

Bucks Strategic Partnership Board

Title: “Better Broadband for Bucks”
Broadband Programme Update Paper

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Author: Graham Grover (Chief Executive, BELP)

Introduction

The aim of this paper and supporting presentation is to inform the BSP on progress and future planning on the Better Broadband for Bucks Programme.

The Board Members are asked to consider the information and to:

- a. Reaffirm their commitment to the programme through the support requested
- b. Comment on the delivery models proposed to provide the infrastructure required to satisfy rural and ‘not-spot’ areas
- c. Enter into dialogue to share existing infrastructure and network solutions to service residential and business locations (e.g. Schools, PCT etc)

Background

In order to ensure Buckinghamshire’s position as a leading economy in the UK, we need to identify opportunities for the development of a suitable technology infrastructure across Buckinghamshire which supports our changing demographics; accommodates new and emerging technologies and meets our economic development aspirations.

The BSP has previously acknowledged the importance of providing High Speed Broadband services and have adopted the programme as one of key strategic importance for Buckinghamshire. The ambition is to provide access to 40mbps broadband county-wide by 2015.

Partnership Support

In order to make sure that the Broadband Programme results in a truly connected county through the use of the most effective technologies and programmes to ensure that both community and business current and future needs are fulfilled, an agile and collaborative process with the BSP and other stakeholders is required.

BSP partners are asked to commit to:

- a. Incorporating the need for high-speed broadband into their policies and strategies
- b. Providing a welcome planning and enabling environment where applicable
- c. Create awareness and stimulate demand amongst your communities
- d. Increase the usage of high-speed services through your own delivery of services
- e. Providing investment to support the programme
 - i. The following investment has already been committed by partners:
 1. BSP £100,000
 2. SEEDA £ 45,000
 3. AVA £ 10,000
 - ii. The following requests for investment are being considered:
 1. LABGI £ 50, 000 to £70,000

- 2. AVA £ 80,000
- iii. A bid for ERDF funding is in process for +/- £100,000

While final costs have still to be calculated, it is envisaged that an amount of £750,000 would be required to satisfy the ambition of the programme to provide 40Mbs broadband coverage across Buckinghamshire by 2015.

This investment would be utilised for:

- a. Project Management
- b. Provision of infrastructure to areas that commercial providers will not address, allowing communities to benefit from existing and emerging technologies and support
- c. Education, awareness and demand stimulation activities

Programme Overview

Governance

The Buckinghamshire Economic & Learning Partnership (BELP) is responsible for the development and delivery of the programme. BELP leads the Economy and Environment Thematic Partnership.

Progress will be reported to the BSP Implementation Group and BELP Board respectively.

The Programme will be delivered in phases through a multi-project approach:

1. Urban areas and New Build

- a. Lobby mainstream commercial suppliers and building development companies to provide high speed fibre solutions for Bucks as a priority, to support “the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain”
- b. Facilitate cooperation between developers and local authorities (Planning, transport etc) to make these developments easier
- c. Provide awareness education and help to stimulate demand, so providing revenues to the service providers encouraging further developments.

2. Rural and ‘Not-Spot’ areas:

- a. **Short term tactical phase** - identify some rural areas currently without realistic service provision and provide funding to assist with implementation of (probably) wireless solutions.
- b. Prioritise a small number of areas which will cover the most significant proportion of premises. (something like 40% of the not spot premises and businesses are within 8% of the county’s postcodes)
 - i. For speed of implementation and proving of service we seek to use an existing provider operating within the county and will provide a ~10mbps service – with the proviso that the solution is expansible for both bandwidth and coverage
- c. Distribute questionnaires targeted at the poor coverage postcodes to establish the level of demand and willingness to pay for higher speeds of service
- d. **Medium term phase** - the project will consider further the following:
 - i. The mix of technologies best suited to satisfy different locations (fibre + wireless combinations)
 - ii. The selection of supplier partners and the most suitable business model(s) to use in relation to managing the supply chain, particularly with respect to demonstrating proper use of public funds and mechanisms to recycle investment / avoid excessive private profits. This may take the form of commercial agreements, or a Special Purpose Vehicle with equity stake or similar – **details to be presented on the day.**
- e. The opportunities to share other existing networks, e.g. schools, to provide reach into rural areas. - **details to be presented on the day**
- f. Also potential to aggregate demands of multiple public bodies and share network solutions to service residential and business locations as well as reducing cost for those public bodies (e.g. BCC, PCT etc)

The above as a basis for the longer term phase, in order to increase the speeds and coverage to provide 40mbps by 2015, county-wide