



Report to: Strategic Property & Resources Committee
Subject: Super Connected Belfast Update
Date: 24 October 2013
Reporting Officer: Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance & Resources
Contact Officers: Paul Gribben, Head of Information Services Belfast

1	Relevant Background Information
1.0	This report provides an update on the Super-connected Belfast project following the completion of the Market Test phase of the Belfast Voucher scheme.
1.2	<p>Members will recall the voucher scheme provides up to £3,000 to a business to enable them to access ultrafast broadband. The market testing phase ran from 1 August 2013 to 30 September 2013 and the target locations for the Market Testing phase included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cathedral Quarter• City East / East Belfast Enterprise• Ormeau Business Park• Ortus• Argyle Business Park• North City Business Centre• Harbour Estate.
1.3	This report will update members on this and other aspects of the work being carried out by the Super-Connected Belfast project team.

2	Key Issues																											
2.1	<p>Belfast Voucher Scheme – Market Test Phase Summary</p> <p><u>Note:</u> All applications received by the 30 September deadline will continue to be processed right through to the issuing of a voucher and subsequent broadband installations by telecoms suppliers.</p>																											
2.2	<p>Voucher Scheme Figures – (10 October 2013)</p> <p>Applications: 228</p> <p>Approvals: 114 (4 rejections)</p> <p>Applications outstanding: 110</p> <p>Vouchers: 11</p>																											
2.3	<p>Distribution of Applications</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th> <th>Applications</th> <th>% of total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Argyle</td> <td>38</td> <td>16.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cathedral Quarter</td> <td>43</td> <td>18.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>City East</td> <td>10</td> <td>4.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Harbour Estate</td> <td>55</td> <td>24.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North City</td> <td>27</td> <td>11.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ormeau</td> <td>27</td> <td>11.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ortus</td> <td>28</td> <td>12.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>228</td> <td>100.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Area	Applications	% of total	Argyle	38	16.7	Cathedral Quarter	43	18.9	City East	10	4.4	Harbour Estate	55	24.1	North City	27	11.8	Ormeau	27	11.8	Ortus	28	12.3	TOTAL	228	100.0
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2.4	<p>Outcomes and Benefits (so far!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Belfast Voucher scheme received more applications than any other city and puts us on course to be the most successful of all the cities. • The success of the Belfast Voucher scheme has led to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) using our scheme design and administration processes as the template for all other cities. • The Super-connected Belfast team has developed online and back office applications that can be used as the foundation for administration of a citywide scheme. • We have received positive feedback from both applicants and telecoms suppliers. • Through the market test there is a commitment of up to £400k to provide local businesses with improved high speed broadband connections. • Businesses have indicated through their applications that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ there will be a growth of up to £20m in the local economy, ○ and improving broadband connectivity will be responsible for the creation of at least 300 jobs in the next 3 years. • Local telecoms suppliers were chosen to deliver the majority of 																											

	<p>broadband connections.</p>
2.5	<p>Completing the Market Test Phase The Super-connected team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a lessons learned/review of phase 1 (at a city and national level) • Process all applications through to completion • Conduct a survey of applicants • Invite case studies from successful applicants • Engage suppliers for feedback (local and national level)
2.6	<p>Preparations for City Wide rollout It is anticipated that the Secretary of State for DCMS will announce the decision on the full rollout of the voucher scheme early in November. If the scheme is approved it will see us opening up the full scheme across the whole of Belfast.</p> <p>DCMS have agreed that the vouchers can be applied to businesses in the areas transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh.</p>
2.7	<p>Effective citywide roll out of the voucher scheme will be dependent on having the right amount of skilled resources to successfully deliver the scheme. One of the key lessons learned from the market test was that most businesses required significant support from Council officers to progress an application to approval.</p>
2.8	<p>Based on findings from the market test the Belfast Voucher team it is recommended that additional resources are needed for effective citywide rollout. It is recommended these resources are and are recruited as Fixed-Term posts. It is estimated that there is potential for up to an additional 5 full-time employees to meet the contact centre and administrative requirements of the full scheme.</p>
2.9	<p>Specialist commercial marketing expertise will be required to create the necessary branding and marketing strategy to support the full rollout of the Belfast Voucher scheme. All of the above resources will be financed from the £3M that the Council has already committed to the Super-connected project.</p>
2.10	<p>Metro Wireless Work is progressing well on the scheme to award an exclusive concession contract for the provision of a public city centre wireless zone.</p>
2.11	<p>A Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) is almost ready to release which will begin the procurement of the wireless concession contract. The key task that must be completed before this can happen is to get sign-off from NIE and DRD Roads Service on the technical design that has already been agreed by wireless suppliers.</p>
2.12	<p>It is anticipated that the PQQ will be ready to be released by the end of November.</p>

2.13	<p>Public Building Wi-Fi Discussions will be held with key contacts responsible for managing public buildings that may be suitable for public Wi-Fi. These will shape the specification of requirements for a contract for Public Building Wi-Fi.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>HR</u> The following resources are required to enhance the existing Super-connected Belfast project team, to oversee citywide rollout of the Voucher scheme and the delivery of the Metro wireless and Public Building Wi-Fi strands.</p> <p>Voucher Scheme administration – up to 5 Fixed-Term posts (indicative Scale 6) £112,215 (The voucher team will be scaled up as the take-up of the scheme increases)</p> <p>Branding & Marketing (Planning phase) – £6,000 (This planning phase will see the creation of a branding and marketing strategy for the Super-connected Belfast project. Following creation of the strategy we will have to determine the resources required to implement the strategy)</p> <p>All resources will be financed from the BCC £3M contribution already committed to the Super-connected Belfast project.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no specific Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are asked note the contents of the report and agree to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The recruitment of up to five fixed term posts to meet the contact centre and administrative requirements of the full scheme. - Specialist commercial marketing expertise to create the necessary branding and marketing strategy to support the full rollout of the Belfast Voucher scheme.

6	Decision Tracking
Officer responsible - Paul Gribben, Head of Digital Services	