

AGENDA ITEM
REPORT TO COUNCIL
8 MAY 2013
REPORT OF
CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

OFFICER DECISION TAKEN IN CONSULTATION – COMMITMENT OF ONE OFF CAPITAL RESOURCES – SUPERFAST BROADBAND FOR BENEFIT OF BUSINESS AND COMMUNITIES IN STOCKTON

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the following Officer decision, taken under urgency powers, in consultation with the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Director of Resources.

DECISION

The Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services took the decision, in consultation with the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Director of Resources, to commit £175k from one off capital resources towards securing a contract for the provision of superfast broadband for the benefit of businesses and communities in Stockton.

REASON

A national programme, initiated by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), to increase accessibility of superfast Broadband to over 90% of premises was launched in August 2011.

The programme allocated funding to Local Authority areas. In order to access this funding, there was a requirement to match with public sector funds, along with a private sector contribution (primarily the provider/contractor).

The procurement exercise for a contractor to deliver superfast broadband across areas of the North East including the Tees Valley, Durham and Sunderland had been underway for some months and had reached a deadline for completion and signature of a contract. Information recently received reflected the benefits of a wider spread and coverage of access to superfast broadband for both communities and businesses in Stockton. This would be much broader than originally envisaged and, as a result, the Council needed to commit a further £175k, which would be matched by BDUK funds, to deliver the improved capacity.

The decision, to commit the one off funding, needed to be taken by Thursday 25 April 2013, however, there was no Council meeting until 8 May 2013 and it was not considered practical to convene a meeting of the full Council at short notice.

Action was considered essential in the Council's and the public's interests.

RECOMMENDED that the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Service's decision be noted.