

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2022

UPDATE ON DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS

Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 To update Committee on progress with digital connectivity projects and digital infrastructure in Aberdeenshire, including appointment of Digital Engagement Team, Scottish Government updates on the Reaching 100% Programme, and general updates on other points of note.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Note the updates on digital connectivity projects and digital infrastructure in Aberdeenshire;

1.2.2 Note the revised timescale for completion of the Digital Infrastructure Full Business Case and Gap Analysis to guide future City Region Deal investment as May 2022; and

1.2.3 Endorse the work being undertaken by the Digital Engagement Team to support improvement in digital connectivity for Aberdeenshire.

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 The Aberdeen City Region Deal (CRD) was formally signed on the 21 November 2016 by Aberdeenshire Council, with our partners Aberdeen City Council, UK Government and Scottish Government.

2.2 At its meeting on 5 February 2021, the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee ([Item 8](#)) approved the allocation of up to £220,000 from the CRD Digital Theme to create new staff capacity to further advance the provision of future-proof digital infrastructure in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

2.3 At its meeting on 11 March 2021, the Infrastructure Services Committee ([Item 13](#)) agreed to approve the use of up to £110,000 of Aberdeenshire Council's contribution to the City Region Deal digital workstream to create additional staff capacity to improve take up of digital infrastructure services and voucher schemes.

2.4 In the Report submitted to the Infrastructure Services Committee on 11 March 2021 (Item 13), detail of the gap analysis of digital infrastructure and connectivity was given, highlighting focus areas.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 Following approval for the recruitment of additional staff, the following appointments have been made:
- 3.2 **Digital Stakeholder Lead Officer** appointed on 20 September 2021, focusing on stakeholder relationships and engagement with UK and Scottish Government digital programmes, broadband infrastructure providers and Mobile Network Operators (MNO's). In addition, the Digital Stakeholder Lead Officer is leading the planning of community engagement and delivery, to maximise the impact of the various programmes in communities across Aberdeenshire.
- 3.3 **Two Digital Engagement Officers** appointed on 1 November 2021, focusing on engaging with residents, businesses and communities, promoting the available programmes, and working to advise and educate members of the public on the options available to them, and best courses of action to improve their digital connectivity.
 - 3.3.1 **Updates on Reaching 100% Programme (R100) providing superfast broadband to every premises in Scotland.** In August 2021, Scottish Government gave detail on the rollout of the R100 scheme for the North Lot, specifying which properties would be reached by subsidised build out of full-fibre. Timescales of build-outs were also provided, showing some properties will not receive build-out until 2027. Breakdown was provided of properties eligible for Scottish Broadband Voucher Schemes (SBVS).
 - 3.3.2 SBVS is split into two categories – Interim Voucher Scheme (IVS) and Main Voucher Scheme (MVS). Properties which are included in planned build-outs, can utilise a £400 IVS to obtain an interim broadband solution, to gain access to superfast broadband by the end of March 2022. Properties who are not included in planned build-outs, can utilise a £5,000 MVS to obtain a permanent broadband solution.
 - 3.3.3 15,823 properties in Aberdeenshire will receive build-out of full-fibre broadband installation by 2027. 7,123 properties will not receive installation of a full-fibre solution, and are eligible for MVS. **Appendix 2** gives more breakdown of headline statistics from R100 information, specific for Aberdeenshire.
 - 3.3.4 Properties can be 'clustered' to allow vouchers to be aggregated, to give operators and suppliers more incentive to deliver larger or more impactful broadband solution installations. **Appendix 3** shows some examples of clusters in the cluster maps.
 - 3.3.5 Scottish Government confirmed in November 2021, that every property on the R100 build-outs will receive full-fibre, otherwise known as Fibre to the Premises (FTTP), delivering gold standard broadband solutions.

- 3.3.6 Builds within Aberdeenshire commenced in November 2021, starting with the Portlethen & Newtonhill areas. At the time of writing this Report, no properties have gone live on full-fibre within Aberdeenshire as part of the R100 build-outs.
- 3.3.7 The information provided in this Report and in Appendices 2 and 3 is, given the Aberdeenshire-wide remit of Infrastructure Services Committee, at a relatively high level. In order for Elected Members to understand the picture in their areas in more detail, it is proposed that the Digital Engagement Teams will provide updates to Area Committees in the coming months and arrangements are being made accordingly.
- 3.3.8 **Other Digital Connectivity Updates.** In addition to the R100 programme delivered by Scottish Government, residential and business premises may also be eligible to benefit from the UK Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, helping rural residents obtain gigabit-speed broadband. These vouchers are worth £1,500 for residential premises, or £3,500 for business premises.
- 3.3.9 The Scottish Government's 4G Infill Programme, and the Shared Rural Network's programme, both increasing 4G coverage across Scotland, will also increase connectivity using Mobile Broadband, over the next few years, with completion of both programmes planned for no later than 2027.
- 3.4 **Gap Analysis Update.** At its meeting on 12 November 2021, The Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee was informed, that due to delays in R100 information being provided by Scottish Government, the Digital Infrastructure Full Business Case and Gap Analysis expected by late 2021, is now expected to be completed, and submitted to the Joint Committee in May 2022.
- 3.5 **Digital Engagement Team Workplans.** As the Digital Engagement Team are now in post, workplans have been drafted to focus on the following areas:
- Complete Gap Analysis for Digital Infrastructure Full Business Case
 - Drive demand stimulation and aggregation activities, by engaging with residents, businesses and communities across Aberdeenshire.
 - Utilise mapping tools to identify key cluster areas, to have maximum impact in the shortest timeframes.
 - Work with Telecoms Providers and Operators to develop local broadband solutions for communities across Aberdeenshire.
 - Actively promote work of the Digital Engagement Team, through marketing streams, including publishing of case studies, social media campaigns, and other streams.
 - Plan and host workshop events for communities, both online and in person, to promote importance of digital connectivity, and solutions available to the public.
 - Act as response team to public enquiries in relation to digital connectivity.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 The Report will support activity and service delivery across the following Council priorities:

- Our people – education; health and wellbeing
- Our environment – infrastructure; resilient communities
- Our economy – economy and enterprise

This Report helps deliver the above Strategic Priorities through having the right people, in the right place at the right time; and supporting digital infrastructure and economy.

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

4.3 The Financial Implications are the recruitment of 3 x FTE posts to create the Digital Inclusion Team. These posts are all funded through the Aberdeen City Region Deal, and are therefore claimed back by Aberdeenshire Council.

4.4 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as **Appendix 1** and no impact has been identified. The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken. No Impact Assessments are required for the activity outlined in this report to the Infrastructure Services Committee, as this report is being delivered to provide members with an update on Scottish Government project(s), on which Aberdeenshire Council has no direct influence. There is no impact identified (negative or positive) on the ten identified areas.

4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a corporate Level:

- ACORP005 – working with other organisations (e.g. partnership working). Expectations of what can be achieved through partnership working with

commercial providers will need to be set out and agreed at the start of this activity.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/26308/corporaterisks.pdf>

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Report and their comments incorporated within the Report. They are satisfied that the Report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider [and take a decision on] this item in terms of Section F.1.1(a) of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to matters within the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

Alan Wood
Director of Environment & Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Jack Rigby, Digital Stakeholder Lead Officer
Date 16 November 2021

List of Appendices –
Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – R100 Key Headlines
Appendix 3 – R100 Cluster Maps

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

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Assessment ID	IIA-000265
Lead Author	Jack Rigby
Additional Authors	Matthew Lockley
Service Reviewers	Matthew Lockley
Approved By	Paul Macari
Approved On	Wednesday January 05, 2022
Publication Date	Wednesday January 05, 2022

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Report to Infrastructure Services Committee for January 2022, to update Committee on progress with digital connectivity projects and digital infrastructure in Aberdeenshire.

During screening 0 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 0 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

In total there are 0 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 0 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by paul.macari2@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	No
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy reduce inequality of outcome?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	No

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Not Required
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	Not Required
Health Inequalities	Not Required
Town Centre's First	Not Required

4. Justification

No Impact Assessments are required for the activity outlined in this report to the Infrastructure Services Committee, as this report is being delivered to provide members with an update on Scottish Government project(s), on which Aberdeenshire Council has no direct influence. There is no impact identified (negative or positive) on the ten identified areas.

APPENDIX 2

R100 KEY HEADLINES

OVERALL STATS	Aberdeenshire	
R100 - Planned Deployment (# of premises)	15,823	
R100 - Actual Deployment (# of premises)	0	Zero confirmed builds so far
R100 - Eligible for Interim Voucher Scheme (IVS)	16,168	£400 voucher per premises
R100 - Eligible for Main Voucher Scheme (MVS)	7,123	£5,000 voucher per premises
R100 – Deployed Vouchers	444	

R100 PLANNED DEPLOYMENT TIMELINES	Aberdeenshire	Areas to be deployed to
By end of March 2022	392	Portlethen / Newtonhill
By end of June 2022	1,034	Stonehaven / North Kincardine
2nd Half of 2022	1,484	Inverurie / Kinellar / Newmachar / Foveran
1st Half of 2023	1,286	Ellon / Oldmeldrum / Collieston / Ythan
in 2023	1,005	Huntly
in 2024	2,259	Aberchirder / Cornhill / Methlick / Tarves / Johnshaven / Gourdon / Inverbervie
in 2025	4,283	Banff & Macduff / Fraserburgh / Invercairn / King Edward / Tyrie / Rathen / Rosehearty / Sandhaven / Boddam / Mintlaw / Peterhead / Strichen / Auchterless / Turriff / Rhynie
in 2026	3,528	Fordyce / Portsoy / Whitehills / Ballater / Banchory / Braemar / Cromar / Donside / Finzean / Lumphanan / Torphins / Mid Deeside
in 2027	583	Echt / Skene / Kintore / Westhill /
R100 - Planned Deployment - TOTAL	15,854	

R100 GAP ANALYSIS	Aberdeenshire	
# of Premises in Aberdeenshire	125,388	
# of 'White Premises' pre R100 build-out	21,802	
Superfast Availability (>30mbps)	82.61%	
# of 'White Premises' after R100 build-out	7,198	
Superfast Availability (>30mbps)	94.26%	
GAP Improvement	11.65%	
Remaining GAP %	5.74%	

APPENDIX 3

R100 CLUSTER MAPS

