

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	27 October 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	North Regeneration Area – Digital District
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/15/298
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

At the CH&I committee of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015, committee approved the following recommendations:

“c) agrees that officers work collaboratively across and outwith the Council to pursue the other projects outlined as part of the overall Accelerate Aberdeen programme post March 2015.

d) Northern Regeneration Area - approval to proceed with discussions and development of a project plan which will be monitored and reviewed through ACC’s PMO.”

Further the report highlighted the following financial implication:

“3.2 £150,000 from approved capital costs for digital infrastructure projects towards delivering a free to access public WiFi network in those areas of northern regeneration communities identified at 5.2.7 and appendix 1”

This report provides information on the development of collaboration with the Future Cities Catapult to deliver a WiFi network and sustainable community delivery model and seeks approval to finalise negotiations with a preferred bidder for the deployment and initial service management of the network infrastructure.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that council:

- a) Approve officers to conclude negotiations with the preferred bidder and award the contract for delivery of a WiFi network within the North Regeneration areas within the set budget of £150,000. The submitted bid is priced at £125,050.
- b) That the balance of the £150,000 budget be approved for use in the delivery of the community engagement and service design works developed within the collaboration agreement and with affiliates to this agreement.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

£150,000 from approved capital costs for digital infrastructure projects towards delivering a free to access public WiFi network within the Northern Regeneration areas and associated engagement and service design works.

An estimated £125,050 for the agreement of a two year managed service delivery with the balance supporting additional activities with collaboration partners and associates to develop community engagement and management/ownership models.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Advice and support from ACC legal and procurement services and input from the Future Cities catapult legal and procurement advisors has been utilised in the development of the collaboration and procurement works associated with this programme.

### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

CH&I committee of 18th March 2015 approved the development of a collaboration programme to deliver a world class wifi network capability across the “Northern Regeneration Area” (defined as Middlefield, parts of Northfield, Woodside and Tillydrone identified as areas of multiple deprivation) and the development of community engagement and ownership solutions that could drive better social and economic outcomes and support effective service delivery.

Aberdeen City Council entered into a collaborative working arrangement with the Future Cities Catapult (FCC) to develop and publish a tender for the provision of WiFi services in the area. The tender was designed with supporting input from technical and legal providers to the FCC.

The tender was weighted towards community benefit (20% of total score) with a requirement for the participation of the winning bidder in community engagement processes (to ensure that the network is further defined in support of these), to work to develop sustainable

community ownership models (of platform/resources within) and that the network infrastructure be returned to Aberdeen City Council ownership following a minimum 2 year contract period to allow ongoing development and best value for the local community. Further the contract required no additional revenue costs to the council/collaboration over the period of the contract.

The collaboration accepted that these were significant restrictions that many providers would find it difficult to work within but believed that the community value proposition was one that required such a challenge to providers.

Out of 16 noted interests the collaboration received one formal bid.

The bid received has the following key characteristics.

- From award delivery is scheduled within four months.
- The bid utilises existing Aberdeen City Council infrastructure in the area (lighting columns and buildings).
- Backhaul is provided at “world class” level using fibre provision already in situ at six locations in the area through the Aberdeen City Council In Building WiFi programme (initially funded through Department of Culture Media and Sport) and installing mesh infrastructure on street lighting and property asset at seven locations. These locations are supported by robust core fibre connectivity providing a gigabit fibre ring. Coverage maps are included at Appendix 1.
- The bid will utilise the existing sign on procedure in place for the In Building wifi programme. This means any citizen currently registered for the service will be automatically registered for use of this network.
- The bidder will support the development of a front page/portal specific to the locations and designed with the communities to meet their desired objectives.
- The bidder will engage with a governance process for the delivery of the network access that puts community influence at the heart of development.
- The bidder has identified opportunities for further network investment and support for community equipment access development.
- The bid is priced within the £150,000 set as the target delivery cost (£125,050).

- The bid provides an extendable infrastructure core to allow the sustainable growth of the network as models are developed.
- The network will revert to ACC ownership following the contract period, allowing transfer to an appropriate, sustainable delivery/ownership model.

Scoring of the bid was undertaken separately by FCC and Aberdeen City Council with a final score of 87%

The prospect of having significant digital network coverage at scale across an area of the City has already been flagged up as a potential benefit in identified bids for funding. The opportunity to extend, enhance and replicate the solution will be considered and built into ongoing projects.

## 6. IMPACT

### **Improving Customer Experience –**

Access to community developed information and public and private sector services (where appropriate drawing on community engagement in their design) will be available to residents and visitors supporting service engagement, community projects and a range of other engagement opportunities.

The “world class” standard of the core infrastructures will allow the consideration of the deployment of other “physical” services on the infrastructure (sensors, CCTV).

At the core of the project will be data access, ethical use and security model developments to ensure that citizens engaging with the platform are fully aware of and in agreement with the types of uses that the information they provide will be used for.

### **Improving Staff Experience –**

The development of a world class infrastructure in the area will allow ACC staff to enhance online engagements with clients, with a potential to consider the platform for “smart working” solutions in areas of poor mobile coverage.

Officers working, for example, on welfare reform delivery in the areas will be able to access DWP websites with clients to walk them through applications and reporting.

### **Improving our use of Resources –**

Working with our communities to design information platforms and service delivery options, and drawing on the expertise within the FCC and University to support this, provides channels of development that can positively impact on resource efficiency.

Encouraging residents to proactively develop “self-service” models and developing increased internal community support systems can allow more time for staff resource to be deployed in handling complex engagements and utilising digital channel shift within them to achieve better outcomes.

**Corporate -**

This project supports the administration’s Smarter Aberdeen Policy Statement. Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) identified a number of areas within the Economic Action Plan where NGA can play a critical role in transport, global connectivity, anchoring the energy sector, and attracting and developing skilled people and company headquarters.

The delivery of this project is consistent with ACC’s administration policy – “Aberdeen a Smarter City”, supporting ACC’s aspiration for Aberdeen to be a Smarter City. The widespread availability of NGA will allow public services to be more cost effectively delivered – this will become increasingly important as Council budgets reduce in real terms.

**Public –**

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) and a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA), have been completed for this report.

The proposed network is likely to be of interest to the public in the areas covered as a mechanism for accessing online content and services and in the development of engagement programmes that will seek to develop the opportunities presented for community benefit.

Those in areas close to coverage may have concerns that the network does not provide further areas, however the network is designed to allow expansion as further backhaul capacity is developed within the northern regeneration area.

The development of appropriate community management/ownership models will provide an opportunity to seek to replicate this model in other communities across the city.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The committee will want to consider whether the deliverable can be considered Best Value on the basis of a single bidder. The definition of the tender was such that it placed a high barrier to entry to ensure that community benefit was a primary driver of the programme. In light of the stringent challenge and the cost and technical solution presented the Senior Project Manager and FCC partner believe the bid represents best value.

Community stakeholders may believe that “community ownership” is not achieved upfront in the delivery of the programme. Officers believe that agreeing what might define an effective community ownership model, what the community may want to stake ownership of and what the liabilities of the community in delivering a sustainable model might be are best undertaken over the duration of the service contract and with full community consultation.

Health and safety and environmental considerations are addressed in the tender document and also in relation to any installations of equipment and power supplies on council asset. Health and safety Executive guidelines on wireless equipment will be adhered to in deployment and use of the network.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

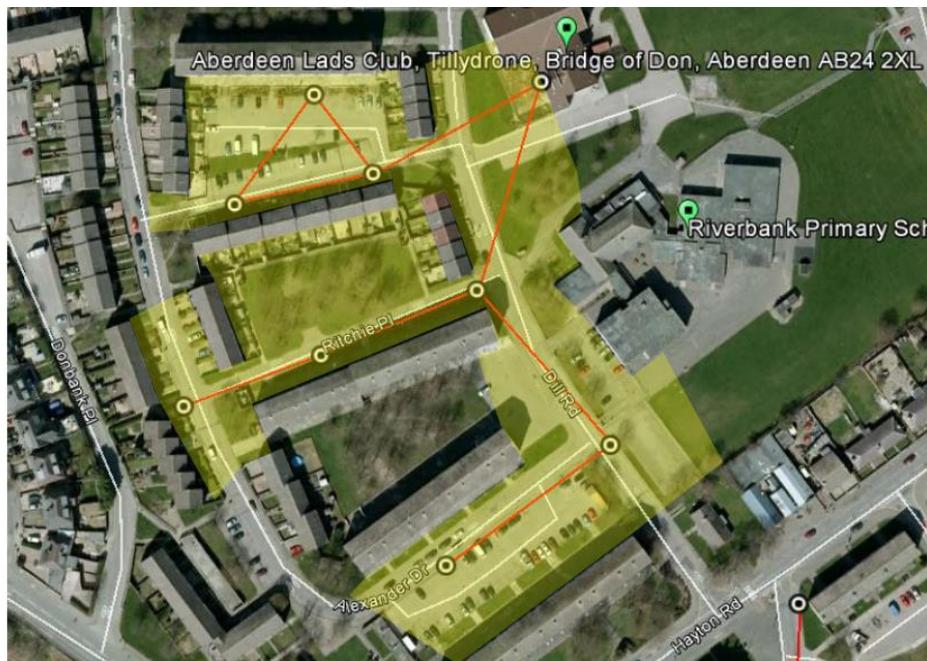
This report refers to Item 34 of the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015 Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee.

## 9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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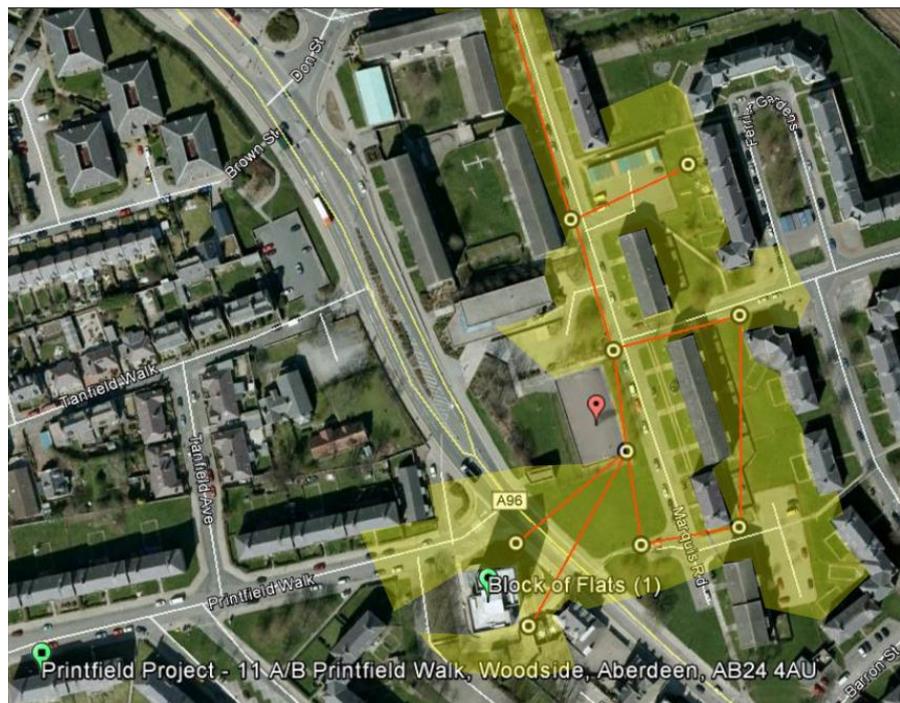
**Mesh 1a – Aberdeen Lads Club (Flats)**



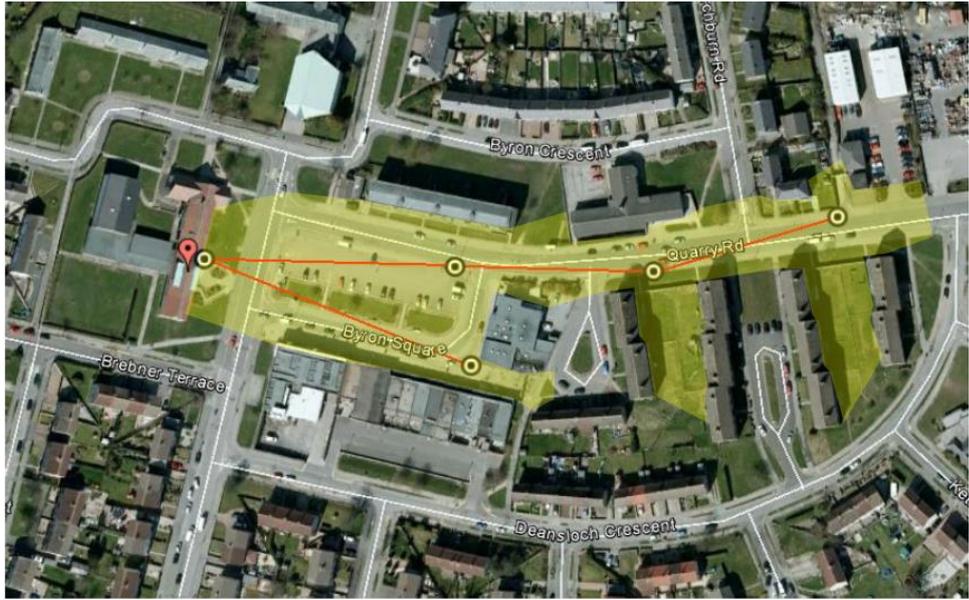
**Mesh 1b – Aberdeen Lads Club**



**Mesh 2 – Tillydrone Community Flat**







**Mesh 6 – Northfield Library**