

REPORT OF THE CHAIR, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**BUSINESS BROADBAND CONNECTION VOUCHER SCHEME EXTENDED
COUNTYWIDE****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Policy Committee that following an approach by Nottinghamshire County Council to the Department for Media Culture and Sport (DCMS), the broadband Connection Voucher scheme which was previously only available in the City of Nottingham, Broxtowe, Gedling, Rushcliffe and Hucknall, has now been extended to include businesses in the districts of Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Bassetlaw and the whole of Ashfield.

Background information

2. The Connection Voucher Scheme is a government-funded initiative, administered through Nottingham City Council and gives businesses money off the cost of installing superfast broadband and access speeds of over 30Mbps.
3. The scheme was only previously available in the City of Nottingham, Broxtowe, Gedling, Rushcliffe and Hucknall. However, following an approach by Nottinghamshire County Council to the Department for Media Culture and Sport (DCMS), the scheme has now been extended to include businesses in the districts of Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Bassetlaw and the whole of Ashfield.
4. Any small to medium sized business in Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham – including home workers, social enterprises, sole traders and landlords - can apply to the scheme to fund the capital costs of upgrading broadband connections. Businesses can choose a provider from more than 600 registered suppliers in the UK.
5. At the time of writing this report, over 95 local businesses in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have received money off connecting to superfast broadband through the scheme.
6. The news that the whole of Nottinghamshire can now benefit has already been well received amongst the business community. An alert was sent by the team to the Nottinghamshire Business Engagement Group (NBEG), to District/Borough Economic Development Officers and to Nottinghamshire Parish and Town

Councils notifying them of the schemes extended coverage. A press release was also issued on 16th June 2015 to the local media.

7. Elected members are being urged to inform local businesses to access this scheme and make sure Nottinghamshire business people are claiming their fair share, as the scheme operates on a first come first served basis.
8. Applying for the grant is very easy. Interested parties can visit www.connectionvouchers.co.uk/city/nottingham to check their business postcode and get started and to find out more information about the voucher scheme in general.
9. In accessing the scheme, businesses pay the VAT charge and the monthly line rental to their service provider. While monthly costs vary by provider and package, a recent straw poll found that a quarter of businesses pay £40 per month or less.

Reason for Recommendation

10. To inform members of the success of the team in persuading Government to extend the Connected Broadband Scheme to the whole county enabling thousands more businesses in Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood to access the benefits superfast broadband can provide, creating jobs and growth across the county.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described in the body of the report.

Financial Implications

12. None.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that

- a) Policy Committee notes the content of this report and supports and encourages elected members to inform their local businesses about the countywide Business Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme.

Report of the Chair, Economic Development Committee

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Jayne Francis-Ward, 73478

Constitutional Comments [SLB 07/07/15]

Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments [SES 07/07/15]

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

- Nottinghamshire Local Broadband Plan (www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/broadband)
- *Nottinghamshire Local Broadband Plan* – report to Full Council, 15-12-2011, published
- *Update on Nottinghamshire Local Broadband Plan* – report to Policy Committee, 20-06-2012, published
- *Response to Petitions presented to Economic Development Committee* – report to Economic Development Committee, 20-09-2012, published
- *Nottinghamshire Local Broadband Plan* – report to Full Council, 28-02-2013, published
- ERDF Funding Agreement, 14-05-2013
- 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
- *Superfast Broadband for Nottinghamshire* – report to Policy Committee 17-07-2013, published
- *Superfast Broadband for Nottinghamshire* – report to Economic Development Committee 09-07-2013, 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)
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – Resource Requirements for Delivery Phase* – report to Economic Development Committee, 12-12-2013, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire* – report to Economic Development Committee 14-01-2014, published
- Superfast Extension Programme indicative funding allocation letter – BDUK on behalf of the Department for Culture Media and Sports, 25-2-2014, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – Superfast Extension Programme* – report To Economic Development Committee, 11-03-2014, 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 Policy Committee, 4-6-2014, published
- *Update on D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan and Local Growth Deal* – report to Economic Development Committee, 1-7-2014, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – Additional Staffing Resource* – report to Economic Development Committee, 16-09-2014, published

- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – quarterly update on the rollout* – report to Economic Development Committee, 18-11-2014, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire Contract 2* – report to Policy Committee, 07-01-2015, published
- Digital Communications Infrastructure Strategy - 18-03-2015
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-digital-communications-infrastructure-strategy>
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire: authorisation for contract 2* – report to Economic Development Committee, 31-03-2015, published
- *Nottinghamshire Digital Champions Network* – report to Economic Development Committee, 31-03-2015, published
- *Broadband Petition* – report to Economic Development Committee, 31-03-2015, published
- Connection Voucher press release – 16-6-2015
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/pressreleases/show/businesses-get-broadband-boost-as-voucher-scheme-is-extended-countywide>
- *Broadband Petition* – report to Economic Development Committee, 07-07-2015, published
- *Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire – Quarterly update on the rollout* - report to Economic Development Committee, 07-07-2015, published

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All