Connecting Cambridgeshire Partnerships Project – Briefing Note

To: Partnerships Review Committee

Date: 20 November 2014

1.   Purpose

1.1.   The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Connecting Cambridgeshire project to date. The Partnerships Review Committee is asked to note the progress thus far.

2.   Background

2.1.   In 2011 it was recognised that it was important to have a comprehensive broadband infrastructure across Cambridgeshire which can be fully exploited by businesses, communities and public service organisations to:
   - Drive forward economic growth
   - Help build and sustain thriving, connected communities across the county
   - Facilitate streamlined public service delivery.

2.2.   The Superfast Broadband Rollout programme was set up in early 2012 to provide public funding on a gap funded basis to support the rollout and exploitation of broadband infrastructure to areas of the county which would not otherwise be served by commercial operators – "white areas".

2.3.   Shortly after it was set-up the scope was broadened to include additional elements including the provision of public access Wifi, mobile voice and data service availability and the development of the Cambridgeshire Public Services Network (CPSN).

2.4.   The programme includes a number of partners and is funded by a variety of sources. The total planned programme investment is just over £50m, with a capital investment of up to £20m from Cambridgeshire County Council.

2.5.   In 2012 Cambridgeshire County Council (with support from Districts including South Cambridgeshire), undertook a procurement exercise to find a supplier who would co-invest to rollout a Superfast broadband infrastructure to those areas of the county that would otherwise not be covered by commercial provision.

2.6.   In March 2013 at the conclusion of the procurement process, the contract to rollout Superfast Broadband to the "white" areas was awarded to British Telecom (BT) with an expectation that 98% of the county can get fibre-based broadband, more than 90% of homes and businesses will be able to receive superfast broadband speeds of 24 Mbps upwards and a minimum of 2Mbps to 24Mbps will be available to very nearly 100% of premises.

2.7.   The Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) is a £150m central government project to improve mobile voice and data coverage across the country in areas where there is currently no service. State aid constraints mean that the scope is confined to complete "not spots", where no mobile signal can be obtained, and does not include areas of poor or weak signal or areas where only one mobile network operator (MNO) has presence.

3. Superfast Broadband Rollout

3.1. The Superfast broadband rollout delivery is currently on track and in line with the contract schedule for planned completion by December 2015, with the first milestones delivered early. As predicted during the demand registration phase, take-up and pubic enthusiasm for the rollout is generally high.

3.2. For each area the infrastructure rollout includes a series of network planning phases, telephone exchange upgrades, rollout of fibre "spines" to connect exchanges and cabinets and the deployment of fibre enabled street cabinets. Once street cabinets are live, residents and businesses are able to order "Superfast" broadband packages from their choice of Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

3.3. The first fibre enabled street cabinets to be rolled out went live in November 2013, slightly in advance of the first anticipated milestone delivery date of December 2013. To date more than 175 cabinets have been deployed and the number of previously "white" premises now able to get Superfast broadband services has just passed 34,000. Although the nature of the rollout means that the more difficult to reach areas are likely to be the most challenging in terms of cost and timescale, there is reasonable confidence that the December 2015 contractual deadline will be met.

3.4. However there are two new factors which have come to light that mean that a follow-on rollout phase will be required. The first is that some commercial providers have not rolled out their services as extensively as the market consultation exercise in 2012 predicted, which means that a number of postcodes originally designated as "grey" and therefore out of scope need to be re-evaluated. The second is that the baseline data which was supplied by government to support the market consultation was taken from 2008/9. In a high growth county such as Cambridgeshire this has meant that a number of new housing developments were completed in the intervening period without the requisite broadband infrastructure but were not included within the original intervention scope.

3.5. A follow on phase is necessary to address these issues and Broadband UK (BDUK), part of Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) have made an in principle allocation of up to £1.5m to support a phase two broadband rollout in Cambridgeshire which will be combined with existing funding alongside potential European funds, which will in turn leverage further private investment. Planning for an extension phase is currently underway.

3.6. Public support for the rollout of Superfast Broadband remains high and Connecting Cambridgeshire has a network of 120 Broadband Champions countywide, who are keeping their communities informed, helping people get online and encouraging people to take up superfast broadband. Further information can be seen at **Appendix One** – Connecting Cambridgeshire Quarterly Briefing.

4. Public Access WiFi

4.1. Since the launch of the first tablet computers in 2010 and the rapid take up of Smart phones and other mobile devices, the demand for wireless connectivity across all sections of the community – including businesses, residents and public service organisations has grown exponentially.

4.2. WiFi complements Mobile connectivity as it can provide fast speeds, is often cheap or free to the user and can provide good coverage in relatively small areas ("hot spots").

4.3. Public access WiFi has a significant role in meeting the objectives of the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme to: drive forward economic growth, help build and sustain thriving, connected communities across the county and to facilitate streamlined public service delivery.

4.4. Free, simple to use, more ubiquitous public access Wifi can help:

- Support the digital inclusion agenda for Cambridgeshire, helping people to get on-line who would otherwise be excluded from the benefits of accessing the Internet (See Appendix Two for linked benefits).
- Support lower cost public service delivery by facilitating the move towards as many Council services as possible provided on-line as part of the "digital first" approach.
- Contribute to public service efficiency and promote flexible working as local authority (and other public service) staff across Cambridgeshire can be connected to Council systems in many more locations.
- Increase community capacity and resilience by providing connectivity to support social and community based events and activities.
- Support "business tourism" and business growth – by providing more widespread connectivity in open spaces and by helping to promote Greater Cambridge as a "connected city" that mirrors our hi-tech and innovation oriented business clusters.

4.5. The County and District councils in Cambridgeshire have been providing some public access WiFi services for some time. Notably in libraries, council offices and in around 50 community access points around the county. However, these are thinly spread and disparate with many different ways of logging on, and do not provide a consistent area-wide service that the general public can access.

4.6. There are two separate initiatives as part of the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme that are aimed at improving public access WiFi. For the purpose of these initiatives and the funding provision from BDUK, the collective group of County and District councils is known as 'Cambridge'

5. Public Building WiFi

5.1. Cambridge is eligible for funding as part of the government's "Super Connected Cities" scheme which was initially launched in late 2012 and is being overseen by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) which is part of Dept for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). There are two parts to the scheme – funding for public building WiFi and provision of connectivity vouchers for businesses. The latter is being delivered as part of the "Destination Digital" workstream of the Connecting Cambridgeshire Programme.

5.2. A proposal to increase the geographical area covered by the Super Connected Cities plan to include South Cambridgeshire was accepted and a successful bid was submitted on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

5.3. A £720k public building Wi-Fi deployment programme has been developed together with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council and submitted to BDUK for approval. This passed the BDUK assurance process in August 2014 and the grant agreement for the full £720k has now been signed.

5.4. South Cambridgeshire District Council sites are:

South Cambridgeshire Hall	Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne
South Cambridgeshire Depot	Ely Road, Landbeach, Cambridge
Sheltered Housing Hub 1	Elm Court, Drings Close, Over
Sheltered Housing Hub 2	Chaston Road (Acacia Court), Great Shelford
Sheltered Housing Hub 3	Elin Way, Meldreth

5.5.   The scheme provides funding to support the deployment of seamless access to a single SSID (network name) and connectivity for around 70 publically owned and managed sites in the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge areas:

5.6.   This includes Park and Ride sites, community centres, sheltered housing schemes, leisure facilities and children's centres as well as some council offices.

5.7.   The timescale for delivery is short as the funding stream is time limited and all spend must be incurred before end March 2015. Detailed project plans are in place and deployment planning is already underway.

5.8.   The single authentication process is currently being piloted on a small scale in South Cambs Hall, Guildhall, Shire Hall and Rock Road library using the "CambWiFi" SSID (network name).

6.   **Open Spaces Public Access WiFi**

6.1.   Cambridge University has an extensive network (both fixed and Wi-Fi) in many areas of central Cambridge for their staff and students. They wish to expand their coverage of open spaces in Cambridge to support the future needs of the University.

6.2.   As part of a trial to extend the academic network and to provide free public access via The Cloud, the University provided Wi-Fi coverage for the central Cambridge route of the Tour de France bike race. They deployed 20 Wi-Fi access points on street lighting columns, CCTV poles and buildings including Parker's Piece and Kings Parade amongst other locations.

6.3.   The open spaces WiFi service was formally launched at the end of June 2014. Access points have been deployed on buildings and street furniture owned by both Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The launch was extremely successful with over 125,000 unique devices connecting to the network during the week of the Tour de France depart.

6.4.   Following the success of the scheme to date, the University would like to expand their open spaces network – incorporating up to 30 more access points in a number of additional locations including Jesus Green, Christ's Pieces and several other areas. Discussions are also ongoing with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) to provide open space public access Wi-Fi in the East Road area of Cambridge.

6.5.   Work is underway to formalise the arrangement with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the University of Cambridge to enable the ongoing provision of public access Wi-Fi by the University utilising Council street furniture and assets. In the longer term it is hoped that the "CambWi-fi" network SSID will be broadcast via the Cambridge University network.

6.6. The current street light replacement programme in Cambridge is being taken into consideration in any further extension plans and a submission is being made to BDUK for funding for modifications to a small number of street lighting columns to enable them to house Wi-Fi access points.

7. Future work/Direction

7.1. The following work streams are being planned to follow on from the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge deployment of public building Wi-Fi and the expansion of Cambridge University's open spaces network:

- Work with the University of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire local authorities and local business networks to provide a combined map of free public access Wi-Fi locations in Greater Cambridge and publicise availability.
- Explore opportunities with other district councils beyond South Cambridgeshire to widen the use of the "CambWi-Fi" network in public buildings across Cambridgeshire.
- Development of a "Connected village hall and greens" initiative to provide help and support to parish councils and village hall committees to commission Wi-Fi provision for their villages

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Footnote: Project governance is provided via the Connecting Cambridgeshire Programme Board and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Cllr. Nick Wright

Appendix One – Connecting Cambridgeshire update September 2014

Connecting Cambridgeshire Quarterly Brief – September 2014

This quarterly brief aims to update MPs and Members on the progress of the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme. If you have any queries, please contact us on 01223 703293, email contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk, or visit www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

Broadband roll-out

The Connecting Cambridgeshire superfast broadband roll-out has reached over 34,000 homes and businesses across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with high speed fibre.

This significant milestone was achieved just eight months after the first roadside cabinets went live. More than 175 new green cabinets have been installed in over 50 areas across the county, giving thousands of people access to superfast broadband.

The programme is on track to bring superfast broadband over 90,000 properties by the end of 2015, which would not otherwise get it under commercial provision. Some areas are going live earlier than scheduled with many more to come over the next year.

People can find out when they can expect to get faster broadband in their area and view a coverage map on the 'my area pages' at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk , which are regularly updated. A list of areas across that have gone live in the first two phases of the roll-out is also available.

Digital Minister pays tribute to rapid roll-out

"I congratulate Connecting Cambridgeshire on their excellent progress to date. I'm delighted to hear that 30,000 homes and business in the county have joined more than a million others around the UK who are already benefiting from the Government's UK rollout." - Ed Vaizey MP

Digital Economy Minister Ed Vaizey came to Cambridgeshire in August to hear how communities and businesses are benefiting from faster broadband connections and digital technology through the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme.

After visiting the rural village of Spaldwick, where over a third of residents have already upgraded to superfast broadband, the Minister joined celebrations at Willingham Auctions with Bill Murphy, managing director of next generation access for BT; Kim Mears, next generation access director for BT's local network business, Openreach; local councillors and Connecting Cambridgeshire programme partners.

Extending the roll-out

Although the rollout is proceeding very well, there is emerging evidence that there will be less commercially provided broadband than predicted. In addition the high level of housing growth in Cambridgeshire poses a risk that a number of recently completed housing developments will not have adequate provision.

Connecting Cambridgeshire has been allocated additional Government funding as part of the Superfast Extension Programme (SEP) in order to address these additional challenges.

We are now starting the process of consulting with the market again to redraw the "black, grey, white" intervention map to determine where the gaps are likely to be at the conclusion of the current rollout programme and to plan a follow-on phase. We expect to have a clearer picture of what this will look like early in 2015.

By the time the programme is completed, Cambridgeshire will be one of the best connected counties in the country. Most homes and businesses will be able to upgrade to faster fibre broadband, although not everyone will be able to get superfast speeds. In a few very remote areas, alternative technologies will be used to ensure homes and businesses can get better broadband (min 2Mbps).

Broadband Champions

Connecting Cambridgeshire has a network of 120 Broadband Champions countywide, who are keeping their communities informed, helping people get online and encouraging people to take up superfast broadband.

Local councillors, Parish Councils and Community groups are also helping to spread the word when fibre broadband arrives using articles, posters, postcards and display materials provided by Connecting Cambridgeshire.

As the programme progresses, more local volunteers will be needed to help people to make the most of faster Internet access. Connecting Cambridgeshire will be highlighting opportunities during Get Online Week on October (13-19). Volunteers can find out more via the Getting Involved page at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

Business support - Destination Digital

Connecting Cambridgeshire's Destination Digital programme is ensuring that businesses can make the most of faster connections and digital technology to boost the local economy.

Destination Digital offers small businesses broadband connection vouchers up to £3,000, 40% grants up to £4,000 for digital products and free advice on digital technology.

The programme has already assisted more than 500 small businesses: awarding more than 60 grants for digital products and services and issuing over 30 connection vouchers for installing superfast broadband, with free business advice and digital skills training for many more.

Destination Digital is working closely with District Councils and business networks to promote the programme and run workshops to help businesses learn new digital skills. Businesses are being urged to apply for funding now to ensure they don't miss out as the programme only runs until March 2015. They can get more information and apply direct at www.destinationdigital.info

Women and Broadband

Connecting Cambridgeshire has been awarded £75,000 from the Government's Women and Broadband Challenge Fund to help women start or grow their own businesses by getting online with faster broadband.

The extra funding will provide practical help for up to 1500 women to improve their digital skills, grow or set up businesses, and gain support from women's business networks. The six-month programme will be launched at a women's business network event in late September 2014 with funding available until March 2015.

Women-led businesses now represent 20% of all small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the UK. This is one way to remove some of the barriers that make it hard for women-led businesses and entrepreneurs to start up. Further details and online resources will be available at www.destinationdigital.info

Public Wi-Fi

Connecting Cambridgeshire is also working to improve public Wi-Fi and mobile coverage across the county and has launched a free Wi-Fi service in central Cambridge in partnership with the University of Cambridge.

Free public Wi-Fi is part of the Government-funded Super Connected Cities project to improve broadband connectivity and expand wireless technology in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

Thousands of people have already logged through The Cloud to use the network, to keep up with friends, work or study on the move and share experiences. A coverage map and further details are available at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

Appendix Two – Digital Inclusion Impact

Local, digitally-literate workforce enables businesses to thrive

Business growth means prosperity and more people can afford to be online

Digital skills and affordable access enable more homes and businesses to benefit

Improved job prospects and access to:
- cheaper goods
- public services
- better educational opportunities

Economic prosperity

Advantages of being online

Digital inclusion

Digital literacy

Digital public services

Digital literacy and skills increase employability

Fully able to exploit the Internet as a pastime, as an efficient information resource, as a transactional and as a social tool

Digital delivery lowers costs, reducing direct cuts to services

Services moving towards easier, more convenient online delivery

Support for those who can't access digital channels directly

Assisted access will increase inclusion when digital skills are passed on