

Agenda Item No. 4(c)

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**22 February 2018**

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**CREATION AND RECRUITMENT OF NEW POST WITHIN DIGITAL  
DERBYSHIRE TEAM**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek approval for the creation and recruitment of a new post of Project Support Officer (Digital Business Growth Programme) within the Digital Derbyshire Broadband Programme Team. This post would assist with the delivery of the outreach function of the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (D2N2) Digital Business Growth Programme (DBGP), support the Digital Derbyshire Programme Manager and the partners to deliver key aspects of the programme including direct business liaison and the ICT grants scheme.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

**Background**

The D2N2 DBGP is delivered across the whole of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, with specific focus on rural areas that will encourage and enable businesses to explore and introduce new and emerging ICT products to their business to improve business competitiveness, productivity and growth.

The project will therefore directly complement the delivery activities of both Digital Derbyshire and Better Broadband in Nottinghamshire, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) schemes and help realise the ambitions set out in the respective Local Broadband Plans. Furthermore, project activity will directly drive further take-up of broadband services being delivered through the BDUK contracts and secure agreed gainshare rewards as set out in the contracts with BT.

The Programme is open to all eligible micro, small and medium-sized businesses (including social enterprise) based in the D2N2 area, regardless of where the activities take place. However, targeted marketing campaigns focus specifically on the priority sectors set out in the D2N2 European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy and companies demonstrating high growth.

With Nottinghamshire County Council as lead applicant and accountable body, the project is being delivered primarily through East Midlands Chamber (EMC) with dedicated resources available for activity in both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

In relation to the grant application scheme, a Derby and Derbyshire (D2) Project Co-ordinator has been funded and appointed to ensure the project is effectively delivered across the County. The post will be offered on a fixed term contract basis by the Council to work as part of the Digital Derbyshire Team.

The project operates over three years, commencing in Spring 2017 until June 2019, with a total cost of £7,237,974 (50% funded via ERDF). The project proposes to deliver a minimum of 850 enterprises supported, 32 new businesses supported, 165 enterprises introducing new products and 70 additional businesses taking up broadband services in excess of 30mbps.

### **Rationale for New Post**

The Grant application scheme has been operational since June 2017 and has proved to be very successful, with approximately £81,000 contracted and a further £247,000 pending, against a target of £450,000. In order to assist with the grant application and monitoring aspects of the programme, the proposed project Support Officer post is required to ensure compliance with the financial and administrative requirements of the ERDF 2014-20 and support the development of the programmes objectives in Derbyshire.

The new post will be responsible for the day to day monitoring of the D2N2 DBGP grant applications to ensure compliance to the financial and administrative requirements of the ERDF 2014-20 and support the development of the programmes objectives in Derbyshire.

Management of the grant programme has proved resource intensive due to demand and the requirement to appraise projects in line with ESIF regulations. The programme also works to deadlines for applicants and it is important that project applications are processed within timescales to avoid any reputational risk to the Council and EMC. The new post will alleviate this pressure and ensure the timely and efficient delivery of this much sought after and successful programme.

(3) **Financial Considerations**      The post will be 100% grant funded through the DBGP.

(4) **Human Resources Considerations**      The post has been reviewed by the evaluation panel and recommended for Grade 6. The post is fixed term until 30 June 2019, when the programme finishes.

The postholder will be employed by the Council and the Council will bear all employment responsibilities associated with this role.

### **Other Considerations**

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, social value and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

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

(7) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economic Regeneration Service within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Robert Rowan, extension 38343.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves the establishment and recruitment of the Project Support Officer (Digital Business Growth Programme) on a fixed term contract basis until June 2019 to be 100% grant funded.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**