

Cultural and Economic Services Committee

Date: 3 June 2019

Title: Town Centre WiFi

Purpose of the Report: To consider commissioning Town Centre WiFi services and additional footfall intelligence gathering.

Contact Officer: Vivien Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services

Corporate Objective/s	
LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim: 2 - To continue to support a vibrant town through partnership working and initiatives including management of the street market, support for local businesses, town and community promotions and town centre enhancements.	
Implications:	
Financial	
Human Resources	
Operational/Service delivery	√ Operational procedure review
Procedural/Legal	
Risk/Health and Safety	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the proposals are -

- 1.1 To recommend to Council to enter into a delivery contract with supplier 'B' for town centre WiFi provision for three-years at a cost of up to £28k.

or

- 1.2 To recommend to Council to enter into a delivery contract with supplier 'B' for town centre WiFi provision and footfall insight provision for three-years at a cost of up to £38k.
- 1.3 To recommend to Council that officers liaise with Central Bedfordshire Council to draw down s106 monies reflective of Council's endorsed recommendation - either 1.1 or 1.2 above.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under the heading of 'Vibrancy and Vitality of Town and Town Centre', the Council's Five-Year Plan and Objectives 2019 – 2024, lists the objective no.22, to "Consider the provision of town centre WiFi (including footfall monitoring facility)."
- 2.2 As Members are minded, the Town Council endorsed and agreed that it would

at the appropriate time further investigate and possibly bring forward the following projects:

- Town centre WiFi
- Pigeon management (*within town centre*)
- Living History legacy feature (*work underway*)

2.3 Council delegated authority to Cultural and Economic Services (C&E) to further explore the merits of the three projects, with any recommendations thereafter being returned to Council for its decision (12/09/16. Ref. CE/011).

2.4 At its meeting on 03/09/18, Committee resolved to instruct officers to investigate further the potential for delivery of town centre WiFi provision for future Committee consideration. (Ref. 126/CE). At the same meeting, CBC officers were in attendance following an expression to support the Town Council in achieving this project. Whilst committee identified a budget, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) officers proposed the spend of s106 funds to this end. CBC officers have also been invited to provide feedback on the received quotes, i.e. officer with IT knowledge and service area experience.

2.5 At its meeting on 11/03/19, Committee endorsed the allocation of s106 planning gain funds towards town centre enhancements. (Ref. 165/CE). Four projects were put forward, one being town centre WiFi. This budget would be utilised for WiFi delivery first.

3. INFORMATION

3.1 Invitations to quote were sent out to 8 prospective suppliers. One responded saying they would not be quoting and out of the remaining suppliers, two submitted quotes.

3.2 Suppliers were invited to submit a quote for a one-year contract for delivery and maintenance of the WiFi system that could be extended for a further two years, three in total, should Committee be minded. This period would secure practical experience for the Council providing a good understanding of what is needed in managing such a system; enough time to assess its usage and value to the town centre.

3.3 The primary element of the quote being considered is the provision of the WiFi system.

3.4 Suppliers were asked to state whether they comply with Friendly WiFi standards and certification. Friendly WiFi is a government-initiated safe certification standard for public WiFi. The Friendly WiFi symbol tells you where the service meets minimum filtering standards – particularly in areas where children are present. Approved venues and locations worldwide displaying the Friendly WiFi symbol have proved their service blocks access to pornography, images and videos of child sexual abuse and web pages known by the Internet Watch Foundation to host indecent images of children.

- 3.5 Suppliers were asked to quote for a town centre area of coverage as per attached map, at **Appendix A**.
- 3.6 As part of the quote invitation, officers requested that suppliers provided additional information on how their WiFi systems could be enhanced to support town centre footfall intelligence gathering. The aim being to inform Committee of the system's future proofing potential should Committee be minded to install town centre footfall counting systems in the future.
- 3.7 There are many systems for counting footfall. To date, the Council has contracted manual counts undertaken at similar times of the year and/or bi-annually. The advantage of intelligence gathering system linked to the installation of a WiFi system is that it can provide data throughout the year leading to a greater understanding of how the town centre is used.
- 3.7 The future use and survival of High Streets is a national discussion. Understanding their use has never been more critical in providing intelligence to guide decisions on how to maintain a High Street that residents wish to use, people want to visit, and businesses want to invest in. The cost effectiveness of installing intelligence capturing systems at the same time as installing WiFi is worthy of Committee's consideration. For this reason, suppliers were asked to include footfall counting systems in their quote.
- 3.8 No two footfall counting systems are the same and it would be fair to say that the suppliers offering a quote have different systems with different 'pros and cons'. Regardless of this, both can provide the Council with more data and more frequently than before.

4 QUOTES

- 4.1 Quotes provided do not include costs for planning permission should it be needed or installation of any additional power supplies if none are available where placement of infrastructure is needed. The aim is to use existing street furniture and infrastructure. The recommendations above therefore, set out an 'up to' spending limit to facilitate these additional requirements.
- 4.2 Supplier A –
An experienced and reputable footfall intelligence and analyst provider and this is the supplier's primary function. WiFi provision is secured through their delivery partner (subcontracted). Therefore, supplier states that their proposal focuses on footfall intelligence information and costs. WiFi costs provided are less detailed than requested. Supplier provides 1yr's WiFi pricing information and does not include maintenance fees.
- 4.3 Supplier B –
Provides both WiFi and footfall intelligence systems in-house. Has provided detailed breakdown of costs for WiFi and guaranteed a fixed annual licence and

support fee for a 3-yr period. Supplier states their product complies with Friendly WiFi standards. Should Committee be minded to pursue additional footfall intelligence, supplier gives reference to GDPR issues stating they will remain responsible for personal data.

4.3 As per para. 3.3 above, the primary focus for the quote is the provision of WiFi.

4.4 The table below presents quote information:

Supplier	A	B	Comments
Wi Fi Installation & 1yr delivery	Circa £16k	Circa £20k	<p>Planning application costs if needed have not been included by either supplier.</p> <p>Both suppliers present indicative costs pending confirmation of final survey and use of existing or new infrastructure fixing points.</p> <p>Both suppliers identify there may be additional costs to install additional power supplies if required. The aim being to access existing services.</p> <p>Supplier A – provides licencing which covers a period of 5 yrs and state it includes maintenance. Internet connection is assumed, and cost does not include set up of connection.</p> <p>Supplier B – includes costs of internet connection, licence fees and maintenance.</p>
Wi Fi Installation & 3yrs delivery	Circa £ -	Circa £23k	<p>Supplier A – No detail has been given regarding costs of a further two years specifically for WiFi services – support/maintenance.</p> <p>Supplier B – provide a fixed fee for a 3-yr period to cover licencing and support costs.</p>
Footfall intelligence & 1yr delivery	Circa £14k	Circa £6k	Supplier B – provides costs dependent on installation taking place at the same time as the WiFi infrastructure.
intelligence & 3yrs delivery	Circa £36k	Circa £10k	

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The set-up costs are the same regardless of whether WiFi is provided for one year or three. The additional costs to extend the provision to three years is small in comparison to the set-up costs. A three-year provision would provide a more robust period for assessing the impact, benefits or otherwise of having town centre WiFi.
- 5.2 The primary work focus is to install town Centre WiFi. Committee may wish to consider the advantages of securing footfall counting systems at the same time for cost effectiveness and to increase its ability to understand the how the High Street is used towards aiding future decision-making.
- 5.3 Quotes provided are indicative to be confirmed following site surveys. In addition, planning consent costs may also need to be met . The recommendations above provide flexibility in assessing the total budget required whilst offering a maximum amount for spend.

END