
To: The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
Date: 15th November 2017

Subject: Recommendations from the Digital Strategy Task and Finish Group

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To inform the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) of the recommendations arising from a select committee style meeting of the Digital Strategy Task and Finish Group with the three main suppliers in the city.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board are recommended:
- 1) To fully endorse the progress made on the Digital Strategy and request the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth prioritise this work to enable Coventry to become the leading local authority in digital connectivity.
 - 2) To encourage all Members to lobby local MP's to address the issues around delays to adoption of highways on large developments
 - 3) That the appropriate Cabinet Member consider the possibility of a Members liaison group to look at the issues raised including Section 58 issues.
 - 4) That the Cabinet Member for City Services identify ways to speed up the process for adoption of highways to enable access for connectivity.
 - 5) That the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth ensure that connectivity is considered at the planning stage for large developments.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Following on from the Digital Strategy Task and Finish Group that reported during the municipal year 2016-17, the group was extended with the purpose of meeting with the main digital suppliers in the city. Members had the opportunity to question them on their plans and priorities, what the main barriers to these plans and priorities are and what the Council could do to support them in delivering their plans and priorities.
- 3.2 On the 18th October members of the task and finish group (Cllr Brown, Cllr McNicholas, and Cllr Ridley) met separately with CityFibre, Virgin Media and Openreach and BT.
- 3.3 All three suppliers were asked to prepare a 10 to 15 minute presentation covering:
- Their existing infrastructure within the City – how many connections you have, average speeds etc. , sectors covered (i.e. business, residential), where these connections are (a map would be great if possible)
 - Their future plans for the City, where you have committed plans for investment within Coventry.
 - As a company how will they be able to support the aspirations of the Digital Coventry strategy

3.4 Further questions they were asked to prepare for were:

1. How can you provide an improved service to local residents? Specifically on the matter of new build housing estates. We, along with the residents, find the delays frustrating. What are your views on the matter and what could be done to resolve it?
2. With cyber-related crime, including scams, phishing, as well as grooming and stalking now accounting for more than 52% of all crimes reported, what value added services can each vendor offer to protect the SMEs and citizens of Coventry from this growing threat? Tell them about the idea of creating a 'Cyber safe City'. Can the suppliers offer funding for preventative solutions to fight cybercrime such as Joint CCC/vendor internet security campaigns/advertising, educating the businesses and citizens on security. What ideas and propositions do the suppliers have on this theme?
3. Councils around the UK are seeking new revenue streams because of the austerity measures. What incentives might the provider offer the Council to take its infrastructure across our land? We are thinking of some form of profit share for every new customer signed up.
4. How will the suppliers maximise/add value to the work being done with the CSW Superfast Broadband project?

4 CityFibre session

4.1 Key points raised:

- They operate a social value model which focuses particularly on the SME business sector
- They create infrastructure competition to reduce prices and increase choice
- End objective is fibre to the home (FTTH)
- They are an open access provider, which means any user can access the fibre
- They have an inward investment model, which has 10 cities short-listed, one of which is Coventry. The resource is available, next step is internet service provider (ISP) commitment.
- If they are successful with securing the ISP commitment and Coventry are selected as one of the 10, Coventry could become one of the best digitally connected cities in the UK and Europe
- They will be working with Local Authorities to help secure DCMS funding through the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Fund – Coventry and Warwickshire is one of the 6 pilots announced.
- Coventry is an example of partnership working, which should be more productive.

4.2 Members asked questions on the following areas:

- Recently Coventry have started to engage better in this area and there is a real cross-party appetite to take this forward. Do you agree that this position will make Coventry a more attractive city both the businesses and residents?
Yes – they are holding an event at the Ricoh Arena, with the focus on future-proofing your business in the digital age, promoting Coventry as a location that offers excellent digital connectivity.
- How we compare to other countries.
Generally the UK is behind other European countries such as Spain and Portugal, however Coventry is ahead of the game within the UK and our digital offer is better than most.
- How can domestic connectivity issues be addressed as well as those to the commercial sector?
They will be working with Local Authorities on LFFN applications. They have also raised £200M to build 1M FTTH premises there are approximately 100,000 addressable premises in Coventry. Fibre to the home has to be done at scale, on a city wide basis,

which is how the ISP's will market it. Issues around access to new developments and adoption of highways after developments are completed

Changes to national planning policy would help in this area, and it is considered within the draft Local Plan

5 Virgin Media

5.1 Key points raised:

- They are currently finalising their 2018 build plans
- They have started engaging with local authorities, both broadband and highways teams. The intention is to work with local authorities for less disruption and to work within Council's priorities.
- They have about 40-50 liaison officers across the country.
- They have held events locally to make sure residents are aware of any works going.
- Issues they face are:
 - Section 58 issues, sometimes the information is late onto the gazetteer
 - Restrictions on the use of the carriageway
 - Ownership of footpaths on housing association land,
 - Existing condition and reinstatement of footways
- It has been useful the part funding of a highways officer for 6 months which provides a named contact
- Areas of development need to be cost effective as they operate on a commercial model, any decisions need to be commercially viable and cost competitive.
- They don't rely on any public money. However they do want to work with local authorities to support residents.
- About 97% of residents will be on a decent broadband by end of 2107, superfast and ultrafast. This is a national Government objective to achieve 95% superfast broadband coverage (24 Mbps) by the end of 2017 and to add at least 2% after that date. This compares with speeds of up to 300 Mbs from Virgin Media
- In certain areas residents can put in a contribution of a certain % to address some of the access issues.
- The key blockage is the Section 58 issues and access to the footway
- They have been working in partnership with developers, which they see as a sales opportunity, but in future will be covered by the Local Plan.

5.2 Members asked questions on the following areas:

- What are the plans and timescales for the rest of the city?
- What are the barriers that the Council can unlock?
- How can we influence those areas with no estimated completion date to come on board?
- What is being done to future proof work; wire vs wireless?
 - They are trialling 5G for use in rural areas where cable and fibre are an issue, but technology advances quickly. Their network is Gigabit ready.

6 BT/Openreach

6.1 Key points raised:

- BT and Openreach are two separate companies. Openreach do not engage with retail customers.
- The whole city has access to the Ethernet – fibre throughout the city
- CSW project will support 5000 premises in the city with fibre to the premise, excluding the urban centre.
- City Council can support with co-funding community fibre partnership (CFP) in 'white areas'. CFP is where communities come together to decide for themselves how they want to co-fund provision of Openreach network in their areas. The gap

in costs can be met whether by the local authority (if a white area) or by the community themselves (in any area not just white areas).

- Fibre on demand can by-pass cabinets via other communication providers
- The size of coverage is due to the fact that coverage is already there, with existing ducts.
- Openreach have a team who liaise with developers and provide free FTTP for developments >30 premises, for <30 this still may be free or contribution required from the developer. City Council to remind planners to enable that
- They have embraced FTTP (fibre to the premise) and are the largest provider in the UK. Openreach are a wholesale provider and are making the connection point closer to home at a retail service provider level.
- International leaders on cybersecurity and have produced a guide in partnership with KPMG.
- They provide Customer Network Services to support large commercial developments to ensure that connectivity requirements are included with the developers

6.2 Members asked questions on the following areas:

- How can the “white areas” on the map be addressed?
 - White areas (no superfast access) can be addressed using CSW funding
 - Full Fibre can be provided if required via Community Fibre Partnership and Openreach FTTP/CFP will be registered for LFFN (Local Full Fibre Network) vouchers
 - Is there demand for the larger capacity for example 110+ gig, and what would drive demand up?
 - Currently there is no visibility of this outside of Corporate and Network Operator use, where Ethernet is used.
- What % of the city will be covered by the end of the plan?
 - From CSW – almost 100%
- What relationship do you have with developers?
 - Engaged with new build builders on both commercial and domestic developments
 - Openreach offers free FTTP on developments >30 premises
- How are buildings with multiple tenants and business parks dealt with?
 - Openreach has a Multi Dwelling Fibre solution.
 - Needs to be done with the landlord’s permission.
 - Often the landlord pay and the costs are included in the rental fee
- What are the main barriers faced?
- What are considerations for connectivity in the wider Friargate plans as well as other major projects such as City Centre South?

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