



Report to: Cabinet

Subject: Investment in Broadband Infrastructure

Date: 3rd November 2011

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1. Purpose of the Report

This report seeks approval to contribute to a match funding exercise, led by Nottinghamshire County Council, in support of investment in the development of broadband infrastructure across the County.

2. Background

The Government's Broadband Delivery UK Programme (BD:UK) was announced in early 2011 the aim of which is to invest £350 million by 2015 to enable 90% of households and businesses to have access to superfast broadband services. The Programme envisages that the remaining 10% will have access to standard broadband services.

Access to the BD:UK funding is only available to upper tier authorities and the focus of the Programme is on access to high quality broadband services for rural communities and businesses.

The outcome of the process of allocating funding from the Programme is an indicative award of £4.25 million for Nottinghamshire. In order to benefit, 'match funding' is required from the public sector and a further £8.5 million from private sector business making a total of £17 million.

Nottinghamshire County Council has led the negotiation and development of the plan with support from public and private partners across Nottinghamshire. Successful consultation exercises have been undertaken with local communities, residents and businesses to ensure involvement and inclusion. Output from the consultation, conducted by Nottinghamshire County Council during the summer of 2011 appears at appendix a. The output also makes reference to a range of benefits, for businesses and residents that would be derived from an improved broadband infrastructure.

Members are asked to note that funding for the plan will deliver new infrastructure to connect communities to superfast broadband and that customers (users of the service) will have to pay monthly tariffs for access and use as they do in all other areas where these services are currently available.

3. Financial Implications

All Nottinghamshire Borough and District Council partners are being asked to make contributions to enable the plan to be delivered. The funding requested from each partner Council is based on the number of properties (residential and commercial) that will benefit from the investment.

Collectively, £2 million is requested from District and Borough Councils within Nottinghamshire as a match to the County Council's Contribution of £2.25 million. Gedling's 'share' is £89,777 based on 5,336 'properties' that could potentially benefit from the proposed arrangements.

Details of the whereabouts of the identified 5,336 properties have been requested from the County Council. It is anticipated that these properties will be situated in the rural areas of the Borough.

Subject to procurement and the scheduling of works, the Council's contribution would be requested during 2012/13 and represents approximately 12% of the anticipated overall cost.

Commitment to the plan is requested by the end of November.

4. Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the 'match funding' requested by Nottinghamshire County Council of £89,777 in support of development of broadband services across the County and that Officers are asked to make appropriate provision within the 2012/13 budgeting process.

Appendix a:

Output from consultation conducted by Nottinghamshire County Council during the summer of 2011

Business (183 responses)	Residents (1,177 responses)	Community Groups (95 responses)
27% had download speeds of less than 1Mbps	25% had download speeds of less than 1Mbps	28% had download speeds of less than 1Mbps
42% had upload speeds of less than 0.5Mbps	40% had upload speeds of less than 0.5Mbps	47% had upload speeds of less than 1Mbps
91% said access to reliable highspeed broadband was very important for their business	79% said access to reliable, high speed broadband was very important	81% said access to reliable, high speed broadband was very important
64% stated that the current speed of their internet connection significantly constrains the way they use the internet and internet based applications	59% stated that the current speed of their internet connection significantly constrains the way they or other members of their household use the internet and internet based applications	60% of respondents said that the speed of their current broadband connection significantly constrains the way they currently use internet / broadband within their organisation/club
70% of responses said they would like to achieve speeds in excess of 20Mbps (30% of these wanting speeds in excess of 50Mbps)	72% of responses said they would like to achieve speeds in excess of 20Mbps (32% of these wanting speeds in excess of 50Mbps)	50% of responses said they would like to achieve speeds in excess of 20Mbps (28% of these wanting speeds in excess of 50Mbps)
31% would be prepared to pay £10-£20 per month to achieve faster internet/broadband		
Main business benefits of faster internet/broadband would be: increased business performance (54%), Improved customer services (48%), more flexible working (including home working (37%), ability to deliver new products or services (33%), increased competitive advantage (30%), higher turnover (26%), reduced carbon footprint/CO2 emissions (21%) and increase in market share or entry to new markets (21%)	A slow connection was the most common issue raised (17%). Respondents said they would like to use the internet for study courses, distance learning (watching/listening to Podcasts, webinars etc) but poor download speeds prevented them from doing so. One of the aspirations frequently mentioned was the ability to work at home. Concerns were raised that schools were increasingly using on-line facilities such as homework help etc, but as they would not be able to use such facilities because of poor speeds, they felt their children would be missing out compared to children in a neighbouring village.	A slow connection was the most common issue raised (23%). (18%) put forward comments related to business, such as the effect of having slow speeds on the way groups/organisations currently use the internet. (14%) had comments relating to education issues, such as the need for children to have access to reliable, highspeed broadband to complete homework and to make use of external learning activities provided by schools on-line.