



Report of the Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

Cabinet – 15 October 2020

Digital Infrastructure Business Case, Swansea Bay City Deal

Purpose:	To approve the Swansea Bay City Deal Digital Infrastructure Business Case.
Policy Framework:	Swansea Bay City Deal.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that Cabinet: 1) Approves the proposed Swansea Bay City Deal Digital Infrastructure Business Case attached at Appendix 1 and subsequent investment in Digital Infrastructure across the Swansea Bay City Region. 2) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Transformation Officer in consultation with The Leader to approve any amendments to the business case that may be required to obtain approval at local, regional, and national governance.
Report Author:	Sarah Lackenby
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Digital Infrastructure Project of the Swansea Bay City Deal is an investment in the Digital Connectivity and associated Telecommunications Infrastructure of the region. This includes but is not limited to full fibre fixed connectivity and associated infrastructure, mobile/wireless technologies and Internet of Things wireless networks. It is in essence the deployment of enabling technology that will allow quality digital services to be delivered and accessed over fixed line networks or wireless networks.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Project will deliver the essential underlying Infrastructure required to support and underpin the region's broader Digital Strategy. It will help to ensure that the region is equipped with future-proofed Digital Infrastructure that will provide the transformative foundations for City Deal interventions and wider regional growth. The Project will also help to ensure social inclusion and cohesion in a post Covid-19 world.
- 2.2 This ultra-fast ultra-reliable connectivity will help to ensure that the region capitalises on opportunities to accelerate economic growth and establish itself as a centre of excellence in the key sectors of; energy, life science and well-being and smart manufacturing. Future proofed Digital Infrastructure will help will create a paradigm shift in the design, development, and application of technology within these key sectors across the region.

3. General Issues

- 3.1 Some of the workstreams within the proposed Business Case may have minimal ICT resource implications for implementation & maintenance. Discussions are ongoing with the relevant lead officers and will continue throughout the lifetime of the project to ensure collaboration and alignment. The Project will complement existing ICT systems. The Project complies with, supports, and underpins existing ICT and Digital Strategies.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

- 4.2 An EIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full EIA report was not required. It is determined a full equality impact is not required at this high level business case stage. The business case proposes multiple work streams and the equality impact will be assessed during the detailed development of each work stream.
- 4.3 This is an infrastructure implementation project which is led by the Swansea Bay region. The high scoring of the impact on all protected groups reflects the positive outcomes of this project. The new fibre broadband, mobile/wireless technologies and subsequent use of internet of things infrastructure will significantly improve access to information, vital services and advice for all Swansea residents.
- 4.4 Being online can significantly improve people's life chances by:
- Helping people find work;
 - Offering improved learning opportunities;
 - Getting access to cheaper goods and services online;
 - Reducing loneliness and isolation, especially for the most vulnerable; and
 - Being part of digital communities, which improve local outcomes through co-ordinated activities and initiatives.
- 4.5 Safety is always going to be paramount when companies roll out new technologies and innovations. Public Health England ("PHE") has recently updated its advice in respect of 5G and the International Commission on non-ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines. ICNIRP is an independent organisation which is formally recognised by the World Health Organisation.

In compliance with PHE advice, mobile network operators such as EE, O2 and Vodafone have committed to follow the ICNIRP guidelines.

- 4.6 The digital infrastructure project will improve access to technology for all communities across the region, including Swansea residents. This includes improving access to digital channels in Welsh.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The financial implications associated with the digital infrastructure project will be managed through the project's risk register coupled with associated mitigating actions. The project is anticipated funded through £25m City Deal Funding, £13.5m public sector funding and £16.5m Private sector spending. City Deal funding will be released on the successful approval of the project business case by UK and Welsh Governments. Public sector investment will be generated through wider public sector infrastructure funding already in train or due to be developed. Private sector inward investment will be generated by telecom and internet providers investing

in and building off the Digital Infrastructure deployed as part of this Project. The procedures around the management of City Deal funding are detailed within the Joint Committee Agreement.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Joint Working Agreement between the participants of the Swansea Bay City Deal requires (at clause 12.3) all councils in whose area the project shall take place to approve the submission of the business case to the Joint Committee before it can ultimately be forwarded on to the UK and Welsh Government. Each participant council will be taking a report of this kind to their respective decision makers.
- 6.2 Legal advice will be required during the implementation of certain workstreams within this project as the region moves into individual procurements. This will be dealt with on an ad hoc basis with relevant advice and guidance sought as and when necessary. Specialist external legal advice will be required on specific matters relating to the Telecommunications industry and state aid.

Background Papers: EIA Screening Form

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Swansea Bay City Deal Digital Infrastructure Business Case