
Council Meeting

23 June, 2015

Booklet 1

Answer to Written Question

1. **QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Lapsa**

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment

TEXT OF QUESTION:

Is the Cabinet Member aware of the match funding available from the Government for infrastructure development for broadband provision?

We know broadband is crucial for the country's economic future so can the Cabinet Member inform the Council of their plans to help Coventry be a leader in developing superfast broadband for businesses and residents alike.

Response:

The Council recognises the ever increasing need for fast and reliable broadband for all residents and businesses across the City. In support of this, several initiatives are in place to ensure connectivity options are developed and available. As an example the Broadband Connection Voucher scheme (formerly Super Connected Coventry), administered by CCC, has supported over 500 businesses to access superfast broadband at speeds comparable with the very best national standards.

Great consideration has been given to the match funding available from both Europe and Government to help provide broadband infrastructure in the City. A significant limitation of this funding is that any funds drawn down would need to be matched by Coventry City Council capital in the absence of alternative currently available sources.

Some 91.7% of the City's properties currently benefit from access to superfast broadband. The latest analysis suggests that to raise this coverage figure up to 95% of properties will cost approximately £3.6m, therefore requiring £1.8m of City Council financing. It has been concluded that this level of expense cannot be justified given all the other pressures on its diminishing budget. However the Council is continuing to explore other potential financing arrangements.

For further information, please see an extract from a recent press release in relation to this issue:-



The Builders Merchants Federation was the first firm to sign up to the Super Connected Coventry project. Managing Director John Newcomb said "Our members are right across the country, so the move from London to Coventry was an important step to offer better service to our members. We now offer a meeting hub for members here in the Midlands, but of course more and more of our services and operations now need to be online. Being a part of a Super Connected Coventry is a vital part of our IT strategy."

Coun Kevin Maton said “The Super Connected Coventry Project is helping to bring superfast and ultrafast broadband to businesses across the City. It’s critical that businesses and organisations in Coventry can access and use the latest superfast and ultrafast broadband connectivity. Companies of all sizes can now trade across the globe, taking advantage of the benefits of doing business online. But they need the latest technology and fastest connections and that’s why this project is so important. It’s vital to our competitiveness as a city and it will help create and safeguard jobs.”