

Background

Belfast City Council, with the support of a number of organisations, has successfully bid for funding to become a Super-connected City by March 2015. £13.7 million will come from the Urban Broadband Fund to provide a major boost to the city's infrastructure. In addition to this, the Council also intends to contribute an additional £3 million, as part of its Investment Programme, and the private sector will contribute £8 million towards the Project.

The total investment of nearly £25 million means this is one of most significant announcements for Belfast for some time as it will provide a world class digital infrastructure that will attract major foreign investment, create jobs and provide a platform for local business start ups. It also brings major benefits and major improvements in quality of life for citizens of Belfast, for communities, tourists and public sector organisations.

Demand stimulation activities

There are two key strands to the Programme – investment in infrastructure; and capability development and community outreach which will maximize the benefits of the programme.

The funding secured through the Urban Broadband Fund will help provide city wide access to city-wide ultrafast digital infrastructure, both fixed and wireless, enabling Belfast to achieve the status of a world-class digital city.

However the project will also be augmented by a separately funded demand stimulation and digital inclusion programme to ensure maximum uptake and maximum economic, community and social benefits. The latter will target both consumers and local businesses.

Activities for businesses

Our programme of support for businesses will address the knowledge gap that exists among businesses around the potential benefits of ultrafast connections particularly in terms of increased productivity, turnover and efficiency and reduced overheads. To do this, we have developed a funding application to draw down resources from the EU under the European Sustainable Competitiveness programme. This application will bring together the infrastructure support provided by the UBF investment with a layered programme of capacity building support that reflects the levels of engagement, access and knowledge of the business user. In total we plan to engage

7,000 businesses over the course of the programme which will run for two years from April 2013 to June 2015.

Activities for communities

We will also promote and enable social inclusion amongst our citizens by enhancing access to broadband services and providing training for individuals who lack digital literacy. To develop knowledge –based skills within the community we will work with the sector to provide a targeted and layered programme of support to help people get online; carry out more transactions online; use the internet to find employment and develop basic skills required for the current market place. We will also work with organisations that plan to submit applications for European Social Funding in order to channel any knowledge-based skills support towards locations and venues where the infrastructure investment is available.

Core activity of our demand stimulation for consumers programme will include:

- Helping people get online by delivering a variety of digital literacy and educational classes/programme to teach digital literacy and computer training to those with limited or no IT skills;
- Working in partnership with education and service providers to host workshops/digital clinics aimed at creating ‘digitally enabled citizens’;
- Recruiting community broadband champions to raise digital literacy levels in the most deprived parts of the city in order to open up new pathways to economic activity and fuller employment;
- Offering education and mentoring opportunities to promote the benefits of faster broadband for improving and modernising lives as well as adoption of the benefits through community based workshops and seminars; and
- Creating a road show vehicle that can visit local communities allowing the entire community to interact with broadband and experience how it could benefit their lives.

Over the course of the programme we plan to support 5,000 citizens to undertake training to increasing their digital literacy and enable 32 community hubs across the city.

To ensure these targets are met it would be hugely beneficial if access to funding and technical support could be facilitated to increase public access to and adoption of broadband technologies throughout a number of our 22 community centres, 10 leisure centres and other community facilities and publicly owned buildings.

Community Centre – Public Access suites: Associated set up costs of £162,780

Each suite will be equipped with 12 desktop PCs, a networked printer and a projector.

Setup costs per suite

IT Equipment

Item	Cost	Summary Total
12 x Desktop PCs	£5,000	
1 x Data Projector	£500	
1 x Colour Printer	£500	£72,000

Software

Item	Cost	Summary Total
12 x Microsoft Office	£2625	
Desktop re-imaging	£ 500 pa	
Web filtering	£ 170 pa	
Anti-virus	£ 170 pa	£41,580

Networking

Item	Cost	Summary Total
BT Infinity Business Service (Internet provision) or alternative service installation	£1000 pa per centre	
Network Switch	£1200	
Room Cabling	£1200 approx per centre	£40,800

IT Equipment or supplies

Item	Cost	Summary Total
Printer toners	£ 700 pa per centre (based on 3 sets of colour toners approx pa)	£8,400

Community Centre ICT Suite Technical support & maintenance

1. All new PCs purchased for Community Centre ICT suites will be supported under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for both hardware and software. This will need to be defined to meet the specific needs of Community Centres. Agreement regarding resource requirements to maintain suites on an ongoing basis will need to be discussed further as it may require out of hours support and additional resource.
2. Following agreement of an SLA for Community Centres new equipment will fall under the councils ICT equipment replacement policies which currently means that desktop PCs will be replaced after 5 years.
3. Links to the 'Super Connected Belfast' education/community engagement programme will need to be worked through and established.
4. Accidental damage insurance is not included above.