

B&NES Digital Programme

1 CONTEXT

1.1 The Bigger Picture

The B&NES Digital Strategy is aiming to align with the UK Digital & Connectivity agenda that has continued to grow over the last few years. This growth is in unison with the global trend of increased emphasis on applying digital and connectivity technologies to create public and private benefit, such as

- economic growth
- digital inclusion and
- improved delivery of Public Sector services.

For B&NES the economy has predominantly been reliant on the public sector, retail, leisure and tourism for employment, which has meant that statistically B&NES has now the lowest average weekly wages across the South West and the UK. However recent research has shown that B&NES has particular strengths and advantages in technology related fields. A key economic indicator estimated that “ICT” (or Information and Communication Technology) activities generated some £119m in GVA in B&NES, even though the sector only represents some 3% of total employment.

Therefore, in light of the above the Economic Strategy for B&NES has set its sights on growing higher value jobs while securing key employment sectors such as advanced engineering, creativity and ICT.

The public sector has also been spearheading for greater efficiency gains, especially in the face of budget cuts and needing to explore technology based solutions that will enable eGov services such as online benefit payments or the provision of remote adult health care to be delivered. The enabler for these efficiency gains goes hand-in-hand with enabling the UK citizens to become ‘smarter’, which will be the catalyst for long-term social inclusiveness and inspiring innovation in developing new Internet-enabled services within emerging ‘smart cities’.

Finally, with the continued and growing financial independence from central government, B&NES like many other local authorities are having to deliver services for ‘more for less’ and hence seeking other channels of revenue generation and developing new ways-of-working.

1.2 Digital Objectives

The key digital objectives for B&NES Digital Programme are therefore:

- Increase Digital Coverage, Connectivity and Bandwidth in support of Business Retention, Growth and Innovation
- Increase Digital Coverage, Connectivity and Bandwidth across Rural and Urban B&NES to enable Social Inclusion and Community Safety

- Enable Fibre to the Premises for all new development sites
- Enable Revenue Generation through leveraging Assets and Services
- Enable Public Services to be Streamlined into 'Smart' Services

1.3 Proposed Digital Initiatives To Be Explored

The digital initiatives that are the enablers to deliver these digital objectives are outlined as follows:

- Business Growth objective achieved through
 - Connecting Devon & Somerset programme to increase digital coverage of Superfast Broadband
 - Wholesale Wireless Provider to increase digital coverage of Wi-Fi and 3G/4G
 - Wholesale Fibre Provider to enable Ultrafast Broadband for Enterprise Areas
 - R&D Testbed Mesh Integration to enable product/service innovation
- Social Inclusion objective achieved through
 - Connecting Devon & Somerset programme to increase digital coverage of Superfast Broadband
 - Wholesale Wireless Provider to increase digital coverage of Wi-Fi and 3G/4G
 - Refurbished PCs to provide socially deprived families access to appropriate digital platforms
 - 'New' development planning policies to motivate developers/utility companies to rollout fibre as standard
- Public Services Streamlining objective achieved through
 - Centralising of ICT Services
 - Knowledge Management to improve decision making processes
 - Smart B&NES to enable the delivery of Smarter Services for the future
- Revenue generation objective achieved through
 - Monetizing the potential of fibre ducts that is also intended to deliver Ultrafast Broadband to the Enterprise Areas of B&NES
 - Monetizing the potential of street furniture that is also intended to increase the footprint of wireless coverage