

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

1 October 2013

Joint Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and the Acting Strategic Director –
Environmental Services

**DIGITAL DERBYSHIRE – EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval to commence the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded business support programme and to establish a new temporary post of Project Officer, grade 9.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

ERDF Business Support Programme

At the meeting on 16 June 2013, Cabinet received an update report on the Digital Derbyshire Programme, including the ERDF grant secured to support the capital infrastructure costs and also a revenue stream for business support activities related to the broadband deployment.

This includes part funding for a Project Officer post that will co-ordinate and monitor the business support programme.

Part of the European funding will be used to procure a partner to deliver the business support programme. This will deliver a tailored and comprehensive package of business support to the eligible Small to Medium-size Enterprises (SMEs) across Derbyshire, providing business support for 300 SMEs. The business support project will encourage uptake and exploitation among all eligible SMEs.

The business support programme will be closely integrated with the infrastructure project, targeting those SMEs which will also be gaining access to superfast broadband as a result of the infrastructure project; although the package of support will also be available to other SMEs which already have access. In addition, the project will also complement the £3m Regional Growth Fund (RGF) Global Derbyshire Small Business Support Grant which includes Digital Derbyshire as one of its four eligible strands for support.

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Through initial engagement events, seminars and group workshops, and brokerage advice, the objective of the business support programme is:

- to educate about the business benefits of using superfast broadband;
- to raise take up of the superfast broadband service; and
- to assist SMEs to maximise superfast broadband use for business gain.

(3) **Financial Considerations** Costs will be met from ERDF and from existing budgetary provision. The ERDF grant will contribute 40% of the costs for the business support programme and Project Officer, the remaining 60% costs will be met from the Regeneration Treasure Chest.

The immediate costs of recruiting a Grade 9 Project Officer will be £22,879 and the ultimate costs will be £24,547 per annum (top of grade). Including on-costs of 27%, the costs are £29,056 and £31,174 respectively.

(4) **Human Resources Considerations** A temporary Project Officer post will need to be established to co-ordinate and monitor the delivery of the business support activities within the ERDF funded project. This post, which will be 40% grant funded and 60% Council funded, will be required for the duration of the ERDF funded project. It has been evaluated at Grade 9 and will be advertised and recruited to in accordance with the Council's procedures. The post, which will be a fixed term position, is currently anticipated to be required until October 2015 and will sit within the Economic Regeneration Team.

The provision of the Council's Redundancy and Redeployment Policy will be implemented at the end of the fixed term contract. Every effort will be made to redeploy the postholder when the fixed term contract ends. However, if this is not possible, a redundancy payment will be provided if the postholder has two years or more service.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** All background documentation is held by the Economic Regeneration Service. Officer contact details – Frank Horsely, extension 38348.

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(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member approves:

- 9.1 The commencement of the European Regional Development Fund funded business support programme, to encourage the update and exploitation of superfast broadband by small and medium business enterprises in Derbyshire.
- 9.2 The establishment of one new post of Project Officer, Grade 9, until October 2015.

David Lowe
Deputy Chief Executive

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director -
Environmental Services