues they had.

- With the assistance of DRCD, a **Local Telecoms Forum** was created in 2021.

- Brought together
  - Community Reps
  - Local Authority mgt
  - Central Govt: DRCD, DECC
  - TelCo's (mobile operators, WISPs, NBI)

- After listening to the scale and impact of the Community's Connectivity problems, TelCo's were invited to brief community on any service improvement plans in the area.

Projects & Initiatives undertaken

1. Starlink pilot
2. BCP Site
3. 'Airband'
4. NBI - advance engagement
5. Eir Mobile – new infrastructure and services

Subject to a NDA so we can't talk to much about it!
Generated a huge amount of hype!
Allowed KCC to properly test Starlink as a Broadband solution for rural businesses (and homes)
There are a number of Valley families using Starlink now.

Elon Musk chooses Kerry for his antennae to the stars

Sources have confirmed Musk's small antennae are likely to operate from the remote Black Valley – 20 miles from Killarney. File picture: Hannibal Hanschke/Pool Photo via AP

TUE, 23 FEB, 2021 - 06:30

ANNE LUCEY

Tech billionaire Elon Musk has targeted a remote rural location in Kerry to locate antennae to the stars.

The pilot project, which is shrouded in secrecy, is likely to roll out within weeks in a valley in the MacGillycuddy's Reeks near Killarney.

Musk, founder of SpaceX and electric carmaker Tesla, is deploying showers of satellites into space to provide cheap and fast broadband connections for remote rural locations.

There are strict non-disclosure agreements surrounding the approach by Musk's SpaceX Starlink to Kerry County Council in December.

However, sources have confirmed his small antennae are likely to operate from the remote Black Valley – 20 miles from Killarney.
Ironically, that was one of the last places in Ireland to get telephone

BCP Site

- The Black Valley National School one of the original 12 BCP sites in Kerry approved by the Minister when the NBP was launched with Community Hubs as an early deliverable

- *(Schools were withdrawn by the Patron)*

- No other Community Use building in Valley

- Outdoor BCP proposed at the Church with community, parish & DRCD support

- Issues with SMS prevented community deriving value

- That issue fully resolved now – so locals and visitors have a drive up 100Mbps+ service.

Your Internet speed is

100 Mbps

Latency
Unloaded Loaded
22 ms   **26** ms

Upload
Speed
77 Mbps

Client ?, IE 195.59.140.115
Server(s) London, GB | Amsterdam, NL

'Airband'

Microsoft Airband Initiative

We advance access to high-speed internet and meaningful connectivity as a fundamental right.

- With support of Microsoft, DRCD, local and national WISPs and other partners, detailed survey work and field tests were done on the technical feasibility of providing a pilot internet service to over 30 Valley homes and businesses.

- Technically, the results were impressive and the project was feasible, but with the **Eir mobile development plan**, the project has been parked.
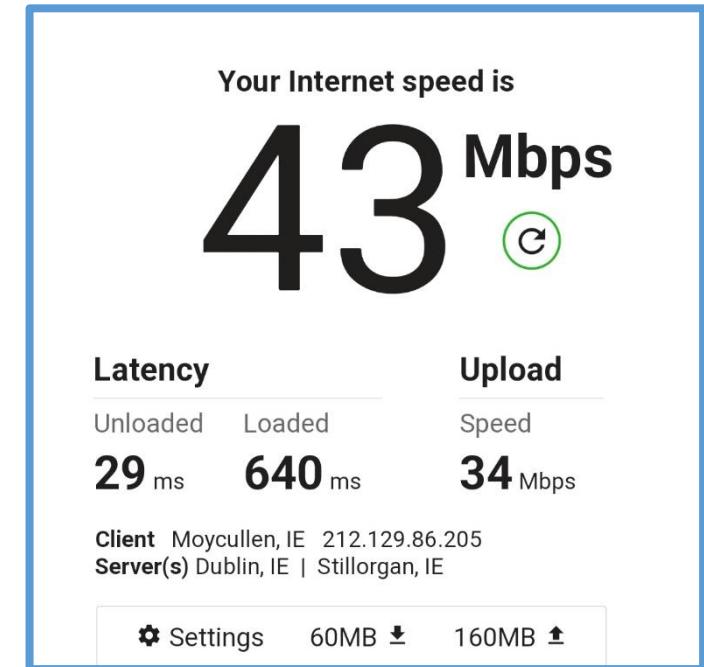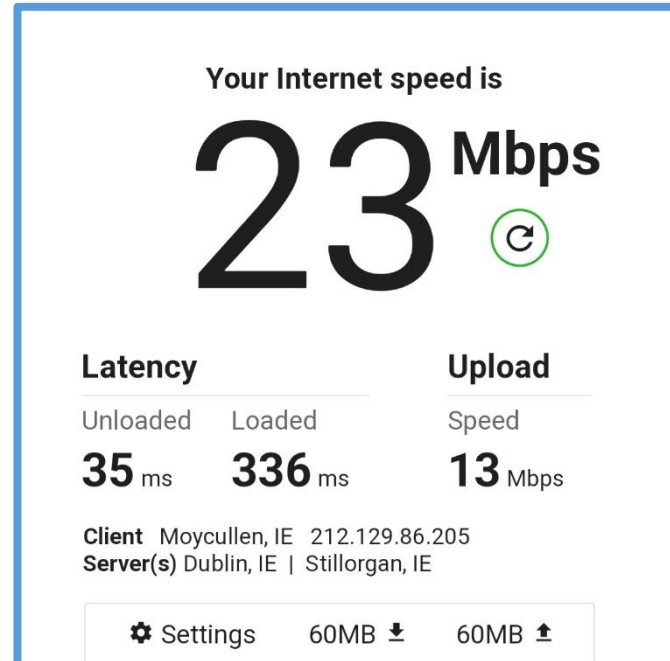
NBI

- The Valley Community have expressed a clear desire to simply "**get the same service as everyone else**" when it comes to high speed fibre.

- Clearly there are huge topological, technical and amenity preservation impediments to deploying the same class of Fibre network as NBI are rolling out elsewhere in the County.

- Kerry County Council have been engaged with NBI and their Design contractors and the next step is an **Options Report** on the means by which fibre services might be deployed and the screening, technical, operational, maintenance and costs issues with each.

Eir Mobile Developments

- Eir have a U.S.O. with ComReg (Universal Service)
- They have sought to address the issues arising from the existing WiMax system
  - Critical service issues for users
  - License expiry issues
- Proposed to develop services through the rollout of new mobile infrastructure located at the sites of their existing pole assets.
- Voice & Data services for the whole valley
- 999/112 service for all networks
- **A game changer for the local community**

Your Internet speed is

23 Mbps

Latency		Upload
Unloaded	Loaded	Speed
35 ms	**336** ms	**13** Mbps

Client Moycullen, IE 212.129.86.205
Server(s) Dublin, IE | Stillorgan, IE

⚙ Settings   60MB ⬇   60MB ⬆

Your Internet speed is

43 Mbps

Latency		Upload
Unloaded	Loaded	Speed
29 ms	**640** ms	**34** Mbps

Client Moycullen, IE 212.129.86.205
Server(s) Dublin, IE | Stillorgan, IE

⚙ Settings   60MB ⬇   160MB ⬆
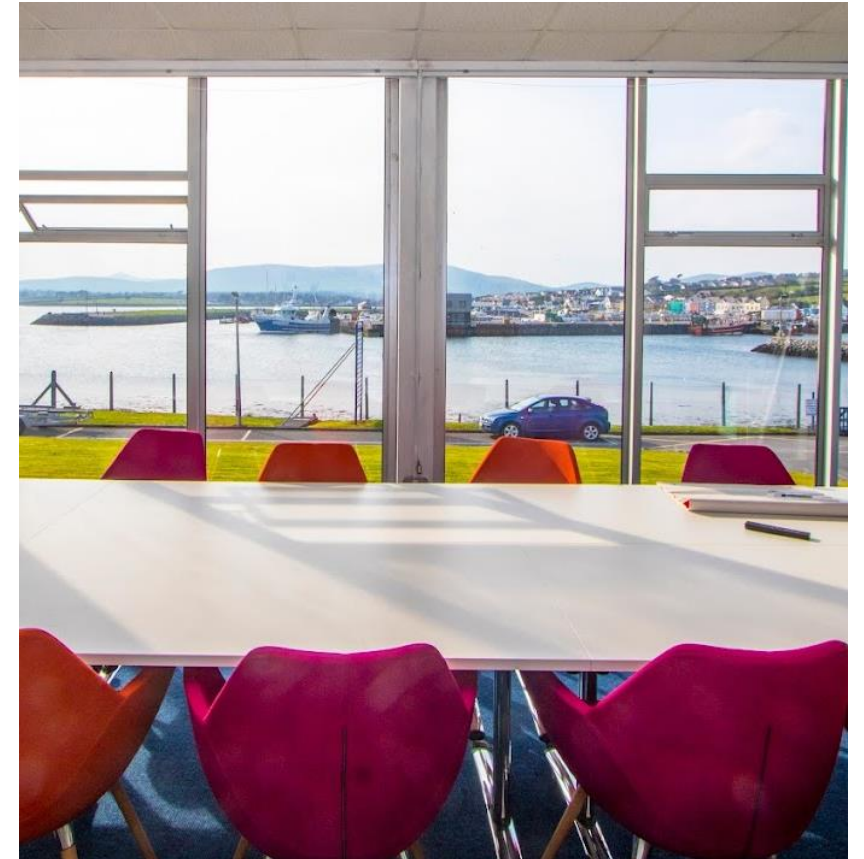
Black Next steps

1. Community Engagement with Eir re. services transition

2. Other Mobile Networks (?)

3. NBI Options Report and Fibre Deployment

4. Signage at the BCP site

5. Community working towards Heritage and Visitor Centre development
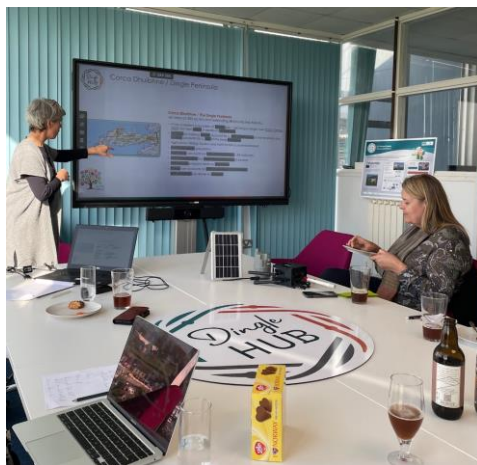
Connectivity as an enabler for regional development in Kerry

- <u>Connectivity</u> underpins Economic, Social and Community Development in Kerry
  - Physical Connectivity (road, rail, air, water; trails, greenways, blueways)
  - Data Connectivity (NBP, mobile / 5G)
  - People & Business Networks
- Enterprise Hubs Development: World Class hubs promoting
  - Entrepreneurial culture
  - Sustainability
  - Research and Development
  - an unbeatable Quality of Life
- Community Hubs, BCPs and the Community Network (PPN)
- Supporting multiple Government Policies (Our Rural Future, Making Remote Work, Harnessing Digital, Climate)

Enterprise Hubs

- Kerry's Hub network provide both human and data connectivity in world class facilities, with mentoring, business supports and peer to peer symbiosis & clusters

- The County is serviced by road, rail and air and the talent pipeline enabled by 4 universities in the region

- True Triple Helix partnerships and EU programmes

- Multiple industry segments

- Driving sustainability in their communities and industry

- Global opportunities combined with the best quality of life for innovators, entrepreneurs and employees.

Community Hubs

- 10 BCP sites with different service profiles

- Developing under 6 Thematic Areas
(based on DRCD themes and KCC's Digital Strategy)

Digital Skills

Remote Working

Arts & Culture

Health & Wellbeing

Engagement & Participation

Education & Research

Valentia Cable Station was our first BCP site – the literal birthplace of global telecoms connectivity

Connected Communities
Broadband Connection Points
Part of the National Broadband Plan

Conclusions

1. Achieving balanced Regional Development requires connectivity
   - Digital Connectivity makes "Remote" a 20th Century concept
   - Human connectivity and partnerships are the key to impact & outcomes – the tech isn't the important bit
2. Black Valley Forum showed what can be achieved in a relatively short time by talking, listening, aligning and partnership – Community, Local Govt, Central Govt, national and local service providers.
3. Telcos, TowerCo's & Communities - work with your local Broadband Officer!
4. Broadband Officers – work 360 in your problem areas - DECC, DRCD; Communities, Industry, Local Authority Business units, LAG's

- Ní neart go cur le cheile & GRMA!

Connectivity as an enabler for balanced regional development

Panellists:

- Fergal McCann, Director of Mobile Networks, eir
- John Mulholland, Chief Executive Laois County Council
- Fergal Mulligan, National Broadband Plan Director
- Carol Gibbons, Head of Regions and Local Enterprise, Enterprise Ireland

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Coffee Break

Our second session will begin at 11.30

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