



Subject:	Local Full Fibre Networks Programme
Date:	23 rd March 2018
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Resources
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The Spring Statement 2018 allocated the first wave of funding from the Department of Culture Media and Sport's (DCMS) Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme, providing over £95 million for 13 areas across the UK. Belfast City Council has been awarded £11.5 million subject to due diligence tests.
1.2	The Council understands that the future of telecommunications infrastructure in Belfast is vital to our economic growth, and full fibre connectivity is the key to ensuring high-speed connectivity for current and future generations. This award will allow Belfast City Council to future proof its network connectivity requirements for the next 20 to 25 years through the "Belfast LFFN Programme". Our LFFN programme will result in the installation of an extensive fibre network connecting the entire Belfast City Council estate, and covering areas of the city where intensive local regeneration plans have been prepared.

1.3	The aim of the programme is to maximise the availability and benefit of gigabit capable broadband services to public sector, business and residential users, and support Belfast's Smart Cities ambitions and growth in 5G.
1.4	This report provides a summary of our successful bid and outlines next steps in the delivery of the Belfast Local Full Fibre Network Programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of the report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Whilst 95% of UK premises can now get superfast broadband, only 3% have access to gigabit-capable full fibre infrastructure. With the need for faster connectivity expected to increase dramatically over the coming years, the LFFN programme aims to leverage local and commercial investment in full fibre across the UK. It will do this through funding a series of projects that seek to stimulate the market by making the deployment of gigabit-capable full fibre infrastructure more commercially viable.
3.2	The delivery of the Belfast LFFN Programme has the potential to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase innovation and productivity in business, • Open new markets for business, by exploiting full fibre infrastructure, • Provide better access to public services, • Improve infrastructure to support Smart Cities initiatives and 5G rollout.

3.3 A summary of the Belfast LFFN award is outlined below.

	Public Sector Anchor Tenancy (PSAT)	Public Sector Asset Reuse (PSAR)	Gigabit Voucher Scheme (GVS)
What?	Installation of dark fibre network across Belfast, connecting approx. 100 council buildings.	Re-use of (Streets Ahead) ducting that has already been laid in the city centre.	Voucher scheme to make full-fibre more affordable to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
Why?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Future-proof the council network for 20-25 years. 2. Provides an opportunity for a telecoms provider to install a new fibre network infrastructure across the city. The successful supplier may then choose to provide fibre services to residents and businesses. 	Significantly reduce the disruption, cost and timescales for fibre deployment.	Help organisations get connected, or improve their current broadband connections.
Where?	All of Belfast	Belfast City Centre – specifically the redeveloped ‘Streets Ahead’ zones	Available to SMEs in all council areas.
Procurement required?	Yes	Yes	No
Funding request	£11,359,200	£206,000	Funding to be managed centrally by DCMS

3.4 A BCC ‘Dark fibre’ network provides us with:

- Additional control to manage our network in the way we determine is best to meet our business requirements,
- A more secure purpose built point-to-point network,
- Almost unlimited bandwidth potential of optical fibre.

3.5 In addition, the successful supplier has the potential to maximise the availability and benefit of gigabit capable broadband services to public sector, business and residential users using any spare capacity they build into the network. The geographical coverage of the proposed public building fibre network is provided in **Appendix 1**.

3.6 DCMS has now indicated that awards for the Gigabit Voucher Scheme will not be provided to individual projects, but will be managed centrally by DCMS. The impact of this decision will need to be worked through to determine what resources will be required by Belfast City Council to ensure local SME’s can maximise benefits from the new Voucher scheme.

3.7 Funding of £360,000 is also being sought from Invest NI for a digital transformation programme.

	<p>This will help maximise take-up of fibre services and realise the potential of the gigabit voucher scheme for Belfast. The programme will raise awareness of digital transformation opportunities and provide an in-depth diagnostic on each business, along with tailored one to one mentoring support to establish and implement digital transformation. The focus of the programme is to increase turnover to drive sustainable growth and create higher-level jobs within the city.</p>
3.8	<p>The programme will provide up to 320 participant businesses with an opportunity to access events and workshops throughout the duration of the programme. Participants will be recruited on a rolling basis. It is anticipated that the engagement with businesses will begin from January 2019 and will run for 3 years.</p>
3.9	<p>As already agreed the next key step in the delivery of the Belfast LFFN Programme will be a tender exercise to procure expert Technical and Procurement Advisors with telecoms expertise to assist with the procurement of the PSAT and PSAR projects. Core elements of this support will be procurement, technical design, market analysis, modelling and contracts. The procurement of expert Procurement and Technical Advisors will assure quality and value for money through best practice design, procurement and contract development. Key to receiving value for money for the PSAT procurement will be the use of competitive tendering processes that are open to all technically and financially capable service providers in the market.</p>
3.10	<p>Regular updates will be provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as the project progresses.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.11	<p>The Council has been awarded £11.5 million subject to due diligence tests from the Department of Culture Media and Sport's (DCMS).</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.12	<p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	Appendix 1 - Geographical coverage of fibre network