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APPENDIX 1 – REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) TECHNICAL REQUIREMENT

APPROACHES TO ACCELERATING AFFORDABLE GIGABIT FIBRE

Development Services – Smart Place

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1. Introduction and purpose

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council has developed a Smart Place Strategy with a clear focus on generating local value, helping to tackle key challenges across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Whether making it easier for people to go about their daily lives, improving the prospects of our local businesses or enabling communities to function more effectively, combining information, data and emerging digital technologies will deliver considerable benefits for our area.

One of the core underpinning technologies that will enable our Smart Place to become reality is Gigabit fibre deployed across the whole of the BCP region. Without ubiquitous and affordable Gigabit speed network availability our Smart Place ambition will be curtailed and the digital divide will continue to grow. Without a significant increase in pace to deploy Gigabit fibre, our region will be held back from achieving the full potential of residents, businesses, and the community as a whole.

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to seek market insight, recommendations and proposals on the various possible Gigabit delivery models (technical, operational and commercial) that would accelerate the deployment of affordable Gigabit fibre to every home, business and organisation across the BCP Council area. These models may potentially include a new partnership between the market, BCP Council and the wider BCP community in order to ensure that optimum economic and social outcomes are achieved. The inputs that we receive from this RFI will help us to shape our requirement before going to market with a formal competition.

2. Background

It is currently estimated that there is a productivity deficit of £1bn within the BCP area with poor digital connectivity (fixed and mobile) costing the local economy around £150m per annum due to lost productivity. Within the BCP area, 48% of homes and businesses in Bournemouth (West) have access to gigabit connectivity. The figure for Bournemouth (East) is 18.5%. These figures compare favourably with the UK average of 15.1%. However, the figure for Christchurch is only 10.5% and for Poole a very low 0.8%. By comparison, the average provision of gigabit fibre in Europe (EU39) is 52.5%.

A key outcome from the Smart Place programme is to improve gigabit fibre connectivity in support of the Council's ambition to create 21st century digital infrastructure. Gigabit fibre is the foundation for the innovation aspects of the Smart Place programme, which is seeking to create new business opportunities and local jobs. In turn this can also accelerate the development of new technologies to help address many of the area's social and economic issues.

The aim of the Smart Place programme is to create significant local value, utilising digital solutions to improve our residents' lives, increase our businesses' prospects and empower our communities.

High speed connectivity is a fundamental building block in developing these ambitions and core to this connectivity is ubiquitous Gigabit fibre. There are five primary strategic drivers for the Gigabit Speed Fibre Programme:

- (i) shift the market toward Gigabit broadband connectivity,
- (ii) safeguard and create jobs in frontier sectors,
- (iii) support the digital transformation of the workforce,
- (iv) support the 'good growth' (including the reduction of carbon emissions and promoting greater inclusivity) of towns and
- (v) support smart mobility.

To underpin a Smart Place, the fibre connectivity needs to cover all of BCP, without exception. It must be affordable so as to remove the issue of digital divide and the pace of deployment must increase significantly to meet the ambitious plans of our programme and to offer our community the wider benefits of high-speed connectivity.

3. Objectives

The response to this RFI should focus on ways in which the following four key strategic and five operational objectives can be met:

3.1. Strategic Objectives

- 1. Gigabit Fibre should be available across the whole of the BCP area.** We are looking for new strategies that will deliver 100% availability in every part of the BCP region without exception. Proposing technical and commercial constructs that will remove "not spots" from the network.
- 2. Gigabit fibre needs to be rolled out at pace.** We wish to see a plan that will deliver 80% of this network by end of 2023 and the remainder by the end of 2024
- 3. Gigabit fibre needs to be affordable to residents, businesses, public sector and the voluntary sector.** We are looking for commercial propositions that remove the financial barriers to widescale adoption of Gigabit fibre in all sectors of the community.
- 4. To create a market which attracts widescale investment in gigabit fibre.** We are looking for ideas as to how we could ensure inward investment into fibre networks within our region.

3.2. Operational Objectives

- 1. All broadband connectivity should be available as a symmetric service.** We wish to see commercial and technical models which allow our businesses and residents to be able to use connectivity that exploits the full richness of Smart services by offering full symmetric speeds of service as standard.

2. **Digital Maturity and Service take up.** We are looking for ways to enhance our existing Smart Place programme with additional steps that can increase the level of digital maturity for both consumers and businesses. As a result, we are also looking at ways in which we can achieve levels of take up of service which are significantly greater than the current UK norm.
3. **“Layer 2” virtual networks for specific local needs.** We wish to create the mechanisms, technically, operationally and commercially that allows the local region to create specific layer 2 networks focused on social and community goals that exploit the fibre network. For example, our local schools being able to create safe and secure home learning solutions without having to transverse the internet.
4. **Vibrant ISP marketplace.** We are looking for new ways of driving a vibrant ISP marketplace that offers residents attractive propositions for a variety of different needs. The solutions should look to remove the barriers to switching between providers, whilst at the same time ensure that the returns for ISPs are sufficient to make BCP attractive market to operate in.
5. **Fibre Aggregation.** We wish to see solutions that allow the potential exploitation of any fibre deployed within the BCP area into a single aggregated solution for ISPs to run service over. Different fibre owners need to be incentivised to make capacity available again by ensuring a commercial model that provides sufficient returns to make this an attractive proposition.

4. Commercial and technological factors

Within the responses to the RFI we will be looking to understand how the proposals presented can deliver each of our objectives (from section 3) in turn. In addition, we would like to understand

1. Any technical/engineering activity that is proposed
2. Outlined commercial constructs that would be employed to offer service to BCP residents/businesses.
3. Ideas for assisting in attracting further inward investment into the fibre network specifically and potentially the wider Smart Place programme in general.
4. The role/expectation that is required from BCP Council.
5. Indication of the revenue opportunity for fibre owners in general and BCP Council specifically.
6. Any wider contribution to the local community on a broader socio/economic front.
7. Feedback on our programme

5. Submission of response

Please submit your detailed **RFI Response Document** and **PowerPoint Summary** in accordance with **Appendix 2 - Request for Information - PIN Process**.

Please note that the PowerPoint Summary may be used in a potential forward discussion with BCP Council, should that be desired by BCP.

Your **RFI Response Document** should detail your responses to each of the factors presented in Section 4 above together with any other supporting material.