

COUNCIL MEETING – 11 SEPTEMBER 2014

Recommendation to Council from the Executive meeting held on 19 August 2014

E/14/48. **Superfast Broadband Extension Programme**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that proposed that the Council funds an additional £350,000 capital, over the £1.5 million already approved to further extend superfast broadband coverage as part of the Council's participation within the Broadband Delivery UK Superfast Extension Programme. This would be matched by £300,000 Broadband Delivery UK to allow approximately an additional 1,200 premises to be supported. It was estimated that spend would be undertaken in 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years.

In response to questions, the Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources agreed that the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be provided with an opportunity to consider the superfast broadband extension programme. The Deputy Executive Member acknowledged that some of the smaller villages in Central Bedfordshire were having difficulties accessing broadband. The aim was to ensure that all premises in Central Bedfordshire had access to the infrastructure to be able to provide at least 2 Megabits per second. Towns and villages not in the existing programme would be considered as part of the January/February 2015 programme.

Reason for decision: To secure additional external resources and put in place the necessary infrastructure at the earliest opportunity to accelerate and extend the delivery of superfast broadband to Central Bedfordshire residents and businesses in line with achieving the Council's Medium Term Plan Objectives and Joint Local Broadband Plan.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that an additional £350,000 capital funding to secure additional external funding, and to extend coverage of superfast broadband infrastructure be approved.