

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Direct Bursaries for Broadband
Date of decision:	16 October, 2018
Decision maker:	Assistant Director Corporate Support
Authority for delegated decision:	Within the chief executives scheme of delegation. The Assistant Director Corporate Support is authorised in accordance with the financial procedure rules to take this decision.
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	Senior responsible officers for Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council for the Fastershire project.
Decision made:	That a budget of up to £50,000 is established from existing funds for broadband deployment to cover Direct Bursaries to support further fibre coverage based on premises that meet required criteria. For the Assistant Director Corporate Support to have delegated authority to agree business case for individual premises.
Reasons for decision:	<p>Herefordshire Council operates the Fastershire project in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council to commission deployment of superfast broadband in the counties not covered by commercial providers. From the start of deployment (in 2012) the county had a superfast coverage of 0.6% fibre – after the completion of phase 1 there is now 85.9% of premises with access to superfast coverage that combines BT’s commercial deployment in parts of Hereford, Ledbury and Leominster with the public sector funded programme in the other areas in the county (independent figures from ThinkBroadband). The council has commissioned Gigaclear to conduct further deployment, along with bespoke schemes for businesses (link) and remaining “cluster areas” have been secured through EU funding (link).</p> <p>In meeting the broadband strategy for the county (link) the council will continue to reach premises in the rural counties. As part of this, the project is finding instances of properties that are, due to the way in which the commercial providers report on their coverage, at risk of being missed where public and commercial deployments meet. The decision reflected above is to create a small fund to enable these isolated premises to become connected in the quickest way possible. This involves awarding grants to residents to purchase their own fibre solution – through an NGA compliant provider of their choice (next generation access - in line with the NGA technology guidelines https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2016-nbs-tech-guidelines.) The fund will only be open to premises that are not included in current deployment plans due to an inaccurate commercial provider’s coverage claim, and where existing change control within contracts cannot apply. It is expected that there will be in the region of 20 premises that meet the criteria; and a value for money test as part of business case will be applied.</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	The funds will be allocated from the agreed capital programmes for superfast broadband within each of the counties. The public funded broadband programme is a gap funded model to enable suppliers to invest in fibre deployment in the county that they would otherwise not do as limited return on investment (considering the

	high level of cost to deployment to rural areas).
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	That the fund is not created and the premises are included in further deployment. This is not recommended as could take considerable time. Another alternative option is to bring single premises into change requests with existing suppliers. This is not recommended as would again take time to go through a full process for a few premises.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	N/A

Signed..... Date: 16.10.18