

**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 9 FEBRUARY 2009**

**REPORT ON: FIBRE CITY BROADBAND**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**REPORT NO: 91-2009**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report advises the committee on a major new initiative to install 100 megabyte broadband fibre optic cable to every household and business in the city.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee agrees to the formation of a Officer Liaison Group chaired by the Depute Chief Executive (Finance) to work with Fibre City to ensure smooth planning and negotiations throughout this project.
- 2.2 The Committee agrees to the Council facilitating briefing sessions for all members and chief officers and key stakeholder groups in the city.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 A company H2O Network Group have selected Dundee to be the first city in Scotland (and only the second in the UK) to roll out a fibre broadband network to every household and business premise in the city. This will provide 100 megabyte broadband capacity and will be promoted under the brand of Fibre City Dundee. The first phase will involve a major communication campaign to every household and premises which will be followed by the engineering installation process commencing in June 2009. Residents have to opt in and agree to receive the fibre, which will be free. They will then be able to purchase services making use of the extra bandwidth from content suppliers.
- 4.2 This is an exciting development as the Council Plan includes as a priority to maximise the use of broadband and also for the employment creation that this project will lead to.
- 4.3 H2O Network Group selected Dundee because of its growing reputation for digital media and developing the knowledge-based economy through expanding universities and use of new technology. This was recognised globally in Dundee receiving a top seven Intelligent Community of the Year award in 2007 and 2008.
- 4.4 The UK Government and the Prime Minister identified that developing a broadband infrastructure was both vital to ensure the UK kept pace with other parts of the world and that it is the type of project that can be considered a major infrastructure investment at this time to create jobs.
- 4.5 There are a number of issues that the City Council will be involved in during this significant intervention in the infrastructure of the city. These are as follows:
  - planning and property issues concerning wayleaves and reinstatement

- | Housing Department as landlord having to liaise with the company over the proposed installation on behalf of tenants
- | ensuring proper community consultation takes place
- | managing public information about the project and dealing with enquiries that are directed to the City Council
- | exploiting the competitive advantage this gives Dundee from an economic development perspective

4.6 It is proposed to set up an officer liaison committee to ensure the smooth planning and resolution of the above issues. This will be chaired by the Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and include the Director of Housing, Head of IT, Legal Manager, Business Development Manager, Performance and Improvement Manager and Head of Public Relations.

4.7 An immediate issue that the Liaison Committee will work on is to facilitate briefing sessions for elected members, chief officers and other key stakeholders such as the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations and other landlord and business representative organisations in the city. Other groups such as Interactive Tayside and Digital Dundee can be involved in initiating new projects for business development and innovations based on high broadband capability.

## 5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no issues in this regard to report on.

## 6. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Finance and Chief Officers.

## 7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

Alex Stephen  
Chief Executive

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03/02/2009