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# **DIGITAL SCOTLAND SUPERFAST BROADBAND PROGRAMME IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS: OUTCOME OF REVIEW BY AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Report by Clerk to the Council**

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## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**4 December 2018**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report presents the outcome of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee review of the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Programme in the Scottish Borders.**
- 1.2 With the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme entering its final phase, at its meeting on 21 August 2018, the Executive Committee agreed to ask the Audit and Scrutiny to undertake a review of the progress made in delivering improved broadband services in the Scottish Borders through DSSB.
- 1.3 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee met on 4 separate occasions during November 2018 to consider the programme, receiving briefings from Council officers and representatives from the Scottish Government DSSB team. Having considered all the evidence and established the main findings of the review, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed seven recommendations at its meeting on 27 November 2018. The report of the review by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

### **2 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to consider the findings and recommendations of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's review of the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme in the Scottish Borders as detailed in the report attached at Appendix 1.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Robust digital connectivity is already central to the delivery of private and public services and in meeting the needs and expectations of consumers, businesses and visitors; this will continue to be the case into the future. Scottish Borders Council has played a crucial role in the development of digital infrastructure in the South of Scotland. From 2012, Scottish Borders Council has been part of the national programme to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure across Scotland, committing £8.4m to extend coverage within the Scottish Borders. The programme was originally called Step Change 2015 and latterly became DSSB – Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband.
- 3.2 With the DSSB programme entering its final phase, at its meeting on 21 August 2018, the Executive Committee agreed to ask the Audit and Scrutiny to undertake a review of the progress made in delivering improved broadband services in the Scottish Borders through DSSB.

### **4 THE REVIEW**

- 4.1 The terms of reference for the Review were:
- (a) An assessment of the final coverage delivered by Contract 1 of the DSSB Programme and the associated 'Gainshare' project;
  - (b) The quality of that coverage and any variations between premises in towns, villages and the countryside. This would include speed coverage, long-line issues and other limitations that have become apparent during the rollout period;
  - (c) How appropriate and effective the communication processes used during the roll-out were, and whether appropriate information sharing and openness was evident to all stakeholders throughout the programme;
  - (d) Did the DSSB Programme deliver appropriate value for money in relation to the Council's £8.4M investment;
  - (e) How successful the take up of superfast broadband services has been across the Scottish Borders; and
  - (f) Identify appropriate lessons for future programmes, such as the new R100 Programme.
- 4.2 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee met on 4 separate occasions during November 2018 to consider the programme, receiving briefings from Council officers and representatives from the Scottish Government DSSB team. Having considered all the evidence and established the main findings of the review, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed seven recommendations at its meeting on 27 November 2018. The report of the review by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

### **5 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **5.1 Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

## 5.2 Risk and Mitigations

Any risk associated with the DSSB programme has been identified within the review outcome document.

## 5.3 Equalities

It is anticipated that the recommendations in the review outcome will not have any adverse impact on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or religion and belief and where possible they promote equality and good relations with equality groups.

## 5.4 Acting Sustainably

Any economic, social or environmental effects of the review are identified in the outcome document.

## 5.5 Carbon Management

The review recommendations have no impact on the Council's carbon emissions.

## 5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in the report.

## 6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 As this is a report of a review by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, no consultation has taken place with the Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR, although officers of the Council were involved in previous reports to Council and the Executive, and provided support to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee during their deliberations.

### Approved by

**Jenny Wilkinson**  
**Clerk to the Council**

**Signature .....**

### Author(s)

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**Background Papers:** Nil

**Previous Minute Reference:** Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 27 November 2018

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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