



**Report of the Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy (Leader), Cabinet Member for Service Transformation (Deputy Leader) and Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure**

**Cabinet – 18 January 2024**

## **Smart City Infrastructure Agreements**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To recommend Cabinet approves this City Deal initiative to sign agreements enabling smart city infrastructure on lamp posts and other street furniture.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	City Deal Digital Programme Business Case Digital Strategy 2023-28 Transformation & Financial Resilience well-being goal within the Corporate Plan Successful and Sustainable Swansea
<b>Consultation:</b>	Finance, Legal, and Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that Cabinet:  1) Approves the signing of agreements to enable smart city infrastructure on lamp posts and other street furniture.  2) Delegates authority to progress further roll-out of the infrastructure following the initial phase to the relevant Director and Cabinet Member.
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### **1. Background and Context**

- 1.1 This initiative is part of the City Deal Digital Infrastructure Programme. The programme has received £175million investment and will look to the boost the economy by £318million across the City Deal region.

- 1.2 The Digital Infrastructure programme has the following aspirations:
- Better broadband for everyone leaving nobody behind.
  - A smart region ready and able to innovate and adopt emerging technology.
  - An inclusive digital landscape that meets everyone's needs.
- 1.3 This report is requesting approval to sign non-exclusive agreements with neutral providers with the aim of deploying smart city infrastructure throughout Swansea. In particular, this will address the network congestion challenges during events and busy periods across the City and County.
- 1.4 This project is specifically focused on using neutral providers who operate a shared infrastructure approach through the signing of an open access agreement with a local authority, allowing them to deploy on council assets such as lampposts.

## **2. Infrastructure on lampposts and other street furniture**

- 2.1 Small access points (AP) provide a cost-effective solution for filling coverage gaps, increasing bandwidth, and future proofing the networks without the need to build more expensive macro sites (masts).
- 2.2 Small APs are quick and easy to deploy and therefore the time to market is effective and efficient.
- 2.3 Each asset has a discrete radio solution, and they sit around 5-6m from the ground, are shoe box sized and weigh up to 18kg, with fibre to each asset. Initially the deployment will involve 5-10 small APs on council assets, e.g., Lampposts.
- 2.4 Benefits to the city include:
- Mobile coverage and capacity:  
Much improved mobile phone signal enabling more people to use the network during busy periods within the city centre.
  - Innovation & Growth:  
Small APs will be futureproofed, supporting the increasing demand for data and connectivity. It will support higher data speeds, improved network reliability, and the ability to support numerous connected devices simultaneously. This will support innovation and in turn growth within Swansea.
  - The smart city infrastructure will also enable other benefits, e.g. sensors to monitor air pollution, smart bins to reduce the risk of litter, and alerts when the life-saving ring is used in the Marina.
  - As well as improving mobile coverage, the infrastructure can help support greener technology solutions.
  - This infrastructure can also work towards tackling digital inequality by unlocking the benefits of better connectivity for more people.

### **3. Neutral Providers**

- 3.1 As a third-party, neutral providers can deliver commercial, mobile access solutions to several operators. By providing a single, shared network solution that is open to all Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), customers get what they are looking for – seamless coverage and high capacity.
- 3.2 This report seeks approval to enter into agreements with neutral providers, two examples include:
- Freshwave is part of DigitalBridge a global digital infrastructure investment firm. The team manages a \$69 billion portfolio of digital infrastructure assets on behalf of its limited partners and shareholders. Freshwave has recently gone through the open access agreement process with Wrexham Council.
  - Ontix is a next-generation infrastructure-as-a-service provider and is transforming the entire process for wireless network densification by investing in shared small AP infrastructure – including connectivity – and licensing this to operators. Ontix has recently gone through this process with the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme, hosted by Cambridge County Council.

### **4. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, 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 Acts.
  - 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.
  - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
  - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
  - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
  - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales by acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed (Appendix A) with the agreed outcome that a full IIA is not required.
- 4.5 The summary of impacts has been categorised as having a medium positive impact. This project will bring significant advantages as it will address the issues of congestion across networks. However, public perception is important, and some people are always concerned about mobile technology. The project will seek to be open and transparent, starting with a small number of APs and evaluating before expanding further. It is proposed that expansion of the infrastructure is delegated to the relevant Director and Cabinet Member and the integrated impact assessment is kept under review.
- 4.6 Well-being and future generations and the five ways of working considerations include:
- An integrated and collaborative approach to working with telecom providers in the longer term
  - Much improved mobile phone signal enabling more people to use the network during busy periods within the city centre.
  - Small APs will be futureproofed for the long-term, supporting the increasing demand for data and connectivity. It will support higher data speeds, improved network reliability, and the ability to support numerous connected devices simultaneously. This will support innovation and in turn growth within Swansea.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Neutral host agreements present a small revenue opportunity to the Council with a payment associated with each small AP deployed on a council asset on an annual basis. The first small AP on one asset will be £300, the second small AP for a different mobile network operator (MNO) on the same asset will be £150, up to a maximum of four per asset.
- 5.2 In consideration of the Authority's costs and expenses in negotiating and facilitating this license, the supplier will pay the Council's expenses up to £1,500 plus VAT if applicable.
- 5.3 The neutral host will conduct the surveys, write the reports, and cover the costs where required.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 Each neutral host provider will complete the supplier selection checklist as a minimum requirement.
- 6.2 The Swansea Bay City deal will review the open access agreement, once it is approved by the Council. This will then become the standard template for neutral providers across the City Deal.

### **Background Papers:**

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A IIA Screening