



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Super-connected Belfast Update
Date:	19 September 2014
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance & Resources
Contact Officer:	Paul Gribben, Head of Digital Services

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Super-connected Belfast programme of work comprises three strands: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belfast Connection Voucher scheme 2. Public Sector Wi-Fi Hotspots 3. Metro-Wireless project
1.2	This report provides updates on the first two strands of the programme and outlines recent significant developments relating to the Metro-Wireless project.

2.	Key Issues								
2.1	<p><u>Belfast Connection Voucher Scheme</u></p> <p>The Belfast Connection Voucher Scheme (BCVS) allows small businesses and social enterprises within the new Belfast City Council boundary area to apply for grants of up to £3,000, to obtain high-speed broadband connections.</p>								
2.1	The Belfast Connection Voucher team is well established in Digital Services and supports the administration of the Voucher scheme for both Belfast and Derry City councils. An update of the current project status is outlined in the table below.								
2.3	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Belfast Voucher Scheme (as of 4th September 2014)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Applications received</td> <td>679</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vouchers Issued</td> <td>289</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vouchers value</td> <td>£752,782</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Belfast Voucher Scheme (as of 4th September 2014)		Applications received	679	Vouchers Issued	289	Vouchers value	£752,782
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2.4 Voucher recipients have indicated that they expect to create 600 jobs and grow their businesses by over £30million in the next 3 years. Examples of two major applications in progress include:

- Townsend Business Park – 39 applications at a value of £115,000
- Conway Mill – 15-20 businesses

2.5 Following a comprehensive review of the Voucher scheme across all participating cities, the Department of Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) are now projecting that whilst there is strong evidence to show the vouchers concept is gaining momentum, voucher take-up will not reach initial predictions.

2.6 To ensure maximum take-up DCMS is now undertaking further work to streamline the scheme to enable suppliers and SMEs in all 22 cities to maximise the number of businesses benefitting, with changes expected to be put in place in September. DCMS are also launching a marketing campaign across all cities which will support our own demand stimulation activities.

2.7 The experience of the Voucher team suggests that direct engagement with businesses is the most successful way of driving up voucher applications. Feedback from early engagement with local companies also suggests that businesses require support to help them maximise the potential of the infrastructure. To this end 15 demand stimulation seminars are to take place across the city. The schedule is as follows:

2.8

Date	Time	Area	Location
25th Sep	Breakfast	City Centre	City Hall
30 Sep	Lunch	City Centre	The MAC
2 nd Oct	Evening	City Centre	The MAC
2 nd Oct	Breakfast	West	Workwest
9 th Oct	Lunch	West	Workwest
15 th Oct	Evening	West	BMC – Springfield Campus
6 th Nov	Breakfast	East	Skainos
13 th Nov	Lunch	East	Skainos
19 th Nov	Evening	East	Skainos
8 th Jan	Breakfast	North	Belfast Castle
15 th Jan	Lunch	North	Belfast Castle
21 st Jan	Evening	North	Belfast Castle
5 th Feb	Breakfast	South	Malone House
12 th Feb	Lunch	South	Malone House
18 th Feb	Evening	South	Malone House

2.9	The schedule of seminars has been carefully planned with telecoms suppliers to ensure they correspond with, supplier roll out plans, areas of current demand and to minimise disruption as a result of physical works. The Voucher Team is planning to hold 3 seminars at each location, morning, lunchtime and evening, on different days to provide the maximum opportunity for businesses to attend.
2.10	With the support of the Lord Mayor and members, the profile of these demand stimulation seminars can be raised to levels that would ensure we connect with as many businesses as possible. The Lord Mayor will launch the seminars in the City Hall on the 25 th September and members are encouraged to promote the seminars within their individual constituencies and beyond.
2.11	<p>Seminar content will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a general overview of the scheme (Super-connected Belfast Team), • explaining how improved connectivity can make business more efficient (local case studies), • and, how improved connectivity can drive job creation and economic growth (expert speakers).
2.12	It is forecast that each event will have an average attendance of 35 equating to 525 attendees across all of the seminars. It is also anticipated that approximately 250-350 businesses will benefit from the vouchers as a result of the events. Should this be achieved, it would deliver almost £1 million of financial support to local businesses.
2.13	<p><u>Public Sector Wi-Fi Hotspots</u></p> <p>The Public Sector Hotspots strand of the Super-connected Belfast programme aims to fund the installation of wireless/Wi-Fi equipment into buildings regularly visited by members of the public. The funding covers broadband connections and equipment, wiring and the cost of installation.</p>
2.13	<p>Public buildings eligible for funding must meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotspots will only be provided within public buildings (owned or long-leased, and occupied by the Council or other public bodies). • The funding is limited to capital works only with an obligation on the Council and its partners (NICS) to operate the service for a minimum of 2 years and to cover all annual revenue costs. • The scheme will cover the capital costs of wireless connectivity within buildings, cabling and where necessary the telecoms connection to the building. • Public Wi-Fi connectivity is primarily for members of the public, however, staff or other groups within a building may also make use of the connectivity if there is spare capacity.
2.14	In total 120 buildings have been identified for inclusion. These are listed in

	Appendix A below. The list is made up of 109 Council buildings and 11 NICS buildings.
2.15	The Public Building Hotspot procurement is underway. The tender closed on the 29 th August. Six submissions were received and it is anticipated that the successful supplier will be selected by mid-September.
2.16	<p><u>Metro Bus Wi-Fi</u></p> <p>The Super-connected Belfast team are also actively working to ring-fence DCMS funding to facilitate the installation of Wi-Fi on the Translink Metro bus fleet. Following positive legal opinion on State Aid the project team are awaiting confirmation from Translink that they can meet the criteria stipulated by DCMS, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the project can be delivered by March 2015, • does not require State aid clearance, • and has a clear and sustainable business case as required by HMT Green Book requirements for ensuring value for money. <p>A decision on whether this addition will be included will be made by the end of September. The estimated cost of the work is £600k and the operating costs will be met by Translink.</p> <p><u>Metro-Wireless</u></p>
2.17	The Metro Wireless concession contract, which aimed to deliver a city centre wireless zone, has experienced unexpected difficulties. Consequently we must now reconsider our approach to delivering this strand of the Super-connected programme.
2.18	Five Telecoms Providers originally applied to take part in the procurement exercise and four successfully met our pre-qualification criteria. However, three of the four pre-qualified organisations withdrew from the procurement during the competitive dialogue process, indicating they were unable to develop a viable commercial business case to sustain a city centre Metro-wireless rollout.
2.19	The remaining supplier (GOWEX) presented a highly attractive proposal which met the aspirations of the Council to have a sustainable widespread Wi-Fi offering in the city centre. The supplier also presented a number of impressive case studies of successful high profile city centre Wi-Fi projects which included, New York, Paris and San Francisco. Regrettably, Gowex has experienced widely publicised financial difficulties which have invalidated their pre-qualification status.
2.20	It is now proposed that the Council takes ownership of the delivery of this project and procure and implement a city centre Wi-Fi service using funding already allocated within our capital programme. The European commission considers that public funding to a single recipient of up to €200,000 (£160,000) over a 3 year period, has a negligible impact on trade and competition, and does not require State Aid notification. Therefore, the Council is free to establish its own city centre Wi-Fi zone within these constraints.
2.21	Initial market research with telecoms suppliers indicates strong interest in a Council funded Wi-Fi network, where Wi-Fi cells are located in areas of high footfall like the grounds of the City Hall. By focussing the installation of Wi-Fi cells on public buildings and by making use of ducting that has already been

installed as part of the 'Streets Ahead' initiative a significant Wi-Fi zone concentrated on the city centre can still be delivered. It should be noted that if this approach is successful at the end of the three year period another €200,000 can be invested to extend the original Wi-Fi zone.

3.	Resource Implications						
3.1	The Super-connected Project Team will continue to manage the three strands of the programme and the Belfast Voucher team will administer voucher applications for Belfast and Derry.						
3.2	<u>Belfast Connection Voucher Scheme</u> Allocated funding of £9.8M will remain with DCMS and will be released based on the take-up of vouchers.						
3.3	<u>Public Sector Wi-Fi Hotspots</u> £1.35M has been earmarked for this strand based on the building list estimates submitted and funding for Translink Wi-Fi.						
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3.4	<u>Metro-Wireless</u> €200,000 (£160,000) over a 3 year period can be allocated to this project without requiring State Aid notification.						

4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	N/A

5.	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to support the series of demand-stimulation seminars that will take place across the city.
5.2	Members are also asked to approve the initiation of a council led city centre Wi-Fi project.

6.	Decision Tracking
	Officer responsible: Ronan Cregan

7.	Key to abbreviations
	DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sport

8.	Documents Attached
	N/A

Appendix 1: Public Sector Hotspot Building list

	Building name	Public sector body	Use	Tier
1	Belfast City Hall	BCC	Civic building	1
2	Belfast Waterfront	BCC	Civic building	1
3	Cecil Ward Building	BCC	Civic building	1
4	Roselawn Crematorium and offices	BCC	Civic building	2
5	Ulster Hall	BCC	Civic building	1
6	City Cemetery - Offices	BCC	Civic building, tourist attraction	3
7	Dundonald Cemetery - Office	BCC	Civic building, tourist attraction	3
8	Ardoyne Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
9	Concorde Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
10	Dee St Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
11	Denmark St Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
12	Divis community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
13	Donegall Pass Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
14	Duncairn Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
15	Finaghy community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
16	Glen Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
17	Grosvenor Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
18	Hammer Community centre	BCC	Community centre	3
19	Highfield Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
20	Horn Dr Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
21	Inverary Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
22	Knocknagoney Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
23	Ligoniel Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
24	Markets - Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
25	Morton Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
26	North Queen St Community centre	BCC	Community centre	3
27	Percy St Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
28	Sandy Row Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
29	Shaftesbury Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
30	Suffolk Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
31	Trinity St/Carrickhill	BCC	Community centre	3
32	Woodvale Community Centre	BCC	Community centre	3
33	Girdwood Community Hub	BCC	Community hub	1
34	Consumer Advice Centre	BCC	Consumer Advice	3
35	Maysfield - Learning & Development Centre	BCC	Education centre	2
36	Andersonstown Leisure Centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
37	Avoniel Leisure Centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
38	Ballysillan Leisure Centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
39	Falls Swim Centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
40	Grove Wellbeing Centre - Leisure Centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
41	Loughside - Recreation Centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1

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42	Olympia Leisure Centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
43	Shankill Leisure Centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
44	Tennis Centre/Ozone	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
45	Whiterock Leisure Centre and Community centre	BCC	Leisure Centre	1
46	Smithfield Market	BCC	Market	1
47	St George's Market	BCC	Market	1
48	Avoniel Play Centre	BCC	Play Centre	3
49	Ballysillan Play Centre	BCC	Play Centre	3
50	Loop River Play Centre	BCC	Play Centre	3
51	North Queen St Playcentre	BCC	Play Centre	3
52	Alderman Tommy Patton Bowling Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
53	Alderman Tommy Patton Changing pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
54	Ballysillan Playing Fields - Bowling Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
55	Ballysillan Playing Fields new pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
56	Blanchflower Playing Fields - pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
57	Blythfield - Changing Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
58	Botanic Gardens - Bowling Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
59	Boucher Rd Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
60	Cherryvale Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
61	City Of Belfast Golf Course - Clubhouse	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
62	City Of Belfast Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
63	Clarendon Park Playing Fields - Changing Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
64	Cliftonville Playing Fields - Changing Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
65	Cliftonville 3G pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
66	Dunville Park Sporting Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
67	Dixon Park Playing Fields replacement Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
68	Falls Park - Bowling/Camogie Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
69	Falls Park new 3G Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
70	Grove Playing Fields - Bowling Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
71	Grove Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
72	Hammer Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
73	King George V Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
74	Mary Peters Track - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
75	Musgrave - Bowling Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
76	Musgrave new changing pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
77	Orangefield Playing Fields - Bowling Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
78	Orangefield Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
79	Ormeau Park - Bowling Pavilion (Ormeau Rd)	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
80	Ormeau Park - Bowling Pavilion (Ravenhill Rd)	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
81	Ormeau Park - 3G pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
82	Shore Rd Playing Fields - changing Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
83	Suffolk Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
84	Ulidia Playing Fields - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3

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85	Victoria Park - Bowls Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
86	Victoria Park replacement Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
87	Waterworks - Social Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
88	Waterworks new pavillion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
89	Wedderburn Park - Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
90	Woodlands Playing Fields replacement Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
91	Woodvale Park - Bowling Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
92	Woodvale Park - Football Pavilion	BCC	Sporting pavilion	3
93	Belfast Zoo	BCC	Tourist location, educational centre	1
94	Lady Dixon - Stables Conservation building	BCC	Tourist location, educational centre	2
95	Belfast Castle	BCC	Tourist location, restaurant, conference venue	1
96	Malone House	BCC	Tourist location, restaurant, conference venue	1
97	Botanic Tropical Ravine	BCC	Tourist location, educational centre	2
98	Digital Services	BCC	IT test centre	2
99	Belvoir Activity Centre	BCC#	Leisure Centre	3
100	Brook Activity Centre & Playing Fields	BCC#	Leisure Centre	3
101	Braniel Community Centre	BCC#	Community centre	3
102	Clonduff Drive Community Centre	BCC#	Community centre	3
103	Cregagh Youth & Community Centre	BCC#	Community centre	3
104	Downshire Community Hall	BCC#	Community centre	3
105	Greenway Womens Centre	BCC#	Community centre	3
106	Tullycarnet Community Centre	BCC#	Community centre	3
107	The Robinson Centre	BCC#	Leisure Centre	1
108	Henry Jones Playing Fields & Pavilion	BCC#	Sporting pavilion	3
109	Tullycarnet Bowling pavilion	BCC#	Sporting pavilion	3
110	Oxford House	DFP	Civic building	2
111	Laganside Courts	DOJ	Civic building	1
112	Royal Courts	DOJ	Civic building	1
113	Clarence West	OFMDFM	Civic building	3
114	Headline Building	OFMDFM	Civic building	3
115	The Housing Centre	NIHE	Housing Office	1
116	Belfast Regional Office	NIHE	Housing Office	2
117	Belfast Grants Office	NIHE	Housing Office	2
118	Shankill Office	NIHE	Housing Office	2
119	Lisburn Dairy Farm	NIHE	Housing Office	2
120	Ulster Museum	DCAL	Museum	2

Tiers indicate building size and complexity

key

Tier 1 large

Tier 2 medium

Tier 3 small

Appendix 2: Possible City Centre Wi-Fi Zone utilising existing Public Sector buildings