

DECISION REPORT:

Report for: David Joyce, Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning

Title: North Tottenham Fibre-broadband infrastructure and Connectivity project

Report authorised by Diane Southam, Head of Economic Development

Lead Officer: Eric Osei, Economic Development Manager

Ward(s) affected: Northumberland Park.

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** Non key

1. Describe the issue under consideration.

- 1.1 In October 2018, LBH was successful in securing £800,000 funding from the Government's Strategic Investment Pot (SIP) - to improve high speed fibre infrastructure and connectivity to council and community buildings in the Northumberland Park and the wider North Tottenham area. The funding was secured as part of the multi-borough Local London¹ partnership bid. The partnership's lead and accountable body for the funding is the London Borough of Bexley.
- 1.2 This report requests approval from the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning (HRP), to enable the Council's Legal department to enter into a Funding Agreement with the partnership's Accountable Body – so that the funding can be to be released, to undertake the above broadband connectivity work.
- 1.3 As set out in paragraph 8.3, the Legal department has reviewed and signed off the Funding Agreement and requires the necessary approval from the Director of HRP, in line with the Cabinet approval- before the Agreement can be executed.
- 1.4 The Economic Development team is leading on the project- and has put in place the delivery plans to implement the project, working with LBH Digital Services team.

¹ Local London: a sub-regional partnership comprising Bexley, Barking & Dagenham, Greenwich, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest & Enfield. L B Haringey was invited to be part of the SIP bid because of its Upper Lea Valley location and the wider regeneration plans for the ULV area.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning:

- (i) Gives approval for the Council's Legal Department to enter into a Funding Agreement with L B Bexley – for the funding of £800k to be released to undertake the above broadband connectivity work.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 The decision is required to progress the work required to implement Cabinet decision for the Council to address the poor internet connectivity problems in the North Tottenham area – and thereby maximise the opportunities and potential associated with high-speed broadband connectivity for the benefits of its residents, businesses, and community.

4.2 On 12 March 2019, Cabinet gave approval to receive the SIP funding to improve digital infrastructure and connectivity to council and community buildings in the Northumberland Park area. Cabinet gave delegated authority to the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Regeneration to approve the terms of the funding agreement.

4.3 The Cabinet Member has been briefed on the scheme – and was happy for the delegated authority to be signed and for legal to complete the funding agreement.

4.4 The Northumberland Park area of North Tottenham is the most economically disadvantaged and digitally excluded ward in the borough. The SIP funding will be used to modernise high-speed internet infrastructure and connectivity in the area – by upgrading/installing future-proofed, full- fibre broadband to council and community buildings, that are close to business locations.

4.5 The fibre broadband connections will enable CCTV upgrades by providing the modern digital infrastructure for the use of high-definition cameras. In addition, the project will explore more mobile solutions (Wi-Fi and 5G), which will be enabled by the improved fibre broadband infrastructure to the council and community buildings and public areas.

5. Alternative options considered.

5.1 The Council could choose not to enter into a Funding Agreement with the L B Bexley, the Accountable Body for the multi-borough funding partnership. This has been discounted for several reasons:

- It would result in the Council forfeiting £800,000 to upgrade high-speed internet infrastructure and connectivity in the most economically disadvantaged and socially excluded ward in the borough.
- The SIP funding and associated project presents the Council with a major opportunity to address the longstanding poor internet infrastructure and connectivity problems in the Northumberland Park area. Prior to the SIP funding, there had been very little public funding available to target upgrades to digital infrastructure.

6. Background information

- 6.1 In October 2018, LBH was successful in securing funding from the Government's Strategic Investment Pot (SIP), as part of the multi-borough Local London partnership bid. LBH's share of the funding is £800,000 for 3 years. The partnership lead and accountable body for the funding is L B Bexley.
- 6.2 On 12 March 19, the LBH Cabinet approved the acceptance of the SIP funding. Cabinet also gave delegated authority to the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning (HRP), to approve the final terms of the Funding Agreement:
- 6.3 The Director of HRP's approval is needed to enable the Legal department to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Accountable Body – so that funding can be released to deliver the broadband upgrade works.

7.0 Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 The project will contribute to the **Good Economy Recovery Plan** activities and outcomes. It will also contribute to the delivery of the **Borough Plan's "Economy" Priority**- in particular, Outcome 13 (Growing economy, thriving businesses and community wealth building)

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer))

8.1 Procurement

- 8.1.1 N/A

8.2 Finance

- 8.2.1 The cost of this proposal will be fully funded by the Government's Strategic Investment Pot (SIP) funding of £800k, which is being projected under capital scheme reference number 458 - SIP - Northumberland PK BB & Workspace/Biz

Support and capital internal order number 10005942 - SIP Broadband Delivery.

8.3 Legal

8.3.1 The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) has been consulted in the preparation of the report.

8.3.2 At the meeting on the 12 March 2019 Cabinet gave delegated authority to the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Regeneration to approve the terms of the funding agreement.

8.3.3 The Head of Legal and Governance sees no legal reasons preventing the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning from approving the recommendation in the report.

9.0 Use of Appendices

N/A

Report Author: Eric Osei, Economic Development Manager, Economic Development Team

Date: 22 July 2021