

Essex County Council
Chief Executive's Office
PO Box 11, County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1LX



To: All Chief Executives
Boroughs, Districts and Unitaries

Date: 30 April 2014
Our Ref: Superfastjk300414

Dear Colleagues

Re: Match funding request for Superfast Essex broadband infrastructure programme

As you will be aware, the Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) recently made available a grant allocation of up to £10.72m for the county of Essex to support a further expansion of the superfast broadband infrastructure in the county. In response to this announcement, Essex County Council (ECC) is preparing a business case to take advantage of the grant allocation, which has to be fully match funded. The objective is to expand the existing Superfast Essex programme to reach many of the areas not covered under the existing Essex BDUK project and achieve 95% superfast broadband connectivity for the county of Essex. ECC is planning to make available £5.5m of capital funding for this initiative and therefore will only be taking up about half of the grant allocation from DCMS. This letter is a request to local councils to express an interest to increase the investment for Essex by contributing to the match fund budget and enable a greater take-up of the grant allocation.

Under the Superfast Essex programme, ECC is currently implementing a broadband rollout which, in conjunction with commercial activity, will deliver superfast coverage for 87.4% of premises in the county of Essex. With the new grant allocation by DCMS and the funds currently being set aside by ECC it is expected that this programme could be extended to reach around 93%, still falling short of the DCMS objective of 95% coverage. If further match funding could be secured from other sources, such as your Authority, a larger part of the DCMS grant allocation could be taken up, with a resulting increase in superfast broadband coverage to be achieved.

Also, one of the procurement processes currently being considered to purchase the broadband extension infrastructure is to call-off under the DCMS Broadband Delivery Framework. This is a gap-funded model contract, which attracts further investment from the supplier in proportion to what the contracting authority is able to contribute including its match grant funds. One of the benefits of pooling contributions from local authorities such as yours with ECC's investment is that all bodies shall together maximise the coverage of superfast broadband across the county of Essex and will in turn share the future rewards.

With the above information in mind, we kindly ask your Authority to consider contributing to the funding budget for this broadband infrastructure opportunity across the county. If funds are pledged, the Superfast Essex programme will work with you to ensure that these are invested to achieve a direct benefit for the local community in your area. Please note that the draw-down of any funds pledged towards this initiative is likely to fall into the 2015/16 or 2016/17 financial years. If you consider that there is money available from your Authority for this programme in 2014/15 financial year, please also let us know on the attached form. Although such monies will not be spent for this initiative until after 1 April

2015, ECC can make arrangements with your Authority to transfer funds and keep them safe in a holding/reserve account until the extension programme commences under contract.

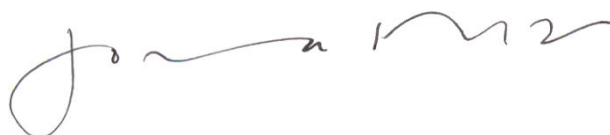
To capture your response to this request, please would you kindly complete the attached form. As the deadlines for progressing the business case and DCMS grant application are tight, I would greatly appreciate it if you could respond by **30 May 2014**.

Please note that the receipt of your Authority's completed response shall be treated in the strictest of confidence by ECC, and will be treated simply as an expression of interest to contribute to this programme, for information only.

If you require more specific details or would like to discuss this funding opportunity further, please contact the Superfast Essex Programme Manager at Essex County Council, Connie Kerbst, by email to connie.kerbst@essex.gov.uk. Further information on the current Essex broadband programme can also be found on the recently updated website, www.superfastessex.org.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course and thank you for your time taken to consider the contents of this letter and to respond.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanna Killian', written in a cursive style.

Joanna Killian
Chief Executive

Please reply to: Member Enquiries Team
Tel: 08457 430 430
Email: Member.Enquiries@essex.gov.uk
Internet: www.essex.gov.uk