

**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)**

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness
<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Full Fibre to The Home - City Fibre.
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	24th January 2022
<b>Report by:</b>	James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
<b>Report Author:</b>	Meredydd Hughes - Assistant Director of Building Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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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 Full Fibre to the Home City Fibre infrastructure works. The information provided will be as follows:

2.1.1 Recap on the background and benefits the installation of the Full Fibre network to HRA properties will have on residents and the management of the buildings

2.1.2 To detail the progress made across the HRA property portfolio since the original report was approved on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

2.2 The Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness places on record a note of thanks to the City Fibre and Building Services team for their work on this project throughout the extraordinary circumstances in 2021 and commends the progress made despite the challenges.

**3. Information Requested**

3.1 The Cabinet member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness has requested an update on the progress of the Full Fibre to the Home infrastructure installation project by City Fibre to HRA communal blocks in Portsmouth.

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### **4. Background**

- 4.1 A for information report was brought to the Cabinet member for Housing and preventing Homelessness meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 detailing the proposed Full Fibre To The Home infrastructure works to be undertaken by City Fibre.
- 4.2 The report highlighted that:
- 4.2.1 City Fibre is making a capital investment of £32 million 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.
- 4.2.2 As part of this investment in Portsmouth City Fibre proposed to install a Full Fibre infrastructure across Portsmouth City Council's retained Housing Stock of communal blocks in Portsmouth.
- 4.3 The contents of the report were noted by the Cabinet Member and the offer of further update progress reports were accepted.

#### Benefits for the HRA Residents of Portsmouth living in Communal blocks

- 4.4 For residents living in HRA communal blocks FTTH will bring the following benefits:
- 4.4.1 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.
- 4.4.2 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
- 4.4.3 Improved access to online shopping, banking and public services.
- 4.4.4 Supporting the adoption of new technologies, such as Amazon and Google smart speakers to control smart heating, lighting and security.
- 4.5 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

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number of other building management services which may require monitoring from a compliance perspective.

- 4.6 The Full Fibre infrastructure installation comes at no cost to the Council, the Housing Revenue Account, residents or leaseholders as all of the new full fibre infrastructure will be funded and managed by City Fibre.

**5. HRA Communal properties Full Fibre to the Home - Progress Update**

- 5.1 On the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Portsmouth City Council entered into a Non-Exclusive Access Wayleave Agreement with City Fibre. This enables City Fibre to have access rights to the City Council's HRA communal property assets to install and maintain a full fibre network in the common areas of our buildings.
- 5.2 On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 representative teams from PCC and City Fibre met to agree the format of future meetings for both the strategic and operational working groups. In addition, a detailed memorandum process was agreed which set out the protocol to be followed in submitting Full Fibre route plan packs and the PCC approval process that follows.
- 5.3 Further strategic quarterly meetings between PCC and City Fibre have taken place in July and October 2021. These meetings are chaired by Meredydd Hughes, Assistant Director of Building Services, and ensure the project stays on track, identifies risks and provides an opportunity for the Group to ensure the project plan goals are met by providing accurate updated data and information for management. The next meeting is scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- 5.4 Regular operational meetings between technical officers of PCC and City Fibre have taken place since April 2020. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss and agree the programme and progress of planned works, ensure the work is completed to the highest standards, are safe and compliant with all regulations and legislation in place and are carried out in a way that minimises disruption to residents. Feedback from all stakeholders is given and received and any necessary amendments to working arrangements and practices are made.
- 5.5 To date, the City Fibre operational team has received positive feedback from both PCC technical offices and PCC HRA residents for all aspects of their service delivery ranging from the pre-engagement survey work to the actual physical installation of City Fibre infrastructure.
- 5.6 To highlight and promote the joint work being undertaken by PCC and City Fibre in installing FTTTH to HRA communal properties an editorial article was written for the Winter 2021 edition of Housetalk published in November 2021. The Housetalk magazine is written for and distributed to our 14,500 HRA residents.

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- 5.7 As of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021, City Fibre have completed the FTTTH infrastructure installation to 182 HRA communal blocks. This had released 1618 individual dwellings capable of receiving Full Fibre. City Fibre have reported that they are confident that by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 they will have reached their planned year's target of 1,800 released properties. In addition, they have advised that 29 customers have signed up with Internet Service providers using the Full Fibre platform. City Fibre have plans to complete and release another 2,000 HRA dwellings in 2022. The list of blocks completed in 2021 and planned for 2022 is included in Appendix A.
- 5.8 In terms of their overall £32 Million investment in Portsmouth. City Fibre have reported that after starting their city-wide project in March 2020 that they have completed infrastructure installation works passed 25,000 properties and that over 22,000 of them are now ready to be connected to the Full Fibre network.
- 5.9 City Fibre also report that out of their workforce of 14 staff, 70% reside within the PO1-7 postcode, and 109 employees of build partner CCN reside in the Portsmouth area. In addition, City Fibre advise that 25% of their employees working on our programme are ex-military personnel or reservists, and 7% are apprentices.

**6. Next Steps**

- 6.1 The Council will continue to work closely with City Fibre in delivering the FTTTH programme to HRA communal properties in Portsmouth up to the end of 2024.
- 6.2 Regular strategic and operational meetings will continue between the Council and City Fibre.
- 6.3 Both parties will continue to use a variety of communication platforms to ensure that all residents and stakeholders are kept up to date with programme and performance.
- 6.4 Further reports on the installation programme progress will be brought back to the Housing and Preventing Homelessness Cabinet as appropriate.

**7. Director of Finance Comments**

- 7.1 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

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with communications to residents and working with City Fibre 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:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Full Fibre to the home - City Fibre - Jan 2021. Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness	<a href="#">Full Fibre to Home - City Fibre.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)</a>