

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 11 November 2014

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Strategy for Next Generation Internet Connectivity

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the Council with a Strategy in support of Next Generation Internet Connectivity across East Lothian. A full copy of the proposed Strategy has been published in the Members Library (Ref 216/14, November bulletin).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve the adoption of the Strategy for Next Generation Internet Connectivity across East Lothian.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The last two years have seen significant developments in the roll out of superfast broadband (defined as speeds greater than 24Mbps). BT have almost completed their commercial deployment and the early phases of the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Project are underway.
- 3.2 Current indications are these initiatives will deliver superfast broadband to between 90% and 95% of premises within East Lothian. The Digital Scotland programme also aims to deliver at least 2Mbps capability to the remaining 5% by 2018. The majority of premises who do not receive superfast broadband as part of these roll outs are likely to be in rural areas.

These projects have raised awareness and expectation across East Lothian. However despite their high profile nature there is still a lot of misunderstanding, misinformation, and exaggeration about what will be delivered, the technologies involved, and the timescales.

Although not a direct provider, the Council has a key role to play in ensuring the best possible outcome for East Lothian, especially with respect to the 5%-10% of premises that are unlikely to receive superfast

broadband. Consequently this Strategy, aimed at supporting and maximising Next Generation Internet connectivity has been developed. It will help ensure a consistent and coherent approach that will enable best use of the Council's limited resources and options for intervention.

- 3.3 Approval was given to tender for specialist consultants to assist with the development of the Strategy as the Council did not have the relevant skills or experience. Farrpoint, a well respected organisation with an impressive track record in this field were subsequently appointed.

In developing the Strategy Farrpoint undertook an extensive series of stakeholder meetings. The stakeholders included local businesses, residents, Elected Members, representatives from Community Councils and Council Officers.

Whilst still in draft form, the Strategy was presented to both the Sustainable Economy Partnership and also the Council Management Team before being finalised.

- 3.4 The strategy document is intended to serve a number of purposes.
- It sets out an approach for the Council to help ensure the best possible connectivity outcome for East Lothian is achieved.
 - It provides clear information about broadband and its associated technologies in an East Lothian context.
 - The background section sets out the relevant demographics of East Lothian, the linkages with existing Council policies / strategies and details the benefits of broadband to businesses and residents as identified by research carried out by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
 - The summary of existing telecoms provision across East Lothian will act as a reference point against which progress made in implementing this and against which related action plans can be measured.
 - The expected outcomes from the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Project are detailed along with an outline of the other Scottish and UK wide initiatives intended to improve connectivity.

- 3.5 The Strategy identifies four key areas of focus that require co-ordination and leadership by the Council to ensure a coherent approach is adopted.

These are:

- Maximise the outcomes of the superfast broadband programme in East Lothian to ensure the greatest possible coverage.

90% - 95% of premises in East Lothian are likely to be enabled for superfast connectivity. The key roles for the Council will be to

ensure Macmerry Industrial Estate is covered and to promote and encourage take up of Superfast Broadband across the county.

- Enhance the funding opportunities for improving internet connectivity to rural communities in East Lothian.

Rural areas are likely to make up the bulk of the 5% - 10% of premises that will not receive superfast broadband. State Aid rules make it difficult for the Council to intervene directly. However a key role will be to identify and support funding opportunities which can be accessed by Community Councils through Community Broadband Scotland.

- Investigate methods for attracting infrastructure suppliers to deliver services in East Lothian.

A number of smaller niche infrastructure suppliers have been identified that have the potential to deliver services that could benefit businesses and residents within East Lothian. A key role for the Council will be to make East Lothian an attractive business proposition.

- Develop a Strategy Working Group to ensure a co-ordinated approach and drive progress, this was a key part of the advice provided by Farrpoint.

3.6 An action plan to assist in the delivery of the Strategy is included in Appendix A. In anticipation of the strategy being adopted, significant work has already been undertaken on a number of the items included in the plan.

- A good relationship has been forged between East Lothian Council and the Scottish Government's Superfast Broadband Team. There is regular dialogue between East Lothian Council and the team on matters such as planning, communication, the phasing of the project and the areas likely to be included.
- Relationships have been forged with Community Broadband Scotland who will have a key role to play in working with communities to enable connectivity to the 5% to 10% of, primarily rural, premises unlikely to receive superfast connectivity.
- An event was run during the recent East Lothian Business Week to bring together local businesses, providers such as BT and the Scottish Government's Superfast Broadband Team.
- A similar event for Community Councils has also taken place and attempts are being made to aggregate demand through the Community Planning processes. This will enable Community Broadband Scotland to work with these communities to deliver suitable connectivity solutions.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Access to affordable high speed broadband is a key priority for the Council and is in support of The Council Plan 2012-17, the East Lothian Community Planning Economic Development Strategy, Single Outcome Agreement and Digital Inclusion objectives. There are particularly close tie ins with the Digital Inclusion strategy which is currently providing free wifi access to three community centres and the Economic Development strategy which is trialling free wifi in public spaces in Haddington Town Centre.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – none.
- 6.2 Personnel – none.
- 6.3 Other – Officer support mainly from those involved in Economic Development, Community Planning and IT will be required to deliver the action plan (see Appendix A) associated with the Strategy.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Report to Members Library Service - East Lothian Next Generation Internet Connectivity Strategy (Ref 216/14, November bulletin)

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Appendix A - Action Plan

Action Ref	Outcome A: Maximise/Optimise the outcome of the Step Change Programme in East Lothian	Action	Indicator of success	Timescale	Lead
A1	Develop relationship and ongoing engagement with SG, BT and other providers	<p>Exert influence at key decision points in the management of the BT contract to ensure that local priorities are considered in any decision that impacts the planned premises to be served in East Lothian and that East Lothian achieves the same if not better outcome as to what was initially planned by BT.</p> <p>Identify priority areas in East Lothian where the need for broadband is greatest (in support of East Lothian aims and objectives) and assess the likelihood of Step Change not delivering in these areas.</p>	Close and trusted relationship formed with Scottish Government Digital Scotland team and BT.	Lifespan of Digital Scotland Project	Economic Development Manager & Service Manager – IT Infrastructure
A2	Contribute to the debate on effective use of the innovation/investment fund	Provide an informed and practical view on technologies that can achieve a better outcome for those premises earmarked for an 'in-fill' solution in the context of East Lothian (potential to use outcomes from Humbie broadband project/trials and external advisors to inform the debate).	Successfully guide the Step Change team on effective use of the innovation_/ investment fund based on transfer of knowledge from East Lothian.	Lifespan of Digital Scotland Project	Economic Development Manager & Service Manager – IT Infrastructure

A3	Digital Participation	Provide local assistance to Programme 4 of the Infrastructure Action Plan covering Digital Participation to ensure highest take-up of broadband within the Council area.	East Lothian recognised by the Digital Scotland team/BT for high take-up relative to other Local Council areas. Effective correlation with the Digital Inclusion Action Plan.	Lifespan of Digital Scotland Project	Economic Development Manager & Equalities Policy Officer
	Outcome B: Enhance funding opportunities for improving Internet connectivity in East Lothian	Action	Indicator of success	Timescale	Lead
B1	Assist communities to help themselves	Identify active community projects in rural areas unlikely to be covered through Step Change, and with them submit expressions of interest to CBS for these projects bringing together communities where appropriate	Number of active communities created and projects submitted	2014/15	Economic Development Manager
B2	Support an overarching joined up approach for delivery in hard to reach areas	Take the initiative to capture the make-up, requirements and firm demand of the hard to reach areas across East Lothian to raise the profile of East Lothian to Scottish Government and allow the Council to be prepared and ready to take advantage of any funding opportunities.	Targeted investment at East Lothian from the funding available.	2014-16	Economic Development Manager & Service Manager – IT Infrastructure
B3	Raise the profile of East	Identify areas suitable for a	Operation of a	2014/15	Economic

	Lothian as an innovation hub	broadband trial with the £10m trial fund in mind. Engage with Suppliers early highlighting key areas primed and ready for a trial in East Lothian.	successful trial that raises the profile of East Lothian nationally, allows suppliers to demonstrate what is feasible in rural areas and promotes the advantages of Internet connectivity in support of the Digital Inclusion Strategy.		Development Manager
B4	Capture mobile requirements	Gain a thorough understanding of areas where mobile voice and data coverage is insufficient to meet the needs of businesses and residents in the region.	Reduction in 2G and 3G not spots. Penetration of 4G coverage.	2014/15	Service Manager – IT Infrastructure
	Outcome C: Attract suppliers to improve Internet connectivity in East Lothian	Action	Indicator of success	Timescale	Lead
C1	Understand the extent of Digital Infrastructure in East Lothian	Communicate with organisations in the area that have telecoms infrastructure to understand the extent of infrastructure and mechanisms of use for providing connectivity for community projects e.g. NR, JANET, SWAN, Renewables etc.	Successful capture of the extent of digital infrastructure in East Lothian and mechanisms for use.	On going	Service Manager – IT Infrastructure
C2	Support suppliers	Work with suppliers to assist in reducing any inhibitors/improving	Increased installation of telecoms	On going	Economic Development

		the business case for investment in East Lothian.	infrastructure in East Lothian. Increased presence of Suppliers in East Lothian.		Manager & Service Manager – IT Infrastructure
	Outcome D: Develop a Strategy Working Group	Action	Indicator of success	Timescale	Lead
D1	Working Group	Appoint a short-life Working Group to further develop, deliver and report on the actions set out in the East Lothian Next Generation Internet Connectivity Strategy. Develop measures for monitoring and reporting on delivery and benefits arising from the Strategy	Working Group established with an influential leader. Evidence of benefits arising from strategy	Establish group by March 2015	Head of Corporate Resources
D2	Digital Stimulation	Promote the benefits and effective use of internet connectivity to businesses (e.g. marketing, new sales channels, cloud computing etc).	Increased awareness of the benefits and need of Internet connectivity resulting in increased demand from business. Close working with the Digital Inclusion working group. Business broadband event during East Lothian Business Week	Ongoing	Economic Development Manager
D4	Champion the Internet Connectivity needs of	Represent the Internet connectivity needs of businesses and residents	One point of contact for capturing and	Ongoing	Economic Development

	businesses and residents in the region	in the region. Provide a forum for Community Councils and other interested organisations to contribute to the debate for improving Internet connectivity in East Lothian.	promoting the Internet connectivity needs of businesses and residents in East Lothian.		Manager
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