

Cabinet

6<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration - Councillor J O'Boyle  
Cabinet Member for City Services - Councillor J Innes

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

**Recommendations from the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) Digital Strategy Task and Finish Group**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

Members of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) Digital Strategy Task and Finish Group invited three digital service suppliers to a meeting discuss:

- 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.

The representatives also discussed ways that the Council could support their plans and address barriers to their plans.

Members of the Task and Finish Group identified recommendations which were endorsed by the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) at their meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended:

- 1) To request that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration promote this work to enable Coventry to become the leading local authority in digital connectivity including participating in the piloting of 5G for the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 2) To encourage all Members to lobby local MP's to address the issues around delays to adoption of highways on large developments

- 3) To request that the Cabinet Member for City Services consider the possibility of an Elected Member liaison group to look at the issues raised including Section 58 issues.
- 4) To request that the Cabinet Member for City Services identify ways to speed up the process for adoption of highways to enable access for connectivity.
- 5) To request that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration ensure that connectivity is considered at the planning stage for any developments.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 - individual questions, responses and key points

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

[Digital Coventry Strategy – Cabinet, 21 February 2017](#)

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No – this report has not been considered by Scrutiny, but the recommendations have been agreed by the Business, Enterprise and Economy Scrutiny Board (3) at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title: Recommendations from the Digital Strategy Task and Finish Group**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 At their meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017, Cabinet approved the Digital Coventry Strategy. The aim of the strategy is to:
- To set the scene for Coventry City Council and partners for the future direction of digital services, infrastructure and innovation.
  - To be an over-arching document that gives a clear direction of where the Council, working alongside all of our partners, wants to be in the next five years – recognising that we will continually adapt and evolve to keep up-to-date with the latest advances in digital technologies.
  - To focus limited public resources on achieving the best digital outcomes across the whole Council, the city and beyond. To encourage and direct investment in the digital programme by others and to maximise limited public resources.
  - To encourage services, people and organisations to work together to share developments and knowledge.
  - To address the growing demand for digital services and focus on what residents want in order to deliver outcomes that matter to them.
  - To enable the Council, residents, businesses and partners to get the most out of digital.
- 1.2 At their informal meeting on 28th June 2017 it was agreed that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) would continue with the Digital Strategy Task and Finish group that had been established the previous municipal year.
- 1.3 The main aim of this task and finish group was to meet 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.

### **2 Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 **Option 1: Do nothing:**
- 2.2 Members considered that there was sufficient evidence from the suppliers to identify recommendations to Cabinet
- 2.3 **Option2: Identify recommendations for the Cabinet.**
- 2.4 Members of the task and finish group wanted to hear from the three main Internet infrastructure providers in the local area, so they could consider what options were available to the Council to support an improved digital infrastructure for both residents and businesses in Coventry.
- 2.5 On the 18<sup>th</sup> October the task and finish group met separately with CityFibre, Virgin Media and OpenReach.
- 2.6 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

2.7 Further questions they were asked to prepare for were:

- 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?
- 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?
- 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.
- How will the suppliers maximise/add value to the work being done with the CSW Superfast Broadband project?

2.8 Each supplier presented their information followed by detailed questioning from Members on the task and finish group. Details of the individual questions, responses and key points can be found at Appendix 1

2.9 The key themes identified from the sessions were as follows:

- Coventry has the potential to be at the forefront of digital connectivity and innovation, and could be a desirable destination for businesses and residents
- At an operational level, there are barriers to connectivity due to issues with adoption of the highway
- All partners are working together to achieve close to 100% coverage for the city.

### **3 Recommendations**

3.1 Following the evidence provided by the three suppliers, Members of the Board identified the following recommendations, subsequently agreed by the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

3.2 Cabinet is recommended:

- 1) To request that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration promote this work to enable Coventry to become the leading local authority in digital connectivity including participating in the piloting of 5G for the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 2) To encourage all Members to lobby local MP's to address the issues around delays to adoption of highways on large developments
- 3) To request that the Cabinet Member for City Services consider the possibility of an Elected Member liaison group to look at the issues raised including Section 58 issues.
- 4) To request that the Cabinet Member for City Services identify ways to speed up the process for adoption of highways to enable access for connectivity.
- 5) To request that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration ensure that connectivity is considered at the planning stage for any developments.

#### **4 Results of consultation undertaken**

- 4.1 No public consultation has taken place on this matter. However Members are aware of the importance of digital connectivity to both residents and businesses, through case work and petitions submitted.

#### **5 Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 5.1 There is no specific timetable for implementing this decision, but should form part of the on-going delivery of the Digital Coventry Strategy.

#### **6 Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

##### **6.1 Financial implications**

Other than officer time, there are no direct implications of the recommendations in this report. Once specific proposals have been identified to implement the recommendations, costs will be identifiable. Any investment requirements would be reported to members for approval as necessary.

##### **6.2 Legal implications**

There are no legal implications.

#### **7 Other implications**

None

#### **8 How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))?**

- 8.1 These recommendations enhance the Digital Coventry Strategy which supports the Council Plan as digital changes create the opportunity for innovation and growth, improving the lives of Coventry residents and helping the Council to deliver outcomes in a more effective and efficient way, working with partners and residents.
- 8.2 The Digital Coventry Strategy supports the CWLEP Strategic Economic Plan by unlocking programmes that address digital connectivity.
- 8.3 The Digital Coventry Strategy also aligns with the WMCA Strategic Economic Plan by promoting digital as a key driver to growth and productivity.

#### **9 How is risk being managed?**

- 9.1 The management of any risk arising from these recommendations will come under the risk management scheme associated with the Digital Coventry Strategy.

#### **10 What is the impact on the organisation?**

- 10.1 There should be no additional impact on the organisation that hasn't been considered in the Cabinet Report 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017.

#### **11 Equalities / EIA**

These recommendations should address any inequality of access to digital connectivity currently experienced by some areas of the city.

**12 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

None

**13 Implications for partner organisations?**

Partner organisations have been involved in the development of these recommendations and will benefit

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Paul Ward	Head of ICT and Digital	People	08/12/17	01/02/18
Gary Griffiths	Lead ICT Strategy Delivery Manager	People	08/12/17	05/02/18
Colin Knight	Director of Highways and Transportation	Place	01/02/18	05/02/18
<b>Elected Members</b>				
Councillor J McNicholas		Members of the Digital Strategy Task and Finish Group	16/02/18	
Councillor R Brown			16/02/18	
Councillor G Ridley			16/02/18	
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (Officers and Members)</b>				
Phil Helm	Finance Manager	Place	31/01/18	01/02/18
Ewan Dewar	Finance Manager	Place	01/02/18	12/02/18
Julie Newman	Legal Services Manager	Place	12/02/18	13/02/18
David Ashmore (on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive (People))	Director of Customer Services and Transformation	People	24/01/18	15/02/18
Councillor J O'Boyle	Cabinet Member for Jobs and Economy	-	15/02/18	15/02/18
Councillor J Innes	Cabinet Member for City Services	-	14/12/17	14/12/17

This report is published on the council's website: [www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings)

## Appendix 1 - individual questions, responses and key points

### 1 CityFibre session

#### 1.1 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.

#### 1.2 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

### 2 Virgin Media

#### 2.1 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.

## 2.2 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.

## 3 **BT/Openreach**

### 3.1 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.
- Can support community fibre partnership, where communities come together to decide for themselves how they want to address “white areas”. The gap in costs can be met wither by the local authority or by the community themselves.
- 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.
- They have a team who liaise with developers and 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

### 3.2 Members asked questions on the following areas:

- How can the “white areas” on the map be addressed?
- Is there demand for the larger capacity for example 110+ gig, and what would drive demand up?
- 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
- How are buildings with multiple tenants and business parks dealt with?  
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.