

<b>SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 5</b>
<b>17 JUNE 2013</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Executive Director of Strategic Resources**

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### **UPDATE ON SUPERFAST BROADBAND IN RURAL AREAS**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Commission for Rural Communities Committee with an update on Superfast Broadband in Rural Areas following a request made by your Committee.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Commission for Rural Communities Committee are requested to endorse the work undertaken as part of Connecting Cambridgeshire to deliver Superfast broadband.

#### **3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The link to the Sustainable Community Strategy is by helping in ‘delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth’.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are the lead authorities responsible for delivering the Connecting Cambridgeshire project. The council is working in partnership with district councils, the Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership and key partners in business, health and education who belong to the Broadband Delivery Group. Connecting Cambridgeshire is aiming for at least 90% of homes and businesses across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to have access to superfast broadband with speeds of 25Mbps or more and a minimum speed of 2Mbps for the remaining 10% of premises by 2015.
- 4.2 Following a competitive procurement process Connecting Cambridgeshire signed a contract with BT in March 2013. The contract means that Peterborough and Cambridgeshire will have some of the best fibre broadband in the country by 2015.
- 4.3 Connecting Cambridgeshire is working closely with BT to ensure that the roll-out of better broadband starts as soon as possible but that it is undertaken in the most cost effective manner to ensure best use of public money.
- 4.4 The roll-put will involve upgrading over 100 telephone exchanges and installing many new cabinets across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.
- 4.5 Parishes/areas under consideration for the first phase of the roll-out, where people may see some activity over the coming months are detailed in the maps in Appendix A and Appendix B.

- 4.6 The first phase of the roll-out is scheduled to deliver connectivity to a number of premises from December 2013 through to June 2014. Broadband services from a range of internet service providers will be available to premises on a rolling basis during this period.
- 4.7 Further details of the first and subsequent phases of the roll-out plan will be announced at regular intervals from September 2013 as BT deployment planning is completed.
- 4.8 Combined with existing commercial broadband provision, 98 per cent of homes and businesses across the county can expect to have access to fibre-based broadband by the end of the contract.
- 4.9 The Connecting Cambridgeshire website will be updated in the coming months to include a map and Parish Checker allowing residents to find out how their area fits in to the programme, and what they can do to promote the benefits of better broadband and help more people get online.

## **5. KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 Superfast broadband will help to boost growth and create jobs, improve our health and make life easier, learn new skills for success and support people who need it.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Connecting Cambridgeshire is a city-wide project and as such there are no implications for any individual Ward.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 As part of the procurement process notices were placed in the local press. There is a regular Member Officer Working Board which will receive updates on the Superfast broadband project.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 A further update report can be presented to the Commission for Rural Communities Committee at an agreed date in the future. Monitoring of the Connecting Cambridgeshire project will continue through the Member Officer Working Board.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 9.1 There were no background documents used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix A
- 10.2 Appendix B