
WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

RECORD OF OFFICER EXECUTIVE DECISION

Date Of Decision	18 July 2018
Decision Maker	John Hobbs - Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Infrastructure – Ken Pollock.
Brief Description Of Decision	<p>Extension of the Local Body Partnership (LBP) scheme within the Broadband programme. In June 2017 the Council's Cabinet reviewed the 'Connecting Worcestershire Phase 3 Broadband Programme' under agenda item 4; within this item the delegated authority was granted to the Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with Cabinet Member Responsible for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure (CMR), for a number of decisions. Following this an initial 'officer decision' was made on 14 December 2017 (as recorded on the website), comprising two decisions.</p> <p>In relation to the second of these decisions, to reinvest Phase 1 underspend and gainshare, within the boundaries of the recommended option 3, a further decision is now being made to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocate a further £0.5m from Phase 1 underspend to a 'Local Body Partnerships' (LBP) scheme, to support communities that are not yet in existing plans in order for them to progress a 'Community Fibre Partnership' with BT; • further reserve a decision or decisions on the remaining funding fully within the delegation from Cabinet in 'October 2015' and 'June 2017', retaining the remaining funding not allocated as above, for future decisions by the appropriate officers in consultation with the required CMRs.
Reason(s) For Decision	<p>The LBP Scheme has proven to be very popular and 13 communities (c. 400 premises) to date have successfully gone through the design and evaluation process, and a further 10 are awaiting their formal proposals from BT. The initial allocation of £0.5m is expected to be exceeded; the decision to extend the funding is required in order for the successful scheme to continue.</p> <p>The LBP Scheme is a natural progression beyond Phase 3 into areas with very high demand and by design, attracts further funds from BT and local communities, meaning that more areas can benefit from the programme expansion. The decision means that £1m has now been allocated to Worcestershire's LBP scheme.</p> <p>As a number of premises are still expected to be without superfast broadband by the end of the existing programme plans and there are a number of variables between now and the end of the programme it is</p>

	also necessary to reserve the right to make further decisions, as allowed within the boundaries of the June 2017 Council Cabinet delegation.
Alternative Options Considered And Rejected	<p>Three other options were considered and subsequently rejected:</p> <p>Option 1: Not to invest the funds into broadband, therefore returning a proportionate percentage (c.35% in respect of contract 1) back to BDUK; noting that when current deployment is complete c.15,000 premises of Worcestershire premises will be 'left behind' and without access to at least 24Mbps.</p> <p>Option 2: Invest, subject to commercial considerations, the remaining funds from the previously allocated £8.5m of WCC capital funding (i.e. underspend) and further claw-back monies (positive take-up claw-back) via a fourth procurement to appoint a suitable supplier to model and extend coverage beyond the already contracted fibre infrastructure. Although this option would contribute towards extending the fibre footprint, it would require additional resource and it would be projected, as a result of economies of scale, to be less beneficial.</p> <p>Option 3: Delay a decision on extending the LBP scheme until further is known on Defra funding or until the initial £500,000 is fully allocated. This decision was not taken as Defra have delayed a decision on their initial funding round and if we waited until the £500,000 was fully allocated we would risk having to delay proactive communities seeking to resolve their connectivity issues. It should also be noted within the 10 outstanding communities there is a large community project that if all other projects are pursued, would take us beyond the £500,000 allocation.</p>
Any Conflict of Interest declared by a consulted Cabinet Member/ any dispensation granted	No