

<b>Report on</b>	Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) Programme – Consortium Agreement
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Claire McNally, Council Solicitor
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Fiona McKeown, Head of Economic Development

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To seek Members approval for the Council to enter into a Consortium Agreement in respect of the Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) Programme with other Councils within the Consortium, those Councils listed in section 2.2 below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Members will be aware through the Development Committee of the Council's intention to bid for funding to the LFFN Challenge Fund ("the Fund"). The Consortium made a successful collective bid for £15m funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) LFFN Fund, to support digital infrastructure development across Northern Ireland. A capital grant of £15million to the Consortium has been approved by DCMS and a Letter of Offer and Grant Agreement received. The £15m grant will be divided equally between the Consortium Members, so that, after consortium costs are covered, approximately £1.473m will be spent on fibre connectivity in each Consortium Member areas. Most buildings are Council sites, but other sites such as schools are also proposed, subject to agreement of the organisations responsible for them. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, will act as the lead Council. The FFNI funding must be spent by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021.
2.2	<p>The FFNI Consortium is a grouping of the ten councils and does not include Belfast City Council. See below, a list of all of the '<i>Consortium Members</i>' in respect of this Consortium:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council;</li> <li>ii. Ards and North Down Borough Council;</li> <li>iii. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council;</li> <li>iv. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council;</li> <li>v. Derry City and Strabane District Council;</li> <li>vi. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council;</li> <li>vii. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council;</li> <li>viii. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council;</li> <li>ix. Mid Ulster District Council;</li> <li>x. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (Lead).</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The Council is now in receipt of the final draft of the Consortium Agreement in relation to FFNI Consortium Programme. A copy of this Agreement is attached to Appendix A of this report. The Councils as listed above in section 2.2 of the report will enter into this Agreement which defines their respective rights and responsibilities within the FFNI Consortium. Newry Mourne and Down District Council has agreed to undertake the role of Lead Council on behalf of and with the agreement of the Consortium Members.</p>
3.2	<p>The main terms of the Consortium Agreement include:-</p> <p><u>General</u></p> <p>The Consortium will establish the FFNI Operations Group and FFNI Steering Group. The Governance structure is set out in section 7 of the Consortium Agreement (see Appendix A).</p> <p><u>The FFNI Operations Group</u></p> <p>The FFNI Operations Group role is to oversee Programme delivery and review the performance of Projects against their Investment Objectives to ensure that they are met. Its Members will be as agreed by the Councils, but is typically made up of Council officers holding the role of Head of Service, Economic Development manager or Digital Infrastructure leads.</p> <p>Its main responsibilities are noted in section 7 of the Consortium Agreement (see Appendix A).</p> <p><u>FFNI Steering Group</u></p> <p>The FFNI Steering Groups role is to set the vision and overall strategic direction for FFNI. The Steering Group will direct the Operations Group, so that the Consortium Members control the strategic direction of the Consortium. Its Members will be as agreed by the Councils, but typically Senior Officers holding the role of Director of Assistant Director responsible for Economic Development, or equivalent.</p> <p>Its main responsibilities are noted in section 7 of the Consortium Agreement (see Appendix A).</p> <p><u>The FFNI Operations Team</u></p> <p>The FFNI Operations Teams role is to manage, deliver and administer all operational Project activity. Its Members will be a hybrid team hosted by the Lead Council comprised of permanent and seconded staff, fixed term contract staff, and specialist consulting and technical support.</p> <p>Its main responsibilities are noted in section 7 of the Consortium Agreement (see Appendix A).</p>

	<p><u>Lead Council</u></p> <p>The main obligations that the Lead Council must adhere to include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administer the FFNI Operations team;</li> <li>• Administer DCMS and other grant funding;</li> <li>• Provide governance support;</li> <li>• Management the Procurements;</li> <li>• Oversee fibre implementations;</li> <li>• The Lead Council will not indemnify Consortium Members.</li> </ul> <p><u>Consortium Members</u></p> <p>The main obligations that Consortium Members must adhere to include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work together in the Consortium;</li> <li>• Support the governance structure;</li> <li>• Support the FFNI Commercial and Financial models;</li> <li>• Deliver FFNI activities.</li> </ul>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: None known.
	Human: Officer time in carrying out their duties in completing this project.
	Risk Management: In line with Council policies.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That Members approve that the Council enters in to a Consortium Agreement in respect of the Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) Programme with the other Councils, as identified at section 2.2 of this report above, along the terms set out in Appendix A.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix A - Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) Programme Consortium Agreement including Letter of Offer and Grant Agreement.

