

Appendix 2 - Text of Email from Councillor Kevin Bentley Essex County Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Infrastructure

From: Toni Coleman, Cabinet Support Officer [<mailto:Toni.Coleman@essex.gov.uk>] **On Behalf Of** Cllr Kevin Bentley, Member CC

Sent: 22 July 2014 14:01

To: Cllr Barry Aspinell at Brentwood; Cllr Bob Boyce; Chris Whitbread; Cllr Colin Riley; Graham Butland Braintree Council; Cllr Jim Ketteridge; Cllr Jon Clempner; Cllr Martin Hunt; Cllr Mick Page at Tendring; Cllr Phil Turner; Cllr Roy Whitehead; Cllr Terry Cutmore; Colchester CE; Alison Crowe; Amar Dave; Basildon CE; Castlepoint CE; Fiona Marshall; Glen Chipp; Ian Davidson; Uttlesford CE; Harlow CE; Nicola Beach; Chelmsford CE

Subject: Superfast Essex Programme

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to give you an update on the Superfast Essex programme, which is currently rolling out high-speed fibre broadband across the county.

Earlier today Essex County Council's Cabinet approved an extension to the programme, supporting a £20.5m investment in superfast broadband infrastructure in Essex.

Essex County Council will commit £5.5m towards the Superfast Broadband Extension Scheme, which will be match-funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (as part of grant funding made available to support broadband extension programmes). A further contribution of around £9.5m is expected to be procured from suppliers, who will be contracted to work with Essex County Council on the programme.

We are strongly committed to the Superfast Essex programme, as broadband access is a necessity both for our local businesses looking to expand and compete in a global market, and residents who want to keep up with the digital world. This extension to the programme will allow us improve connections for even more homes and businesses.

Our intention is to use the new County Council investment across two main projects – a fibre extension project with the intention of reaching an additional 40,000 homes or business; and a rural challenge project with the aspiration to provide superfast broadband to a further 20,000 rural homes or businesses.

As the County Council is unable to match fund the full grant allocation made available by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, discussions are continuing to seek contributions from districts and other funding sources. So far Braintree District Council, Tendring District Council and Epping Forest District Council have indicated that they would contribute.

We will continue to welcome offers of support from district, borough, city and unitary councils in Essex. If your authority would like to make a financial contribution it is not too late. Please do not hesitate to contact my office and I will be happy to discuss further.

In order to define the areas where the extension programme is most needed, we are currently carrying out an Open Market Review to establish existing broadband provision and commercial

investment plans over the next three years. A public consultation on the scope of the programme will follow in the autumn.

Delivery for the current £24.6million Superfast Essex programme is progressing well and on track. By the end of June, 22 fibre-enabled cabinets were live and able to accept orders from 2300 homes and businesses in Colchester, Braintree and Harlow. The first fibre cabinets in Brentwood and Tendring districts will be launched in the coming months.

I will provide further updates as the Superfast Essex programme progresses. In the meantime if you have any questions about the scheme please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Bentley', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Kevin Bentley

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Infrastructure

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