



Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services

Tuesday, 16 July 2024 at 3.00 pm

Room 1 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

Items for Decision

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on 23 July 2024 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

These proceedings are open to the public

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Reeves".

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

July 2024

Committee Officer: ***committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk***

Note: *Date of next meeting: 17 September 2024*

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Items for Decision

1. Declarations of Interest

See guidance below.

2. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

3. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

Requests to speak must be submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting. Requests to speak should be sent to committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9 am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

4. DSIT 5G Innovation Regions project - England's Connected Heartland (Pages 1 - 8)

Cabinet Member: Community & Corporate Services

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/50

Contact: Craig Bower, Digital Infrastructure Programme Director

Craig.Bower@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CMDCCS)**

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to

- (a) Delegate authority to the Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, to approve the award and entering into of two contracts for managed 5G private network services for each of the capital projects forming the project known as England's Connected Heartland (ECH). The combined contract's value will not exceed the value of the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) capital grant of £3.8m.**

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.
- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

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Divisions Affected - All

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & CORPORATE SERVICES

16 JULY 2024

Contract Awards for the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology 5G Innovation Regions (England's Connected Heartland)

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to

- (a) Delegate authority to the Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, to approve the award and entering into of two contracts for managed 5G private network services for each of the capital projects forming the project known as England's Connected Heartland (ECH). The combined contract's value will not exceed the value of the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) capital grant of £3.8m.

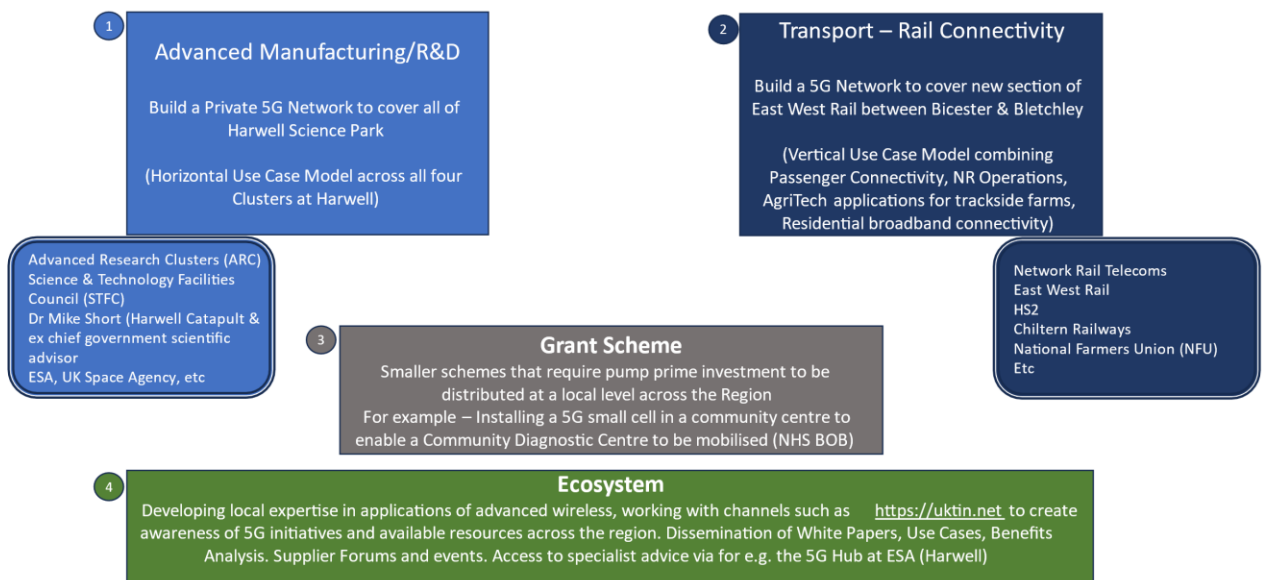
Executive Summary

1. This decision follows approval by Cabinet on 19th December 2023 to accept the DSIT grant of £3.8m awarded to Oxfordshire County Council for funding the ECH programme. This decision also authorised the use of a proportion of the gainshare funding held in a ringfenced account for the purpose of supporting digital infrastructure projects.
2. The two capital projects comprise a 5G Private Mobile Network (MPN) for Harwell Science and Innovation campus, and a 5G MPN for deployment along the new stretch of East West Rail between Bicester and Bletchley.
3. Both capital project requirements have been subject to an Open Procedure procurement. At the time of drafting this report, the Preferred Bidders are not known and selection of such will be subject to evaluation and moderation before taking the recommendation of contract awards to the Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer.

4. Both contracts will have one-off capital costs to be paid entirely by the DSIT grant funding. Both contracts will have ongoing service management costs to be paid annually. These costs are estimated to be c £150k per annum for each capital project. The programme expects to commit to these two projects being available for a minimum of three years, meaning the total expected drawdown of gainshare funding will be c £900k.
5. The programme aims to generate revenue from users of the services of each project which will mitigate/reduce the gainshare drawdown required and may enable the services to continue for up to seven years without requiring any further drawdown of gainshare funding. The core purpose of the programme is to establish a viable commercial model for each capital project such that future investment in this type of capability will happen without the need for public subsidy. It can be described as a 'build it and they will come' model where the demand for this connectivity can be aggregated to enable the business case for investment can be financially viable, along with demonstrating to the supply market that these are low risk viable propositions to bring to market. This is described in further detail below at paragraph 15.
6. For context, these two capital projects are supported by a Grant Award Scheme and an Ecosystem workstream. These are described below in Fig 1

Fig 1: ECH Programme Components

Four ECH Building Blocks



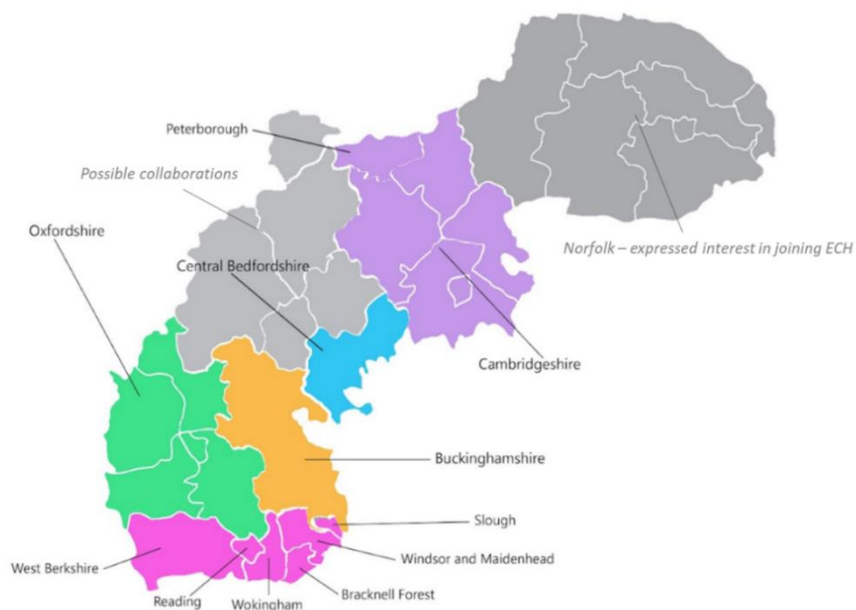
Context and Background

7. **Digital Infrastructure** comprises fixed broadband connectivity and mobile voice/data connectivity along with connected assets such as Internet of Things devices. Wide availability and access to good connectivity in the internet age is

critical for a huge array of public and private sector services to be delivered productively, and frequently can be linked to both clean economic growth and carbon reduction by mitigating the need for travel. Historically the central government department responsible for digital infrastructure was the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). It is now the responsibility of the Dept for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

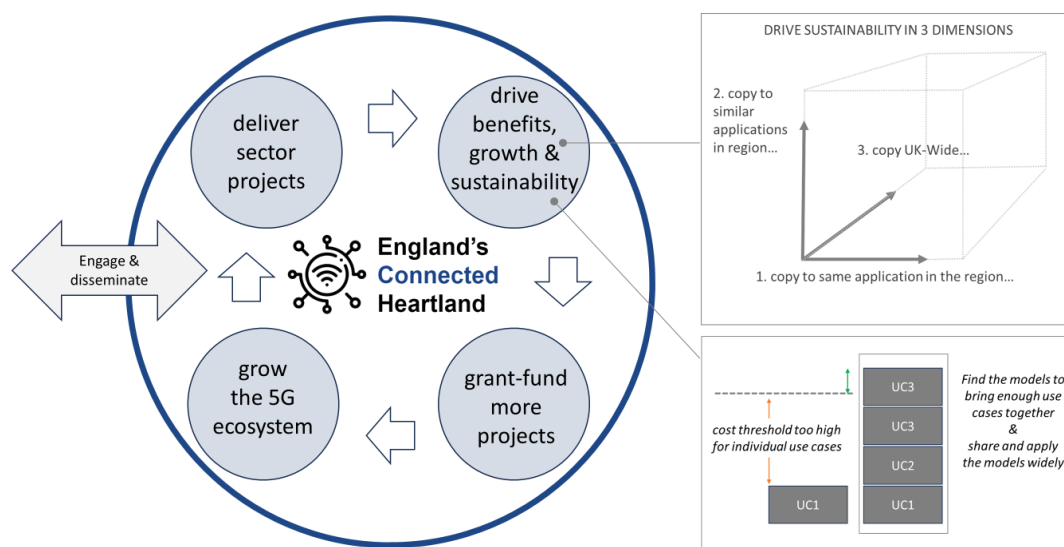
8. **Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Programme (DIP)** has been in place since 2014. The initial focus was fixing the lack of broadband infrastructure across Oxfordshire. The core project was known as Better Broadband for Oxfordshire which delivered access to superfast broadband for 100,000 homes and businesses over a period of six years. The delivery contract was constructed as a profit-share where an element of revenue earned is paid to the council, predicated on take-up of services by residents. This adoption rate has reached over 80% and allowed for DIP to accrue a fund known as gainshare which is ringfenced for further investment the council wishes to make in digital infrastructure. The programme has delivered several other projects since 2014, including Businesses in Rural Oxfordshire a Gigabit Voucher Scheme & GigaHubs. DIP has more recently focussed on improving mobile infrastructure as wireless connectivity becomes more strategically important, especially with the advent of 5G mobile.
9. **England's Connected Heartland** is the regional partnership comprising the Local Authorities in the map below. The partnership is led by Oxfordshire County Council and is supported by a Memorandum of Understanding.

Fig 2: England's Connected Heartland



10. **UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy** published in 2023 sets out the case for driving private and public investment in wireless infrastructure. The report concludes that 5G “...will be the cornerstone of our digital economy...” where widespread adoption could see £159bn in productivity improvements by 2035. The DSIT 5G Innovation Regions (5GIR) is an intervention funded programme aimed at improving adoption in specific UK sector verticals. The ECH Advanced Manufacturing (Harwell) and Transport (East West Rail) projects are set to test and demonstrate commercial models that if successful can be widely replicated. This is represented in the diagram below.

Fig 3: Commercial Model Development



11. **Supplier Consultation.** Extensive informal consultation with suppliers has taken place prior to structured engagement in the form of supplier webinars, each attended by over 70 people representing over 30 suppliers. This was followed with publishing Prior Information Notices (PINs), one for each procurement.
12. **Stakeholder Engagement** has been widely undertaken over several months. This has been aimed at capturing requirements, testing demand & likely use cases, as well as establish preparedness for installation and integration with other ICT infrastructure and assets. This has included;
- Harwell: Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC), Advanced Research Clusters (ARC), Asset Management team, Estates, IT Management group, Security management team, and individual entities such as European Space Agency, SA Catapult, Moderna and others.
 - Rail Project: Network Rail, Network Rail Telecoms, East West Mainline Partnership, East West Rail Company, Chiltern Railways, England’s

Economic Heartland, Dept for Transport, National Farmers Union and others.

13. **Functionality, Purpose, and Objectives of the projects**

- (a) **Harwell Science & Innovation Campus:** With over 200 innovative enterprises across four clusters (Space, Energy, Health, & Quantum) located at Harwell, this is an ideal location to demonstrate how a private 5G network can provide a range of benefits. The approach seeks to overcome the ‘who pays?’ It is much more cost effective to deploy a single network that can be accessed by multiple entities than it would be for individual enterprises to stand up their own individual mobile private network (MPN). It should be noted that Harwell campus competes with similar science parks across the globe in locations such as Silicon Valley, Beijing, Singapore etc where this kind of connectivity is readily available. Currently there is no mobile network operator 5G coverage at Harwell at all and even the 4G mobile coverage is patchy. The plan for Harwell should also make it more likely that a public 5G network would be built by one or more MNOs as our ECH project will make infrastructure assets available for use. After the first year of operation, ECH will work with STFC and ARC to establish a process for billing and collecting revenue for users of the 5G MPN, most likely via existing ground rent/service charges issued to tenants.
- (b) **Rail Project:** The 5G rail project seeks to resolve an entirely new commercial model to enable the rail industry to find a way of providing decent connectivity for rail commuters. This is a long-standing problem in the UK and stems from the same ‘who pays’ conundrum as described in the Harwell project. The ECH project is using the concept of stacking use cases each with potential revenue opportunities which when combined aims to reduce or remove the need for public subsidy. These revenue streams can be described as:
- (1) Train Operating Company where the 5G MPN is made available via SIM card added to the train-top mobile antenna box which augments any MNO signal available on the route
 - (2) Network Rail where the connectivity can demonstrate the means of collecting the vast amount of data gathered onboard such as track condition sensors, trackside video of embankment conditions, onboard security CCTV etc.
 - (3) Network Rail maintenance yards such as the vast new facility being built at the intersection of HS2 with East West Rail.
 - (4) Agri-tech connectivity for farms.
 - (5) Residential Fixed Wireless Access (FWAS) broadband service to trackside communities.
 - (6) Business Park connectivity along the route.

Sustainability Implications

14. Digital infrastructure invariably enables communication that reduces the need for travel which both improves productivity as well as reducing carbon

emissions. The Harwell project will provide both aspects where greater collaboration is possible between Harwell enterprises and their supply chain and partner institutions, both within the UK and internationally. The rail project seeks to find a sustainable funding mechanism that will enable reliable rail passenger connectivity. This will in turn attract more people to using sustainable rail transport rather than vehicle commuting. Whilst the ECH rail project is very small in scale, if successful it could have an application much more widely across the UK's rail network.

Risk Management

15. The ECH programme has a detailed risk log which is continually assessed. The service outputs are external and do not impact on any services directly delivered by the council. The risks will primarily be concerned with diligent contract, budget, and project delivery management. Subject to contract(s) the bulk of delivery risk will be held by the successful supplier(s). The commercialisation aspect of both projects will become material during 2024/25 but the business case does not depend on this such that revenue collected is forecast as upside outcomes.

Financial Implications

16. The ECH programme is entirely funded through the DSIT grant funding of £3.8m and access to the digital infrastructure gainshare fund of £0.9m held by the council. This covers the minimum operational contract period 3 years post implementation.
17. There is sufficient grant for the two capital programmes £3.2m (£1.6m each) and Grant Award scheme of £0.6m and worst-case position regarding operational delivery costs of £0.9m. As such the projects bear no financial risk to the council and will be contracted via an open competitive tendering process and in line with value for money principles.
18. The ECH programme is leveraging our gainshare fund to secure c £17 external investment for every £1 of our money investment. An important aspect (and risk) of the programme is the current condition of the DSIT grant award that all invoicing for capital items (the purpose of the grant) must be submitted for payment by March 2025.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

19. Both capital projects referenced in this paper have been supported by robust, compliant with the Public Contract Regulations procurements with input not only

from the procurement and legal teams, but also external legal services via DAC Beachcroft who have provided specialist contract and UK subsidy control advice. There will be further downstream legal input required in establishing mechanisms for the council to receive income derived from users of the network services. It is, for example, a possibility that the regional consortium of ECH is formed as a Joint Venture given the potential value in the commercial templates developed for both the Harwell and Rail projects.

Comments checked by:

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July 2024

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