

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****BETTER BROADBAND FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE (BBfN) PROGRAMME  
CONTRACT 3****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is fourfold:
  - a) to seek approval to enter into a contract with the preferred supplier to further extend superfast broadband coverage;
  - b) to approve the programme management staffing resource required until September 2019 to complete contract deployment, assurance and close;
  - c) to approve a variation to the capital programme due to additional external funding;
  - d) to seek delegated authority for the Corporate Director, Place and Chair of Policy Committee to approve a bid submission for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding, subject to the criteria of the fund meeting County Council objectives.

**Information**

2. As part of a national programme, Nottinghamshire enjoys the vanguard position in the East Midlands with 97.5% superfast coverage. The Council Plan 2017-2021 "Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future" highlights the importance of connectivity and showcases why Nottinghamshire is a great place to start, grow and do business.
3. Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire (BBfN) has already greatly improved access to high-speed broadband to many businesses and the Council continues to make progress with this issue. BBfN is currently on track to ensure 98% superfast coverage by September 2018.
4. Public sector investment in broadband to date in Nottinghamshire for the period 2014-2019 stands at £17,100,000. This investment will result in approximately 83,000 premises in Nottinghamshire having access to a fibre broadband service that would not have received such access without the BBfN programme.
5. In July 2017, Policy Committee approved the procurement exercise in respect of a third contract to extend broadband coverage, prioritising the most rural and business properties across the two district areas of Newark & Sherwood and Bassetlaw.
6. Since then, from the twenty-six bidders who submitted Expressions of Interest, two telecommunications companies, BT Group and Quickline, submitted bids. Following a rigorous evaluation and moderation process, BT Group were selected as the preferred

supplier as they had the highest evaluation score based on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender.

7. Delivery is expected to last 18 months and as indicated under the financial implications paragraph, in the event of further funds being introduced (for example, subject to Policy Committee approval and the criteria of the fund meeting County Council objectives, a funding submission to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), this will extend the contract delivery beyond this period.

### Programme Resourcing

8. The current resource for BBfN is a Programme Manager (Band E), a Programme Officer (Band B) and a Broadband Engagement Officer (Band A).
9. Recognising that we are now entering the latter stages of the rollout, with far less programme development and stakeholder management work required, subject to Committee approval, an amendment and reduction to the headcount of the Contract 3 project management is proposed. An internal, officer-led review has concluded that the remaining delivery of BBfN could be delivered by a Project Manager and a Broadband Engagement Officer, as follows:
  - **Project Manager**
    - Day-to-day management of the contract to ensure delivery maximises the benefits within value for money considerations.
    - Lead on, deliver and monitor progress of the specified workstreams within key areas of BBfN.
    - Manage the reporting and claims process for funding partners, until the completion of the contract deployment, assurance and closure.
    - Develop, support and maintain effective relationships with partners while dealing with customer enquiries.
  - **Broadband Engagement Officer**
    - Driving the take-up in local communities with a series of marketing and public relations activities, including attendance at events liaising with Parishes and community groups.
    - Informing Nottinghamshire residents about the availability of new broadband services as they become 'live' in the county.
    - Encouraging residents and businesses to take advantage of superfast broadband access.
    - Promoting the Nottinghamshire Digital Champions volunteering network to help promote the safe and positive use of digital technology.
10. The costs of employing the posts detailed above up to 30 September 2019 are estimated at £121,000, which will be funded from the BBfN reserve.

### **Other Options Considered**

11. The option to do nothing was discounted on three accounts:
  - a) The recent Open Market Review (OMR) undertaken by the Council established that from existing and planned coverage by the telecommunications sector, properties in the County

will still remain without access to superfast broadband unless public sector intervention is made.

- b) One of the key themes from the Council Plan focusses on Nottinghamshire being a great place to enjoy later life. The Broadband Engagement Officer's promotion and support of activities will help individuals and businesses to get online and help create a better and safer online Nottinghamshire community.
- c) Driving up take-up is vital because it links into the clawback (gainshare) mechanism of the broadband contracts, which requires suppliers (i.e. BT) to return part of the public investment when customer adoption of the new service passes beyond the 30% mark. This can then be further boosted by any efficiency savings made during the roll-out. The returned funding is intended to be reinvested towards further coverage improvement via future contracts. BT alone has recently indicated that they had deferred £465 million nationally, which could potentially be harnessed in this way. **Successful management, delivery and take-up of BBfN has already seen £2.7 million returned to the Council**, which has been used as match funding towards the current Contract 2. Having dedicated resource in the form of a Broadband Engagement Officer increases the likelihood of hitting the % threshold as duties will include ensuring businesses, residents and communities are made aware of the availability and benefits of superfast broadband in their areas. Any further increases as contracts complete will be reported to this Committee.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- 12. To enable contract signature with the preferred supplier to ensure on-the-ground delivery as soon as possible and to ensure sufficient staffing resource for the successful delivery of the rollout.

## Statutory and Policy Implications

- 13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## Financial Implications

- 14. The public sector subsidy for Contract 3 is the previously agreed £1.32m. This is broken-down as Nottinghamshire County Council investment of £600,000 and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport investment of £720,000 and it leverages significant investment from BT. £1.20m of this funding is already approved into the capital programme. However, since then, County Council negotiated an additional £0.12m. It is proposed that a variation to the capital programme is approved to incorporate the additional £0.12m and received from DCMS.
- 15. Provision has been included within the contract for further public funds to be introduced to the contract to extend coverage further. Potential sources of funding could be European funding which is subject to Policy Committee approval and a successful bid or underspend and gainshare funds arising from previous BBfN programme contracts. A request to vary

the capital programme will be submitted to the appropriate Committee once further funding is confirmed.

16. The financial implications of the proposal to employ a Project Manager and a Broadband Engagement Officer to 30 September 2019 are set out in paragraph 9.

### **Human Resources Implications**

17. The BBfN resource will require a revised job description for the Project Manager role. Temporary arrangements (expected to last around three months) are being applied for the incumbent Broadband Programme Officer to take over the project management duties on an honorarium basis. This gives sufficient time for the Project Manager role to undergo evaluation, as the timing will coincide with April 2018 commencement of Contract 3. The job evaluation is in recognition that this latter stage of the rollout requires less resources, as the focus will be on contract delivery with far less development and stakeholder management work required. Once the Job evaluation is complete, the post will be recruited to on a fixed-term basis until September 2019.
18. The incumbent Broadband Engagement Officer is currently an agency member of staff. The role will be transferred to the Council's establishment, in keeping with the proposed Project Manager role, also on a fixed-term basis until September 2019.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

19. It is recommended that the Policy Committee:
- 1) Based on the results of the evaluation process, approves the award of the Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire Contract 3 to BT PLC, subject to satisfactory completion of contract finalisation activities;
  - 2) Approves the establishment of the required staffing resource to deliver the Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire programme;
  - 3) Approves the variation to the capital programme due to additional DCMS funding;
  - 4) Delegates authority for the Corporate Director, Place and Chair of Policy Committee to approve a bid submission for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding subject to the criteria of the fund meeting County Council objectives.

**COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS MBE**  
**Leader of the Council**

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### **Constitutional Comments (EP 02/03/2018)**

20. The recommendations fall within the remit of Policy Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments [RWK 01/03/2018]**

21. The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 14 to 16 of the report.

## HR Comments [JP 02/03/2018]

22. The relevant job evaluation and recruitment procedures will be followed in respect of the posts noted in the body of the report.

## Background Papers and Published Documents

- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire (BBfN) Programme Update* - Report to Policy Committee, 19-07-2017 – published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire (BBfN) –Additional broadband deployment* – Report to Economic Development Committee, 03-01-2017, Published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire: authorisation for contract 2* – report to Economic Development Committee, 31-03-2015, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire Contract 2* – report to Policy Committee, 07-01-2015, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – Additional Staffing Resource* – report to Economic Development Committee, 16-09-2014, published
- *Update on D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan and Local Growth Deal* – report to Economic Development Committee, 1-7-2014, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire Superfast Extension Programme* – report to Policy Committee, 4-6-2014, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – Phase One* – report to Economic Development Committee, 1-4-2014, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – Superfast Extension Programme* – report To Economic Development Committee, 11-03-2014, published
- *Superfast Extension Programme indicative funding allocation letter* – BDUK on behalf of the Department for Culture Media and Sport, 25-2-2014, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire* – report to Economic Development Committee 14-01-2014, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – Resource Requirements for Delivery Phase* – report to Economic Development Committee, 12-12-2013, published
- *UK Broadband Impact Study* – Impact Report, SQW, 11-2013  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/257006/UK\\_Broadband\\_Impact\\_Study\\_-\\_Impact\\_Report\\_-\\_Nov\\_2013\\_-\\_Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257006/UK_Broadband_Impact_Study_-_Impact_Report_-_Nov_2013_-_Final.pdf)
- *Superfast Broadband for Nottinghamshire* – report to Economic Development Committee 09-07-2013, published
- *Superfast Broadband for Nottinghamshire* – report to Policy Committee 17-07- 2013, published
- *Investing in Britain's future* – Presented to Parliament by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury by Command of Her Majesty, 6-2013  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/209279/PU1524\\_IUK\\_new\\_template.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209279/PU1524_IUK_new_template.pdf)
- *ERDF Funding Agreement*, 14-05-2013
- *Nottinghamshire Local Broadband Plan* – report to Full Council, 28-02-2013, published
- *Update on Nottinghamshire Local Broadband Plan* – report to Policy Committee, 20-06-2012, published
- *Nottinghamshire Local Broadband plan*– report to Full Council, 15-12-2011, published

