

Starting Gate

The Contract was signed 29 March 2016 with fixed price (~£134.5k) and target delivery of 31 March 2017 for 5 cabinets (with the intent that some cabinets might be delivered early).

Funding from pledges was around £11k short but the deposit was paid to BTOR on the basis of making up the shortfall through guarantors, new pledges and revisiting those who indicated they might pay more. An alternative funding option is also being pursued.

Progress to date

A number of key issues are still being addressed as the project progresses.

- 1) BTOR refused to accept their prior commitment to Scheme 6 (Blissford) speeds. They did more tests and concluded that their original speeds were OK after all but this delayed progress initially!
- 2) During May and June BTOR proposed major changes to the contract. We could not accede to their proposals and they have at last accepted our position - end August 2016;
- 3) Meanwhile the project has been progressing at the engineering level.

Surveys to start BTOR contractor activities were done in early July. Sites for 3 of the 5 cabinets appear satisfactory, but the cabinet in S Gorley and the one at Hungerford Crossroads were identified as problematical as they were on SSSI/RAMSAR sites. Consequently these were unlikely to be approved by Natural England or Verderers. In July NE, Verderers and NPA were briefed on our plans by HCP, with a Verderer offering to walk round the sites to advise/support our plans. Two residents in the problem locations were approached by HCP and have agreed (this week) to give up part of their land for the cabinets. Surveys for those locations are now imminent and bayleaves will be set up; we are very grateful to the landowners for their strong community support.

- 4) The fixed price deal, project support, post-delivery support and target delivery dates have all be retained despite the challenges from BTOR.

So what next?

1. BTOR advised us on 1st September that target delivery date remains 31 Dec 2016 for all 5 cabinets. Frankly we have reservations about this - constructors surveys and planning approval could take 6-12 weeks and BTOR advice to the CPs usually takes 28 days. BTOR are using the period Jan-March 2017 as contingency and we expect it be required to a greater or lesser extent. Detailed delivery dates cannot be given until BTOR contractors have completed their surveys - BTOR sub-contract most of this work; but we are assured that once a cabinet is 'lit' it will be immediately be made available to the network.
2. Finance Options are still being pursued and are looking very hopeful but remain confidential.
3. Delivery Dates from Sub-Contractors are now key.
4. We are working on advice to residents on the need for house wiring checks and measurement frameworks to ensure we can collectively hold BTOR to account for the delivery quality.