

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness
Subject:	Full Fibre To The Home - City Fibre.
Date of meeting:	25 th January 2021
Report by:	James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
Report Author:	Meredydd Hughes - Assistant Director of Building Services
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by Cllr Darren Sanders, Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness**2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The report is for information only and provides the Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness with an update on the progress of the Full Fibre to the Home installation project by CityFibre in Portsmouth and detail the Impact on HRA communal blocks. The information provided will be as follows:
- 2.1.1 Provide the background to the city-wide Full Fibre installation programme
 - 2.1.2 Outline the benefits the installation of the Full Fibre network to HRA properties will have on residents and the management of the buildings
 - 2.1.3 Outline the next steps.

3. Information RequestedBackground

- 3.1 On 13th March 2018 as part of the Chancellor's Spring Statement it was announced that Portsmouth City Council were successful in securing up to £3.9m to implement an Ultrafast Full Fibre Network, as part of the Full Fibre Network Programme (LFFN) operated by the Broadband Development UK (BDUK) programme within the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS).



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- 3.2 The grant agreement relating to the local LFFN in respect of the Solent Network framework project was signed by Portsmouth City Council and The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on 31st October 2019 with an agreed grant cap of £3.8m.
- 3.3 The Council tendered the opportunity to provide a 'dark fibre' network across the City, which PCC accesses via a long term 'Indefeasible right of use' agreement. The dark fibre network is a passive optical fibre network that is installed and maintained by an operator. The network will act as major enabling infrastructure for PCC IT requirements. Once the fibre is "lit up", it will be used to connect as many PCC operational sites as possible, within the City and in Havant. The benefits of a dark fibre network is that it allows the Council to increase or decrease the services required at any given time with no associated cost. Dark fibre also allows future proofed, unrestricted connectivity solutions by way of an open access infrastructure.
- 3.4 CityFibre was the chosen Service provider for the initial Framework Agreement award and the contract to design, build, operate and own the full fibre network and provide Fibre to our premises between Portsmouth City Council and CityFibre was signed on 31st October 2019.
- 3.5 CityFibre's contract is to connect all 184 mandatory sites within the budget allocated from LFFN funding. These sites include:
- 3.5.1 Portsmouth Schools
 - 3.5.2 Business and Enterprise centres
 - 3.5.3 HRA operational and sheltered housing sites
 - 3.5.4 Community Centres
 - 3.5.5 Sports Centres
 - 3.5.6 CCTV locations
 - 3.5.7 Children's Homes
- 3.6 Progress of the contract is reported and presented to the LFFN Corporate Governance and Oversight Board which meets on a regular basis. At the last meeting on 9th December 2020, it was reported that Phase One of the project was ongoing despite the Covid-19 pandemic and would be completed and services live by November 2021.
- 3.7 CityFibre is investing £32 million of capital investment to futureproof Portsmouth's digital infrastructure and provide residents and private businesses with access to reliable, high speed and high capacity digital services. This Fibre to the Home (FTTH) project commenced in March 2020 and will connect approximately 98,000 homes and businesses across the City when it is completed in late 2024.

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- 3.8 CityFibre presented to a Portsmouth Ward Councillor briefing on Building Gigabit Cities in August 2020 the benefits of full fibre connectivity to Portsmouth residents. The presentation highlighted the following:
- 3.8.1 The planned works programme of installations and resident engagement and communication.
 - 3.8.2 Local job opportunities provided to Portsmouth residents via CityFibre's build partners CCN Communications Ltd.
 - 3.8.3 A full team of CityFibre staff deployed locally to manage the build rollout and customer enquiries.
 - 3.8.4 CityFibre working with COLAS with regards to Highways work / permits
 - 3.8.5 At present the build programme is planned for the entire island of Portsmouth, and to go as far as Queen Alexandra Hospital in the North, Portchester in the West and Farlington to the east.
- 3.9 As part of CityFibre's £32Million investment in Portsmouth it proposes to install a Full Fibre infrastructure across Portsmouth City Council's retained Housing Stock of communal blocks in Portsmouth.
- 3.10 The UK Government has set a target that half of UK homes should have a full fibre-optic broadband connection by 2025 and all properties should be connected by 2033. To facilitate the installation of full fibre infrastructure and connection across the UK the Government introduced new obligations on landlord/property owners to grant permission to broadband suppliers to install their cables onto properties.

What is Full Fibre and why is it important?

- 3.11 Full fibre is an internet connection entirely served by a fibre optic cable, from the exchange all the way to the office or home. This is known as Fibre to the Premises (FTTP).
- 3.12 At present only around 14% of households in England have access to full fibre networks. Older networks run on copper wiring, or a mix of copper and fibre, not "full fibre". This process, known as Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC), can offer a speed increase but these speeds diminish the further the final connection to the property is from the cabinet.
- 3.13 Full Fibre will see existing cable replaced with fibre optic cabling and is considered the highest standard for internet connections as it is fast (internet speeds of up to 1Gbps / 1,000 Mbps), reliable and futureproofed. It will cope with growing demands and won't need to be replaced or upgraded in the foreseeable future.
- 3.14 Due to faster internet connection speeds Full Fibre should make it easier to work and learn from home and allows households to use data-intensive services such as

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gaming, video calls and streaming services across multiple devices without a drop in service.

Benefits to Residents of Portsmouth

3.15 For residents living in HRA communal blocks FETH will bring the following benefits:

- 3.15.1 Residents will be able to access 1000Mbps broadband services directly into their homes, improving user experience with seamless multi device streaming, enabling everyone to watch what they want.
- 3.15.2 Flexible home working and e-learning opportunities with exceptionally fast speed online file sharing and video conferencing.
 - Enabling children to be better equipped to do homework and learn independently online
 - Offering improved opportunities for adults to continue life-long learning
- 3.15.3 Improved access to online shopping, banking and public services.
- 3.15.4 Supporting the adoption of new technologies, such as Amazon and Google smart speakers to control smart heating, lighting and security.

3.16 These benefits for residents will complement those arising for the Portsmouth City Council HRA from the roll out of LFFN Public Sector Network (PSN) to our operational sites and will assist where there is a particular need to control building management systems remotely, for example communal gas boilers, lighting, CCTV, lifts, alarm systems, water storage tanks and boosted water pumps, as well as a number of other building management services which may require monitoring from a compliance perspective.

HRA Full Fibre to the Home Next steps

- 3.17 Portsmouth City Council will enter into a Non-Exclusive Access Wayleave Agreement with CityFibre. This enables CityFibre to have access rights to the City Council's HRA property assets to install and maintain a full fibre network in the common areas of our buildings.
- 3.18 The Council will work with CityFibre to enable the installation of a full fibre infrastructure to our HRA communal properties. HNB Building Services will ensure that the works are completed to the highest standards in accordance with best practice, are safe and compliant with all regulations and legislation, and are carried out in a way that minimises disruption to residents.
- 3.19 The installation will come at no cost to the Council, residents or leaseholders as all of the new full fibre infrastructure will be funded and managed by CityFibre.
- 3.20 Once the infrastructure is completed and the connections "lit up", residents and leaseholders will be able to take up or switch to a package offered by the new

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internet service providers. There will be no obligation for residents or leaseholders to switch to a new provider and they are free to continue with their existing contract providers.

- 3.21 Although CityFibre commenced its FTTH installation project across Portsmouth in March 2020 no programme of works for the installation of full fibre to PCC's HRA stock has been presented or agreed to date. It is anticipated however that works to HRA communal blocks will have commenced by the Summer of 2021 and follow the FTTH programme with completion in late 2024. Upon completion and signing of the Wayleave agreement discussions will commence on the proposed programme of installation together with the development of a communication strategy on resident engagement which will utilise the opportunities CityFibre has progressed to date and the PCC social and printed media platforms.
- 3.22 HNB will continue to work closely with CityFibre to agree the Wayleave, develop an agreed programme of install works across the HRA portfolio of communal blocks in Portsmouth and develop a communications strategy. Further reports on the installation progress will be brought back to the Housing and Preventing Homelessness Cabinet as appropriate.

4. Director of Finance Comments

- 4.1 There are no additional costs to the City Council's Housing Revenue Account as a result of this project, as stated in the main body of the report. Any costs associated with communications to residents and working with CityFibre will be treated as day to day expenses and will be met from existing resources.

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Signed by James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location