



31st March 2015

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, POLICY, PLANNING AND CORPORATE SERVICES

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE DIGITAL CHAMPIONS NETWORK

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Committee on the progress of the Nottinghamshire Digital Champions Network.

Background

2. As part of the wider agendas around broadband take-up and digital inclusion, the Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire (BBfN) programme has continually recognised the important role Digital Champions can play in supporting others to get online and in raising awareness of both the BBfN programme and the availability of fibre broadband.
3. Following a number of attempts (of variable success) to recruit and engage potential Digital Champions across Nottinghamshire, the decision was taken to invite organisations to submit quotes for the provision of a resource to deliver a Nottinghamshire Digital Champions Network. This forms part of the work Committee has approved in terms of demand stimulation for the BBfN programme.
4. A framework contract was tendered, as this offered greatest flexibility in terms of extending the timescale or geographical scope, which may need to occur should the Council extend its work to deliver a fibre broadband network through contract 2. The total budget made available for this initial call off was £40,000, funded by the allocation from this Committee and by resources secured from the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. The contract started in March 2015 and is set to run until the end of March 2016. Some costs have been met from the 2014-15 budget.
5. **Digital Unite** was the successful bidder, with a proposed total project cost of **£38,750**.

Information and Advice

6. The Nottinghamshire Digital Champions network is a programme of activity designed to inspire a wider group of people to help others within their community

to use the internet. This will be achieved through a mix of on the ground, face-to-face activity and online support. The project will be required to deliver the following outputs:

- **60 x Digital Champions (minimum):** Recruit and support a thriving local network of digital champions to include a blend of:
 - **Digital Champions** – support individuals on a 1-2-1 basis at appropriate community venues.
 - **Rural Business Champions** – work within the local self-employed and micro business community raising the awareness of how a fibre based broadband service can enhance the way businesses operate.
 - **Community Champions** – individuals who are willing to support the marketing and publicity of fibre based broadband within the community; for example, leaflet drops within Health Centres, Youth Clubs, Doctors Surgeries, Pubs, Community Centres, Play Groups, Post Offices including local events.
- **1 x Marketing/ PR plan:** Develop and deliver a strong local marketing campaign to promote the Nottinghamshire Digital Champion Network within communities and to recruit further Digital Champions. This will be developed in partnership with the BBfN team to ensure it is in line with and reflects existing branding / marketing materials created to promote the Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire programme.
- **1 x Toolkit:** a resource updated tools, tips and information to support the Nottinghamshire Digital Champion Network to take immediate action.
- **3 x Digital Champion Events:** Delivered in strategic locations across the County to engage with as many Digital Champions as possible and provide guidance on how to fulfil the role and utilise the toolkit.

The first event is provisionally being scheduled for 14th May 2015 (date and venue to be confirmed) and will function as a 'launch event' to kick-start this project and raise awareness. Once confirmed, further information on this event will be circulated to Members, so they can assist with promotion and attend, should they wish.

- **Forward Strategy:** Production of a Forward Plan for the Nottinghamshire Digital Champions Network, which will detail options around sustaining activity once the project is complete.
7. Digital Unite will be required to provide a monthly update on progress, with a template for this data currently being finalised. This will be complemented by a quarterly report focussing more on performance against the contracted outputs.

8. It is proposed that Committee receives a further update report at the scheduled EDC meeting in July, at which progress will be reported. It is also proposed that Digital Unite be invited to attend, along with a local Digital Champion.

Reason(s) for Recommendations

9. The take-up and exploitation of fibre broadband is the key driver of the BBfN programme and the Nottinghamshire Digital Champions Network will play a key role in maximising this throughout the County.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. 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 report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

11. It is recommended that Economic Development Committee note the report and approve the invitation of Digital Unite to present at a future Economic Development Committee meeting.

Report of the Group Manager, Corporate Strategy, Celia Morris

For any enquiries about this report please contact:
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Constitutional Comments [CEH 18.03.15]

The Economic Development Committee has the delegated authority to consider the recommendation in the report.

Financial Comments [SES 18/03/15]

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All