

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 January 2014



Digital Durham Programme

Report of Don McClure, Corporate Director Resources

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Digital Durham Programme.

Background

- 2 The Digital Durham Programme aims to provide superfast broadband to all businesses, homes and communities across the County.
- 3 Based on the outcome of the procurement process and completion of the programme, 96% of premises in Durham will have access to a superfast broadband (in excess of 24 megabits per second mbps) while 98% will have access to a fibre broadband service (Next Generation Access NGA).
- 4 Services will be sustainable and provided by retail Internet Service Providers (BT, Sky, Talk Talk etc.) at the same rates that are provided across the country.
- 5 All remaining premises in the County will have access to a minimum service of 2mbps and the programme will continue to try and improve this service level.

Digital Durham Programme

- 6 The Programme includes Gateshead, Sunderland, and 5 Tees Valley Councils with Durham taking the lead.
- 7 Primarily superfast broadband services will be available from new fibre enabled cabinets (fibre to the cabinet, or FTTC) which are linked to the existing copper cabinets which provide telephone services.
- 8 There are 9 phases in the deployment plan (build programme) commencing April 2014 and ending September 2016.
- 9 The first fibre cabinet in the programme just off Durham Marketplace is live and was officially launched on 17 December.2013.

- 10 22 cabinets in the first phase were surveyed in December and progressing to build, 31 cabinets are to be surveyed in January 2014 (in Cockfield, Sacriston, Shildon, Staindrop and Willington exchanges areas). A further 82 cabinets are to be surveyed by the end of March 2014.
- 11 The Programme is actively involved in digital inclusion and demand stimulation activities and is:
 - a. Working with BT to develop a programme of activities around individual cabinet deployment.
 - b. A Go On North East member.
 - c. Started digital inclusion training with Neighbourhood Services staff.
 - d. Working with Business Durham to look at a programme of work relating to business engagement and take up on business parks.
 - e. Working with town centre managers to investigate how digital can regenerate our town centres.
- 12 The Programme is seeking additional funding for Teesdale and Weardale from Rural Community Broadband Fund and the final application has to be with DEFRA by 28 February 2014.
- 13 The Programme Team has submitted a digital inclusion project as part of the new ERDF programme (2014-2020) and has attended a number of internal meetings to ensure the proposed ERDF project is aligned with other potential ERDF funded projects.
- 14 Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK)/Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) still have a further £250m to allocate to local programmes and the Digital Durham Team are awaiting further guidance from central government to see if additional funding can be obtained to address the premises which will still have poor broadband provision even after the current programme has finished.

Recommendations

- 15 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided at the meeting on the 27 January 2014.
- 16 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further progress report on the development of the Digital Durham programme at a future meeting of the Committee.

Background papers:

Digital Durham tender documentation, BT bid response, BT Openreach Deployment Plan.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing –None

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity – None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None.

Procurement – None

Disability Discrimination Act –None

Legal Implications – None