

Council – 6th December 2016

**Agenda Item 8
Recommendation from Cabinet
1st November 2016**

Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 1 November 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor A Khan (Deputy Chair)
Councillor F Abbott
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor K Caan
Councillor K Maton
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor E Ruane

Deputy Cabinet Members Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor P Seaman
Councillor C Thomas
Councillor D Welsh

Non-Voting Opposition Members: Councillor J Blundell
Councillor G Crookes

Other Members: Councillor S Bains
Councillor R Lancaster (Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination
Committee)
Councillor S Walsh
Councillor G Williams

Employees (by Directorate):

Place M Yardley (Executive Director), D Cockroft, L House,
A Walster, A Williams
People G Quinton (Executive Director), L Gaulton, J Moore
Resources C West (Executive Director), L Hughes, P Jennings, L Knight,
J Newman,

Apologies: Councillor R Ali, J Innes and J Mutton

RECOMMENDATION

52. Increasing Coventry's Superfast Broadband Coverage

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which sought approval of proposals for investment to increase Coventry's superfast broadband coverage.

The Government expected that 20,000 new jobs and £6.4bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) would be created in the UK by 2024 as a result of investment in broadband infrastructure.

Coventry's broadband coverage currently lagged behind that of similar areas. Superfast broadband connections (over 20Mbps) were available in just 91.7% of properties in Coventry, which compared poorly to other areas and was a long way from the Government target of 95% of properties having superfast broadband by 2017. Birmingham, Derby and Leicester were in the top 40 for broadband speeds, while Coventry was 74th out of 185.

European funding was being made available to improve superfast broadband infrastructure that served small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This funding would target areas containing concentrations of SMEs, but would not serve them exclusively; residents and larger businesses would also benefit as the infrastructure in the target areas improved as a result of the project. Ultimately, the project would help the city improve its superfast broadband coverage considerably as part of its Digital Strategy, which was under development and due to be formally adopted by the end of 2016.

In order to access this funding, the Council must provide match funding. Coventry's contribution to an overall £15m package of improvement across Coventry and Warwickshire would be £2.55m, which was proposed to come from corporate capital resources. In addition to a European grant of £4.86m, Growth Deal funding of £4.3m had been requested from Government. The project would be completed by the established Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Broadband Project (CSW Broadband). A further one off investment of corporate monies was proposed to project manage on behalf of the Council for a period of 2 years up to a maximum of £150k.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

1. **Agree one-off corporate funding for up to £150,000 to project manage the Council's investment and work as part of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Broadband (CSW Broadband) team to secure ongoing funding into Coventry's Broadband Infrastructure.**
2. **Recommend that Council:-**
 - a) **Approve capital investment of up to £2.5m for Superfast Broadband Infrastructure to lever in both European Regional Development funding and Growth Deal funding for investment into Coventry's broadband infrastructure.**

- b) Approve the addition of £2.55m to the Corporate Capital Programme, profiled as appropriate in terms of financial year.**