



Decision 1 - Building on the current broadband deployments through the Superfast Worcestershire Partnership, Worcestershire County Council has taken an active role in supporting community fibre schemes and to date, has secured nearly £5m worth of investment, as the Rural Gigabit Community Scheme has proven very popular across Worcestershire and has already benefitted over 70 communities (either already delivered or in process of being delivered); meaning approx. 5,000 premises are directly benefiting from this initiative.

The existing top up (which includes previously agreed £1m from

risk not being able to support any further communities, which are very close to obtaining gigabit service.

All of these communities were in areas not in scope for any BDUK or commercial interventions; many of which fell into the definition of the

It should be noted, the current policy within DCMS states that if Contract 1 underspend and take up clawback funding is not re-invested to further broadband provision, an element of the funding will need to be repaid to DCMS, based on the investment ratio for contract 1 (36%). This means that currently, up to £1,454,494 is

**Reason(s) For Decision**

-investment (36%) instead of returning it to BDUK as per the Grant Funding Agreement.

Having analysed the current projects, with the requested up to £1m

anticipates that c. 20 - 30 more projects can be supported, many of which are currently unable to meet supplier quotes. This will allow a further up to 2,000 premises worth c. £2m to benefit from ultrafast connectivity despite being not in any of the current deployment plans.

Reinvestment of the funding as described above allows for the greatest amount of flexibility considering the current telecommunications market and increasing Government Connectivity

<p><b>Alternative Options Considered And Rejected</b></p>	<p>The programme team constantly looks at options to boost gigabit connectivity and the Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme is the most flexible and quickest way to extend gigabit capable networks.</p> <p>Other options were considered and discounted, in line with the UK premises by 2025 and the increasing demand for full fibre networks.</p> <p><b>Not to reinvest:</b> a proportionate percentage of underspend/reinvestment (36% in respect of contract) back to BDUK (expected to be in excess of £1.4m); noting that following the end of the Superfast Worcestershire deployments, there remain significant number of Worcestershire premises without acceptable service (c. 8,000 premises without at least a superfast service). Note that the funding to support the PMO, the team are not funded through core WCC revenue budgets, therefore without the reinvestment would cease to exist.</p> <p><b>To delay the reinvestment decision:</b> by delaying the reinvestment decision, we risk up to 50 communities (up to 5,000 premises) either not getting gigabit connectivity at all or having their gigabit upgrade delayed until 2025 or beyond. It is crucial to understand that some of these communities fall into the worst served across Worcestershire, many of which have been following the programme's progress since 2012, expecting at least some improvement well before now.</p> <p>The above options were considered and subsequently discounted.</p>
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## **Appendix A**

### Earlier Associated Decisions

#### Decision 1

[Connecting Worcestershire Phase 3 Broadband Programme - 14 December 2017](#)

#### Decision 2

[Extension of Local Body Partnership Broadband - 18 July 2018](#)

#### Decision 3

[Broadband LBP Community Funding June 2020](#)

#### Decision 4

[Broadband voucher top up scheme - August 2020](#)