

Borders Broadband

Herefordshire and Gloucestershire

Briefing Note No.2 ♦ August 2011

Working for better rural broadband in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire

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The Borders Broadband project is a partnership between Herefordshire and Gloucestershire supported by Government funding to bring better broadband to benefit rural residents, businesses and communities across both counties



LATEST NEWS:

Procurement process well underway – seven suppliers invited to 'dialogue' stage

The Borders Broadband project is well ahead of the national race for fast rural broadband.

The Contract Notice for the Project was issued in early June inviting potential suppliers to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ), determining the financial and technical capacity to deliver a project of this size.

Seven suppliers have now been invited to participate in the dialogue stage of the procurement process, which will be split into four phases:

1. Invitation to Participate in Dialogue (ITPD)
2. Invitation to Submit Outline Submissions (ISOS)
3. Invitation to Submit Detailed Submissions (ISDS)
4. Invitation to Submit Final Tender (ISFT)

The ITPD paperwork has been released with the ISOS due at the end of August. Outline submissions will be received in mid October and will be followed by an intensive period of dialogue and evaluation. Three suppliers will be selected to submit their detailed solutions in February 2012 before submitting their final tender with a preferred supplier chosen.

IMPORTANT

Reminder of the protocol during procurement

This is a highly complex procurement and there are strict protocols to ensure that we remain open, fair, transparent and non-discriminatory. In line with EU Procurement Directives, adhering to these principles is mandatory.

During this process individuals may be approached by potential suppliers about this project. As we need to ensure we do not inadvertently disadvantage any potential providers and jeopardise the process, individuals should not attempt to provide responses to any questions raised.

Any queries from suppliers need to be referred to Bob Gennard, Assistant Contracts Manager at Herefordshire Council 01432 261617 or rgennard@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Please note this notice will remain in place for the duration of the procurement stage which is planned to end in May 2012.

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Proving there is demand – 'demand stimulation'

The Project Team is developing a practical programme of 'demand stimulation' activities to help prove to broadband infrastructure providers that it makes sound commercial sense to bring better and faster broadband provision into the heart of our rural communities.

As part of this, the intention is to carry out a survey of as many households and businesses in the localities as is possible.

Questionnaires for residential and business use will start to be available in September to help build an essential evidence base of genuine interest and demand for improved broadband services.

The Project Team will work closely with the campaign group 'Fast Broadband for Herefordshire', the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and local business groups and stakeholders to promote and distribute both the household and on-line business survey. Both questionnaires will also be accessible on-line at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/broadband and www.qfirst.co.uk/broadband.

Case studies from businesses already working efficiently with enhanced broadband use will be researched and written to help to promote the benefits and encourage support for the campaign and completion of the demand survey.

Please contact the team if you are aware of any individuals or businesses which may be useful in this respect, as we want to build up a library of 'human' stories and experiences.

- Stakeholder Lead for Herefordshire: Alan Ronald 01432 260177
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- Stakeholder Lead for Gloucestershire: Angela Presdee 01452 328309
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Communications and Meetings with Parishes

Regular and consistent two-way communication as well as marketing activities will be critical elements in supporting the delivery of a successful project.

In recognition of the project's profile, the Project Team is working with a range of community and business organisations to promote the campaign as widely as possible across rural Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

As part of this work, the Project Team will keep Parish and Town Councils and ward members up to date on progress, and explore the best ways of working together with communities to meet the ambitions of the project.

Meetings with ward members, Parish and Town Council representatives in the Phase One area in Herefordshire have now been completed. Similar meetings are scheduled for the Forest of Dean in September 2011 and will roll out through the rest of the two counties through the autumn.

The Project Team will be recruiting volunteer 'Broadband Champions' in each parish/ward/town as key contacts with local communities and to help co-ordinate information about their localities.

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The Borders Broadband team

The team working to deliver the Borders Broadband project across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire is now finally in place with two new appointments complementing the existing senior staff team from Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Councils and GFirst (Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership).

- **Matt Smith**, who has previously worked at the Rural Regeneration Zone of Advantage West Midlands (AWM) and was instrumental in the delivery of improved Broadband in the Ludlow/Leominster/Tenbury area has been appointed Operational Manager
- **Richard Shelley** will be drawing upon extensive experience in the private sector mainly through ISP companies working on public sector contracts as the Technical Manager

To contact the team, email bordersbroadband@herefordshire.gov.uk

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Frequently Asked Questions

To endeavour to answer the most frequently asked questions about this project, we will be maintaining and updating our FAQs on our websites:

- www.herefordshire.gov.uk/broadband
- www.gfirst.co.uk/broadband

If you feel there are questions (and answers!) which have not yet been added, please let us know! Email bordersbroadband@herefordshire.gov.uk

While we plan to issue and distribute the Briefing Notes on a regular basis, we will be updating the latest information on the websites.

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