

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	13 July 2021
Title:	Hampshire Broadband Programme – Update and Top Up Voucher Proposal
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. **The decision:**

That Cabinet:

- 1.2 Note and endorse the success of the current Superfast Broadband Programme to date.
- 1.3 Note the government's new Gigabit Programme which is starting to gain momentum and that the opportunities this provides for Hampshire will become clearer over the coming months.
- 1.4 Note the success of the 2020/21 Gigabit Voucher Scheme Top Up fund and approve the implementation of a limited £1M Hampshire top up to government's current UK Gigabit Voucher Scheme, to be funded through future programme gainshare and for communities on a first come first served basis until the fund is exhausted.
- 1.5 Note that broadband infrastructure will play a critical role in supporting policies to mitigate and tackle climate change.

2. **Reason(s) for the decision:**

- 2.1 Since the inception of the Superfast Broadband Programme, the importance of broadband infrastructure in Hampshire has continued to grow. The Coronavirus pandemic has only served to highlight just how important digital connectivity is for economic and community wellbeing, and has shone a spotlight on the necessity of broadband as an enabler.
- 2.2 The Superfast Broadband Programme started in 2013 and through close working with our delivery partner, Openreach, and the central government team at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), the programme has delivered approximately 115,000 superfast connections to date, nearly 12,000 of which are full fibre. The programme delivery is expected to conclude in summer 2022 delivering coverage of superfast broadband to around 97% of premises in the County.

- 2.3 In addition to the core programme, voucher schemes developed and administered by government have proved a successful route to extending gigabit-capable speeds to more communities. Hampshire County Council provided a top up to extend the value of the previous gigabit voucher scheme, and this has helped bring gigabit-capable broadband to over 2,000 premises across 23 different community projects.
- 2.4 The programme is now seeking to implement further funding of £1M from the limited gainshare rebate to provide a top up to government's current UK Gigabit Voucher Scheme, helping to bring faster broadband to communities more quickly than the future larger-scale procurements.
- 2.5 The report also outlines the developing national programme managed by government. DCMS has an ambition to deliver gigabit-capable broadband to everyone within the UK, with support from Local Authorities, through an entity they have set up within the department called Building Digital UK (BDUK).

3. Other options considered and rejected:

3.1 None

4. Conflicts of interest:

4.1 Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: None.

4.2 Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: None.

5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: None.

6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: Not Applicable.

7. Statement from the Decision Maker:

Approved by:

Date:

Councillor Keith Mans
Chairman of Cabinet

13 July 2021