

POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

10 APRIL 2013

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

BROADBAND PROJECT – NEXT STEPS

1.0 THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to proceed to the next stage in relation to the Broadband project and to authorise the Chief Executive to exercise urgency powers in respect of the Collaboration Agreement, once this has been finalised between the parties.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the position with respect to the negotiations concerning the Collaboration Agreement and the development of the Countywide Broadband Project be noted, together with the use by the Chief Executive of her urgency powers in respect of the Collaboration Agreement once finalised.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 3rd July 2012 this committee approved the allocation of £360,000 to enable Melton to participate in a countywide scheme to facilitate Broadband access across the Borough.

- 3.2 Leicestershire County Council have a vision to deliver superfast broadband to all premises in Leicestershire by 2017. £4m has been allocated by Leicestershire County Council to match the Government's £3.3m allocation for Leicestershire in order to achieve the following:

- Ensure access to significantly faster broadband for every business and community by the end of September 2015, with a minimum of 90% of premises receiving superfast broadband;
- Deliver competitively priced broadband services through an open access network attracting, where possible, a wide range of service providers.
- Work with public and voluntary sectors to deliver digital inclusion and transform access to services;
- Unlock Leicestershire's economic growth potential, deliver digital inclusion and transform access to public services through the effective use of digital technologies;
- Close the Digital Divide between rural and urban areas in Melton;
- Ensure deployment supports the County's ambitious environmental sustainability targets – including cutting carbon and improving the environment.

Broadband connectivity is a crucial issue for Melton as areas in the Borough will be unlikely to experience the benefits of market led connectivity improvements. So called Slow Spots and Not Spots can be viewed at http://www.leics.gov.uk/leicestershire_broadband_connectivity_maps.pdf. The Local Broadband Plan was signed off by Government in April 2012 which has enabled the County Council to progress with procurement. An ERDF bid for additional funding has been submitted and a significant programme of activity is now underway regarding this

project. The Strategic Director (CM) has been attending the programme board meetings on behalf of the Districts in conjunction with the Chief Executive of Harborough District Council.

4.0 KEY ISSUES

4.1 As part of the next steps for this project Melton Borough Council will need to sign up to a Collaboration Agreement with the County Council along with the other districts engaged in this project. This document is close to being finalised and will need to be completed as soon as practicably possible. In order to facilitate this members are asked to note that the Chief Executive will be making use of her urgency powers to enable this to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

4.2 This agreement sets out the responsibilities of the various parties and specific terms and conditions relating to this project.

4.3 The timetable for the project currently is as follows:

Issue of Invitation to Tender Documentation	13 th May 2013
Supplier Engagement and Clarification	13 th May – 22 nd July 2013
Supplier responses	22 nd July 2013
Contract Award	26 th August 2013.
Commence deployment	summer 2014
Complete deployment	end summer 2016

5.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Broadband across the Borough has direct links into the following corporate priorities:

- Support people and businesses through the economic downturn
- Meet the Economic needs of the Borough
- Maximise the potential of Melton Mowbray Town centre
- To provide high performing services that are efficient and meet customers' needs

6.0 FINANCIAL & OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A budget of £360,000 has been set aside for this project.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

7.1 The Solicitor to the Council is advising on the Broadband Collaboration agreement.

8.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

8.1 There are no direct community issues arising from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES

9.1 There are no direct equality issues arising from this report.

10.0 RISKS

10.1 No direct risks have been identified. The project is supported by Leicestershire County Council, who is the major financial contributor and has oversight of Project Management.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

11.1 There are no climate change issues arising from this report.

12.0 CONSULTATION

12.1 Leicestershire County Council have undertaken a broadband survey and had over 4,600 responses with 650 of these being to the dedicated business survey. The results of the consultation have helped to create a picture of where there is poor connectivity and demand for superfast broadband. The full survey report is available at www.leics.gov.uk/broadband

12.2 A consultation is currently underway with service providers to comply with State Aid requirements.

12.3 A further stakeholder event is planned for 22nd April 2013.

13.0 WARDS AFFECTED

13.1 All Wards

Contact Officer: Lynn Aisbett/C Marshall

Date: 1st April 2013

Appendices: N/A

Background Papers: BDUK Broadband Delivery Project – ‘Broadband Leicestershire (Final Redacted Summary Version) February 2012

Reference: X: C'tees, Council & Sub-C'tees/PFA/2012-13