

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Local Government North Yorkshire and York

24 June 2011

Broadband – Connecting North Yorkshire

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on broadband developments since the presentation made to LGNYY on 28 January 2011 and to invite LGNYY to endorse the Connecting North Yorkshire Vision and Approach.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The North Yorkshire sub region (including York) has been successful in securing pilot status from government to deliver next generation broadband to rural areas where there is market failure.
- 2.2 North Yorkshire partners (i.e. excluding City of York) have also agreed to use £750K of LAA Performance Reward Grant to help bring broadband to rural “not spots” – where there is no adequate provision.
- 2.3 As per Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) requirements, and in order to inform direction, a Vision has been produced which seeks to set out the overall drivers and approach for broadband delivery in the sub-region. BDUK have now “signed off” this Vision but it is accepted by all that it will change over time. The Vision can be downloaded on <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12737&p=0>
- 2.4 In recognition of the infrastructure of broadband and the involvement of many other partner organisations the campaign / project has been called **Connecting North Yorkshire** (CNY).

3.0 Update

Funding

- 3.1 The BDUK has recently advised a provisional allocation of up to £16.4m funding which together with ERDF moves the CNY project well towards the £30m initial target.
- 3.2 Some local funding has also been found to supplement the PRG of £750K in Ryedale and Hambleton (circa £40K and £10K respectively).
- 3.3 The RDPE funded project (£215k) is underway with projects in the Vale of Mowbray, the Bradley’s Both, Barlby, Robin Hood’s Bay and Nun Monkton in various stages of development/implementation.

- 3.4 The project management team will be hosted by NYnet (commissioned by NYCC as the agent for delivering the project) with NYCC meeting the costs (£800k+).

Procurement

- 3.5 Following BDUK approval, a procurement process has started to identify a supplier to deliver next generation broadband to the key market towns and quality broadband to surrounding communities. The CNY Vision is to bring the advantages of high-quality broadband to 100% of businesses and citizens in North Yorkshire by 2017. This will enable all to participate in the digital world so that they can carry out their business when and how they wish.
- 3.6 The procurement specification is being structured in such a way that it encourages tenders to add their funds to those available from CNY thereby maximising the roll-out that is possible.
- 3.7 Given its complexity the procurement is scheduled to take up until March 2012. Based on soft market testing interest is strong and all the 'major players' are likely to submit PQQs.
- 3.8 At this stage it is not possible to be definitive about the locations or timings of the roll-out of broadband – this will be determined by the outcome of the procurement.

Business Sector

- 3.9 Quality broadband is critical for rural businesses. The York and North Yorkshire LEP has identified broadband as a key priority whilst more detailed discussions have taken place with the FSB to see how we can mutually support.
- 3.10 If successful, the ERDF funding will provide significant sums with which to encourage business take up and engagement. An offer has been made to provide an update on CNY to a future meeting of the York and North Yorkshire LEP.

Communities

- 3.11 A CNY "family" has been created to ensure that there is a network of information, advice and support based on the team hosted by NYnet. Each District/Borough now has a designated "community co-ordinator" who links with the County Council (+ NYnet) to ensure good two way communications. In addition, there are other agencies, notably Rural Action Yorkshire and other voluntary and / or community groups, who are part of this approach.
- 3.12 Key information is being provided on CNY and the network is then able to engage with interested communities (with appropriate support). It is hoped that this approach will be sustainable and also encourage communities to accept at least an element of self responsibility (eg gauging demand, arranging meetings, providing top-up funding etc).

4.0 **Next Steps**

- 4.1 Whilst the major procurement is now under way, there is likely to be a significant time lag before there are tangible outcomes. In order to help maintain a sense of momentum it is intended that the PRG will be used, probably on a phased basis (**paragraph 2.2** refers) using local wireless based networks extending from existing NYnet 'points of presence' in communities (eg local schools).
- 4.2 A consistent approach is currently being worked up in order to evaluate community "bids" for broadband. Community leadership and ownership are key elements for consideration but technical deliverability is also essential (given the financial parameters that exist). A targeted approach is therefore being taken by the community co-ordinators and it is likely that there will be a spread of projects across the County (i.e. excluding York given that this work is PRG funded). If additional funds are available for not-spots they can be readily accommodated because a 'core' approach has been established.
- 4.3 Once schemes are approved it should be possible to implement relatively quickly. This will of course, be dependent upon local issues (eg line of sight between properties).
- 4.4 Consideration is currently being given to initiating a broadband campaign in order to demonstrate the appetite for take-up within the sub-region. This is likely to raise the profile but, more importantly, positively influence the investment that any bidders will be prepared to make. Further details will be shared with partners should this come to fruition.

5.0 **Recommendations**

5.1 LGNYY are:

- (i) invited to endorse the Connecting North Yorkshire Vision and Approach
- (ii) asked to note the progress made relating to Connecting North Yorkshire
- (iii) make any further suggestions as to how the Connecting North Yorkshire project can be most effectively progressed.

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