

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

Executive
Forward Plan
Reference

E2328

**Improving Access to Superfast Broadband in B&NES - the
Broadband Delivery UK option**

Date of Meeting	9-Nov-11
The Issue	<i>This report recommends that the Council considers whether or not to begin preliminary work on a Local Broadband Plan with South Gloucestershire and Bristol City Councils, in order to further investigate the costs and benefits of applying for available Government funding for improved broadband infrastructure where the private sector is not delivering</i>
The decision	<p>(1) To NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there are many advantages to the local economy and to individuals to bring Broadband to as many residents and businesses as possible. The private sector will bring superfast broadband to 56% of our residents by 2015. • That the Government is offering funds to support the development of superfast broadband of £670K. The Council would need to contribute £1.045M, making a Government Grant of 39%. • That the project would bring superfast broadband to around 29% to 34% of premises and dwellings, but a significant number of those dwellings do not have Computers, so the number benefitting is likely to be much less. • That the current national take up of Superfast broadband from those to whom it is enabled is only around 5%. For some of our residents with computers and internet access, superfast speed may not be a concern. • That 10% to 15% of premises in our area would still not be reached and therefore not benefit from the expenditure. • That the Council cost of £1.045M would add to our borrowing and to our revenue costs (around £50,000 per annum) in future years to support the borrowing. <p>(2) NOT to prepare a joint plan with Bristol and South Glos under the terms of the Government Broadband UK offer;</p> <p>(3) To ALLOCATE £25,000 of funding from Development and Regeneration reserves, with a brief to be agreed by Cabinet, to identify how internet access can be brought to as many of our residents as possible. This would include investigating the development of Community opportunities in our villages and rural areas..</p>
Rationale for	The Cabinet acknowledges that people living in more rural areas are at a disadvantage due to the lack of planned broadband infrastructure

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decision	upgrades. Improved broadband connectivity would support a diverse range of Council priorities, from supporting private sector jobs growth, to improving the independence of older people. However, the Cabinet is not convinced that the price being asked (over £1M) would be justified by the benefits to a relatively small number of businesses; nor that the terms offered by the government are as generous as being suggested. In addition, the Cabinet felt that advances in technology would overtake any actions the Council might take.
Other options considered	Proceed with the joint arrangements Most residential computer users are satisfied that their internet access runs at a satisfactory speed. The cost to the Council would not be justified by the benefits to a small number of businesses and residents. The terms on offer from the government are not advantageous. In addition, by the time any benefits of proceeding might be enjoyed, the arrangements would be likely to have been overtaken by commercial advances such as satellite technology and existing plans already announced by BT.
The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision	